

# INSPECTION REPORT

## PEPPER HILL FIRST SCHOOL

Bradville, Milton Keynes

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique reference number: 110330

Acting Headteacher: Anne Lubbock

Reporting inspector: Brenda Iles  
12000

Dates of inspection: 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2002

Inspection number: 243846

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: First School

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 8

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Kingsfold  
Bradville  
Milton Keynes

Postcode: MK13 7BQ

Telephone number: 01908 312912

Fax number: N/A

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Rev. Jo Stoker

Date of previous inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> April, 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
12000	Brenda Iles	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities Science Geography History Music	What should the school do to improve further The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught How well is the school led and managed
13526	Richard Barnard	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents
21114	Malcolm Johnstone	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Information and communication technology (ICT) Design and technology	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
2818	Graham Warner	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language English Art and design Physical education Religious education	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Almost all pupils attending the school live locally in rented accommodation in Bradville, Milton Keynes. The school serves a large council estate including emergency housing and a refuge. A small proportion of pupils live in private housing. The area is recognised as one of the most challenging locally and there is significant deprivation. The school, which is smaller than most primary schools, has 149 pupils, 70 boys and 79 girls, aged from four to eight. At the time of the inspection 34 children were in the reception year group. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average although many choose not to take up their entitlement. Seventeen pupils have English as an additional language, three of whom are at the early stages of language acquisition. Most pupils come from European backgrounds and 20 pupils are of various African and Asian heritages. Seventeen per cent of the pupils are on the register of special educational needs, which is about average. Three pupils have statements. Forty-two per cent of pupils joined or left the school at times other than the usual admission and transfer times during the last year, which is exceptionally high. Many family moves result from emotional and social difficulties and a small number return to their countries of origin for lengthy periods of time. Attainment on entry, measured using local assessment information, shows children's achievements are well below average when they start school. Few parents have higher education qualifications. All the teachers except one have joined the team since September 2001. The many changes experienced by the school since the last report have presented significant challenges. Difficulties in teacher recruitment have contributed to inconsistent provision and instability. There have also been many changes to the governing body in the last two years. Replacement teachers and governors have now been appointed and the picture is more settled. The school is led by a temporary headteacher. The headteacher has been seconded to support the local authority.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The school has received two achievement awards for improvements in standards in literacy and numeracy. Pupils' achievements are about average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics when compared to similar schools. They achieve well in relation to their low starting point and difficult social circumstances. Very good provision in the Foundation Stage of learning, good teaching and the very high commitment of staff to school improvement are having a positive impact on standards. The interim headteacher provides very effective leadership, the school is well managed and governors give good support. The school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The interim headteacher is a very effective leader and staff and governors support her well.
- Pupils make good progress through the school in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage (reception) and good in other age groups
- Standards in art and design and physical education are above average
- Staff provide very sensitive care for pupils and understand their different needs very well.

#### **What could be improved**

- The range of practical opportunities for pupils to improve their communication skills, learning and personal independence.
- History and geography are not taught regularly enough for pupils to sustain their learning
- The rigour of monitoring, assessment and evaluation procedures to show the progress of groups of pupils during their time at the school.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in May 1997 all the teaching staff have changed, the social circumstances have deteriorated, the level of pupil mobility has risen to be amongst the highest nationally and attainment on entry is now well below average. Although standards in Year 3 appear to be lower in English, mathematics and science, direct comparisons cannot be made due to the many changes already described. The analysis of the school's results over time shows that results have risen annually over the last three years. The quality of teaching has improved and is now good, the curriculum has been reviewed and provides appropriate coverage and the literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented effectively. Consequently. Standards in ICT are now appropriate for the ages of the pupils. Attendance, while remaining below average, is monitored rigorously. There is scope to develop further the curriculum for history and geography to better meet the needs of the ever-changing groups of pupils. The school has made good progress. The capacity for further improvement is very good.

## STANDARDS

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

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

Children's attainment when they start school is well below that of most four-year-olds. Through very good provision in the Foundation Stage of learning children make very good progress. Despite this, standards remain below average when they transfer to Year 1. Good teaching supports learning well and by the time they reach Years 2 and 3 national test results and teachers' assessments indicate that pupils' skills and knowledge in literacy are similar to schools in similar circumstances. In mathematics they are above those of similar schools. Teacher assessments in science also show attainment is about the same as similar schools with strengths in knowledge of living things. Trends over time have shown gradual annual improvements and the school has received two achievement awards as a result. Pupils' literacy skills are inhibited by their narrow range of language experience and the frequent interruptions to their learning caused through house moves and changes of teachers. Pupils often find it difficult to describe their learning. In art and design and physical education standards reached by pupils in Years 2 and 3 exceed expectations. Pupils find it easier to express themselves creatively and these subjects are strengths of the school. Standards in other subjects are about what would be expected in Years 2 and 3 except in history and geography where standards are below expectations because they are not taught frequently enough.

The school is meeting the needs of different groups of pupils well. The recent progress of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is good. The school manages the continual movement of pupils into and out of the school well. In Year 3 two-thirds of the pupils have changed since September 2001 so overall comparisons of progress against last year's test results are not reliable. However, the school's analysis of attainment in national tests

shows that a higher proportion of the pupils who stay at the school achieve more highly than those who join classes during Years 1 and 2.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils like coming to school and respect the adults who care for them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is satisfactory. While most pupils behave well there is a significant minority who have very challenging behaviour. This is consistently well managed by staff.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships with adults are very good. Pupils are cared for with sensitivity and supported well. Pupils need more opportunities for drama and role-play to learn to reason and resolve conflicts independently.
Attendance	Attendance is below average. This has a negative impact on learning.

The school encourages regular prompt attendance but a significant number of pupils do not attend school regularly due to illness, taking long holidays abroad or through difficult home circumstances. This results in lessons being missed which interrupts the pace of learning.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Year 3
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good	Good

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

Teaching in the Foundation Stage of learning is a strength of the school and the many exciting practical play activities help children to make rapid progress in their early learning. In Years 1, 2 and 3 teaching is good overall with some very good and occasionally excellent lessons. None were less than satisfactory. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. Teachers support well pupils limited language skills. They use sentences that reinforce new words and ask questions that help pupils to use the descriptive words introduced in lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge and their management of pupils' behaviour is a significant strength. There are occasions when lessons and activities are too long to sustain the full concentration of pupils. The needs of groups of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are met well. More use could be made of drama and role-play to extend the range of practical, creative opportunities for pupils to express their skills and knowledge. Assessment information is not used rigorously enough to set precise learning targets and monitor rates of progress over short periods of time.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good.

Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Spiritual, social and moral provision is good. Cultural provision is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The staff provide very good care for pupils and understand their varied range of needs very well.

The school makes good efforts to involve parents in their children's learning and parents feel welcome in school. There are new plans to promote the learning partnership between home and school further.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership. The high level of optimism and commitment of the new team of teachers supports school improvement well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors provide good support and fulfil their duties well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are appropriate systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's effectiveness but the approaches require more rigorous implementation to measure accurately the school's success.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used appropriately to support school priorities.

The quality of the accommodation and resources is good overall. There are plans to secure the play area for children in the Foundation Stage to promote more independent play and to provide a canopy to enable the area to be used during wet weather. The lack of a television restricts opportunities to explore visual media to support teaching and learning in subjects such as history and geography. Despite recruitment difficulties there are sufficient teachers and a good number of teaching assistants to support learning. Funds have been used prudently and the principles of best value are applied appropriately.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school and make good progress</li> <li>• They feel comfortable talking to staff about their ideas and concerns</li> <li>• Teaching is good</li> <li>• Their children are expected to work hard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities</li> <li>• The amount and range of homework</li> <li>• Fewer changes of teachers</li> </ul>

Inspectors support parents' positive comments. They also agree that due to recruitment difficulties the learning of some pupils has been disrupted. The school has managed this situation appropriately and the new teaching team are enthusiastic and conscientious. Pupils would benefit

from more visits and opportunities to meet adults who are able to extend their creative and cultural understanding beyond their immediate surroundings. The amount of homework is appropriate for the age range. Many pupils rely on their older brothers or sisters to help them with homework.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS**

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

1. In last year's national test Year 2 pupils attained levels which were well below average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. However, when these results are compared with schools with similar intakes the picture is more positive. Standards in reading and writing are about average and in mathematics they are above average. Teacher assessments in science show similar findings. When judged against national standards science results are below average but similar school comparisons indicate average attainment. The school's circumstances are very challenging. The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school at times other than the usual admission and leaving times is 42 per cent, which is amongst the highest nationally. The difficult social circumstances of many pupils also mean they have attended several schools by the age of seven. Teachers are constantly adjusting pupil groupings to integrate new pupils and this has implications for friendships, working partners and the loss of peer support as their friends leave, sometimes without warning. Attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is well below the local average. Bearing these factors in mind, the pupils make good progress.
2. It is difficult to compare progress between cohorts, gender and year groups because the pupils who have been assessed change so frequently. However, the school has made a positive start to address this problem. Recent analysis has extended the school's data and shows that in 2001 the pupils who had consistently attended the school from the age of five performed better than those who had joined later. This valuable information is beginning to enable the school to judge more accurately its' effectiveness and there is more that can be done to extend the practice. While pupils' performance is monitored through regular teacher assessments and particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, the targets which are set are not sufficiently precise and timed to enable the teachers to judge the amount of progress pupils make between their joining and leaving times. This is an issue for the school to address to improve evaluation and judgements about the effectiveness of provision.
3. A further factor influencing standards has been the frequent changes of teacher experienced by some year groups. Younger pupils, in Years 1 and 2, have been taught by several teachers and this leads to discontinuity and some instability that has interrupted the pace of learning. This situation has been resolved and the new teaching team has prioritised developing strong supportive relationships that enable pupils to learn in an atmosphere that raises confidence and self-esteem and where mistakes are seen as pathways to improvement. Many pupils have difficulty expressing themselves in words. Their teachers provide good support and consequently, with prompts, they recall the language introduced in lessons. An example of this practice was seen in the teaching of science to Year 3 pupils who recalled terms such as photosynthesis, oxygen and carbon dioxide when the teacher posed questions and prompts to support their responses.
4. All work is neatly presented and by Year 3 most pupils write legibly in a joined hand. Although many do not enjoy writing the skills of labelling and composing sentences are secure. The use of writing models, introduced by teachers,

helps pupils to structure ideas and use descriptive language. In discussion Years 2 and 3 pupils say they prefer writing reports, labelling diagrams and creating lists to composing stories. Similarly in reading, many state a preference for non-fiction text. While reading is below average in Years 2 and 3, phonics has been taught well and pupils use word-building strategies to decode words which are unfamiliar. Year 1 pupils broke down the word 'antique' using the strategies they had been taught but needed help to understand the meaning of the word. Many have limited knowledge and understanding of the world beyond their local environment and this inhibits the development of imaginative ideas. However, they love stories and listen in rapt attention. Younger pupils follow the teachers' example, using a pointer to follow sentences and referring to illustrations to gain clues to support the meaning of the text. While most take reading books home, there are very few examples of the home school partnership supporting learning. Where parents help their children regularly, progress is faster.

5. Seventeen pupils have additional language needs, three of whom are at the initial stage of learning English. The school gives every opportunity for these pupils to be fully involved in all of its activities and the standards they achieve are comparable with many other pupils. The small minority of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English are well supported and included. They work industriously and pay careful attention to teachers and support assistant's instructions, asking questions if they are uncertain. Their confidence is developed through the very good relationships adults have with pupils. Speaking skills are often limited, even though listening skills are well developed. Writing is presented carefully but is limited by the range of language pupils feel secure to use. Many are beginning to enjoy reading because the meaning of words is being made clear to them. Reading skills are limited but are supported well through regular opportunities to use these skills in other subjects such as religious education.
6. The mobility of pupils has a depressing effect upon the school's results regardless of its good achievements with special needs pupils. The provision to meet the pupils' needs is good because of the high level and quality of support given by both class teachers and support assistants. Although pupils with special needs make sustained, satisfactory progress over time the recent initiatives of providing extra support indicates some good progress being made more recently. The pupils are making effective progress against the precise targets in their individual education plans. Pupils work on the same tasks as their classmates in the main but at a level that meets their needs effectively. Both boys and girls work collaboratively and their needs are met efficiently. They achieve the best when they receive direct support but also make good efforts when they have opportunities to work independently.
7. Pupils' mathematical skills are developed better as they find it easier to communicate their understanding of numbers by using apparatus, charts and sums to reflect their understanding. Work in number is a strength and the oral and mental starter in the numeracy lessons has helped to focus attention on number patterns and the four modes of calculation. Knowledge of tables and number facts is good overall.
8. Pupils enjoy science and say it is a favourite subject. They benefit from practical opportunities to explore their world and to investigate. In a Year 1 lesson pupils discovered that melting ice could not be 'dried' with a towel and

learned that rises and falls in temperature can change the state of materials. Few had watched ice melt previously. By the ages of seven and eight pupils have experienced a range of investigations but these are mainly teacher directed. Pupils are not able to independently construct their own investigations and this inhibits the application of their knowledge and skills to reinforce learning. They find it hard to use scientific language when constructing sentences independently in discussions, but through good adult support, encouragement and reinforcement pupils meet the expectations made of them.

9. In history and geography standards are below those expected because pupils find it hard to recall their past learning. The teaching of these subjects on a two-year rolling programme in blocked units of time leads to gaps in pupils' experience. Because pupils join and leave the school regularly this arrangement does not meet their needs well enough. The lack of a television and access to videos of cultures and times in the past to help them to visualise environments beyond their own is another inhibiting factor.
10. Standards in ICT are about average but more use could be made of ICT to support the development of recording, independent thinking and research skills. In religious education pupils meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and show awareness of world religions and the different occasions and festivals some of their friends celebrate.
11. Standards in music and design and technology are appropriate for the age ranges. Art and design and physical education are significant strengths. Pupils are proud of their pictures and model making and benefit from the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings and ideas through paint, paper and materials. More can be done to provide practical tasks that enable pupils in Years 1 and 2 to communicate and learn through role-play and music.
12. These weaknesses should be seen in relation to the school's challenging circumstances. The school is beginning to use and implement new local guidance to support raising standards and is coping well with the challenges it faces. More details about pupils' learning can be found in the subject paragraphs in Part D of the report.

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

13. Pupils' good attitudes to school, satisfactory behaviour and relationships have a positive impact on both their academic achievements and personal development. Standards are similar to the level reported at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are keen to come to school, happy in their lessons and talk with friendly enthusiasm about the activities and their teachers, in whom they confidently put their trust. Parents say their children like school and pupils who have recently joined the school say they have been made welcome by staff and other pupils.
14. The youngest pupils in the Foundation Stage have settled into school very well and show very good attitudes to learning, responding enthusiastically to the outstanding range of activities provided. For instance, in the reception class, great interest and excitement was shown when children examined birds' eggshells, found in the grounds, under a microscope. This had a very positive impact on their personal development as they learned how to care for eggs and increased their knowledge about growth.

15. Throughout the school pupils work hard in lessons. For example in a Year 3 art and design lesson all pupils showed very good interest and concentration when drawing a range of plants using pastels. They also followed instructions closely and this enabled them to produce high quality observational artwork.
16. Behaviour is satisfactory. One pupil has been permanently excluded and two have been excluded on a temporary basis over the last two years, a figure below the national average. A significant minority of pupils have behavioural problems. This leads to some boisterous behaviour in the playground and on a few occasions unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons which, while well managed slows the pace of learning for others. For instance, in a Year 3 physical education lesson, the unsatisfactory behaviour of a number of boys inhibited the improvement of pupils' ball skills. The pace of the lesson was slower than that planned because of interruptions requiring the teacher to draw upon a range of strategies to maintain control. Many pupils have a sense of fairness and are developing a good awareness of the impact of their actions on others. A small number are lacking in self-discipline and do not recognise the needs of others, especially in the playground. However, no bullying, racist or sexist behaviour was observed during the inspection and pupils show little concerns in these areas, although some instances of name-calling have been recorded. Pupils have no fears of bullying because they feel the school treats everyone fairly. The pupils' manners reflect immaturity and the disruptions that have affected their lives. There are too few opportunities for role-play and drama in Years 1 to 3 to develop the skills of negotiation and reasoning and to help pupils to express their thoughts and ideas.
17. Personal development is satisfactory. Pupils undertake a limited range of duties and responsibilities keenly. Opportunities for them to take personal responsibility for learning and behaviour are not developed fully. Many pupils are over reliant on physical communication to express their thoughts and feelings and lack the ability to express feelings in words. There are good examples of how the school is working to improve this. In an excellent Year 1 personal and social development lesson the pupils reflected very well on the positive qualities of the week's "Golden Child". They described a wide range of attributes to describe her qualities. Relationships between pupils are satisfactory throughout the school. There are times when pupils refuse to share resources, for example in design and technology, and squabbling slows down learning. The impact of very high pupil mobility means that friendship groups are constantly being disrupted and this impedes the ability of pupils to form lasting constructive friendships. Interactions between staff and pupils are very good. Staff do all they can to provide security and help pupils to construct friendships.
18. Attendance rates are unsatisfactory, being below the average for primary schools. A significant minority of pupils have poor attendance and are often late for school. Incidents of this nature are monitored keenly. The impact of non-attendance has a detrimental effect on their learning. There is a higher level of general sickness than found in most schools. The level of unauthorised absences is about average.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT

19. Teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage of learning and in the other classes it is good. Two-thirds of the lessons in the infant and junior classes were good. Just over one in eight lessons was very good and two excellent lessons were observed, one in science in Year 2 and the other in personal and social development in Year 1. The remaining lessons were satisfactory. The very good teaching in the reception class enables children who have had very little pre-school experience to make rapid gains in their learning. Role-play, drama, creative and practical tasks promote enthusiasm and excitement as children learn through discovery.
20. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. Teachers prioritise supporting pupils' limited language skills. They use sentences that reinforce new words and ask questions that help pupils to use the descriptive words introduced in lessons. In a science lesson in Year 2 the teacher taught terms such as 'stem', 'root' and 'petal' and involved pupils in labelling a diagram to reinforce the learning. Similarly in Year 3 the teacher reviewed terms such as 'chlorophyll' and 'carbon dioxide' to help the pupils to describe their knowledge scientifically. In literacy the modelling of reading is a strength and pupils listen intently to stories and factual accounts. Almost all pupils say they enjoy books and describe or show others how to locate non-fiction text in the library. Reading is taught as a separate unit of work from the literacy hour and this works well, sustaining pupils' interest and giving precise focus to learning and practising essential skills. Good use is made of teaching assistants to support the school's reading programme. Grammar, punctuation and handwriting are also taught well and the majority of pupils present their work neatly. Similarly in mathematics the oral and mental starter provides rigour and fun while pupils develop speed and accuracy calculating numbers and describing how they reached their answers. Teachers make efforts to link recording to day-to-day situations so pupils understand the purpose of their work and how it might help them in the community. They are taught to create lists and instructions and to present their findings in simple tables and graphs. This approach supports positive attitudes and frameworks to help pupils to write at length give guidance which supports description, sequence and structure.
21. There are occasions in other subjects when lessons and activities are too long to sustain the full concentration of pupils. For example, in subjects such as history and science pupils have difficulty in maintaining the pace of investigation beyond half an hour. More use could be made of drama and role-play to extend the range of practical opportunities, evident in the reception class, to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3. Many pupils, often those who have not benefited from time in the school's reception class, need help to share resources and to resolve minor conflicts that arise from insecurity, loss and a lack of trust in others. The interim headteacher is rightly leading staff to adjust the range of activities they plan to include more opportunities for pupils to act out situations that can be resolved in different ways. Teachers aim to promote independence but pupils find conflict hard to manage. The very good relationships staff develop with pupils ensure that most difficulties are managed effectively and upsets are avoided; however, pupils continue to rely on adult support. Role-play offers opportunities to learn alternative approaches to negotiate and resolve disputes independently. The sensitive, firm insistence observed during the lessons seen on inspection minimises the potential for disruption. Consequently, lessons are calm and learning is effective. Teachers have good subject knowledge and their

management of pupils' behaviour is a significant strength. Pupils with challenging behaviour are included in lessons unless their behaviour disrupts others or creates a risk to health and safety.

22. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and adjust their planning based on their observations of pupils' learning. Many pupils stay at the school for very short periods of time and others take long extended holidays to their countries of origin. Consequently, it is difficult to judge progress using the practice of setting targets over the period of a term.
23. Teachers pay careful attention to the individual needs of groups of pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language. They give thought to the level of the tasks that are provided to ensure the appropriate level of challenge and inclusion in lessons. The small number of pupils who are at the initial stages of learning English receive extra support from local authority support staff. They work closely with teachers to devise effective work programmes for the pupils. Interesting tasks are compiled, well supported by good resources. The benefits of this comprehensive support are shown in the confidence that even the least skilled pupil has in asking questions to work with accuracy. Pupils' needs are well documented but records do not show the rates of progress of this group of pupils sufficiently well to reflect the quality of the support.
24. Individual education plans are drawn up by teachers in consultation with the interim headteacher, who is acting as temporary special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). Another teacher has been appointed from the beginning of this term who will be taking over the leadership of SEN in the near future. The targets for pupils are clear and the quality of support pupils receive from teachers and support staff is very good. This is because they are involved in decisions about how best to meet their special needs. Provision is identified clearly on lesson plans. Support assistants keep pupils on task and generate good levels of independence by asking pertinent questions that make the pupils think carefully about the way they are working. Support assistants make careful observations of pupils, for example during whole class discussions and feedback to class teachers their assessments of how well pupils are progressing in their work. There is too little use of ICT to support pupils with special needs and this is aspect that could be strengthened in the future.
25. The quality of teaching is better than that described in the last report and the capacity for further improvement is very good. There has been a complete change of staff since the last report.

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

26. The curriculum covers all National Curriculum subjects and religious education, and meets all statutory requirements. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection. There are now good policies and schemes of work that support lesson planning more successfully and ensure better development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding from year to year. The policies and schemes of work have provided a much stronger base from which teachers plan both in the long and short term. Curriculum planning is based on national guidance and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Teachers

make good meaningful links between subjects in order to make learning more interesting and relevant for the pupils. A weakness lies in the two-year programme of work devised to teach history and geography in Years 1 and 2. While planning reflects appropriate coverage, the subjects are taught as units of study alternately. This results in pupils finding it hard to recall and describe their previous learning. The delivery of the curriculum for history and geography does not provide sufficiently regular and frequent experiences to sustain effective learning.

27. The national literacy and numeracy strategies are well established and are having a positive effect on teaching and learning in English and mathematics. They have given lessons a consistent well-planned structure. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and meets the needs of all children very well. It is based securely on the Early Learning Goals (what children are expected to learn by the age of six in all the areas of learning) and is adapted successfully to cater for the youngest children who attend part-time.
28. Personal and social education is given a high priority in the school and includes appropriate health and drugs education. Sex education is taught as part of relevant science topics and issues are discussed sensitively if they arise in activities such as circle times (lessons where the pupils sit round in a circle and, with the teacher, discuss issues such as feelings and emotions).
29. Pupils with additional language needs take a full part in all curriculum activities. They have opportunities to take a leading role in discussions and do so with pride. A good example was seen in a religious education lesson when a pupil was invited to talk about his experience of a Sikh wedding to compare the traditions to the teacher's description of a Christian wedding. No pupils are disapplied from any aspect of the curriculum. Parents receive clear information about the school's provision for pupils who are additional language learners. They support their children and the school's valuable efforts as best they can.
30. There is a very clearly defined programme to meet pupils' special needs, effectively detailed in the school's policy. However, due to changes in the management of special needs provision this policy has not yet been revised to reflect the new national code of practice. The school has rightly prioritised making the necessary alterations to practice and new requirements are being met efficiently. Class teachers devise individual education plans after discussions with support staff and the coordinator. All staff implement an agreed approach and meet the needs of the pupils effectively. Individual pupil's plans have precise targets that support progress well. Group education plans are not as effective because the targets set are too broad. Despite this minor weakness, pupils' needs are met in class lessons because work is planned at appropriate levels to ensure the pupils' inclusion in all subjects. Class teachers very thoughtfully include special needs pupils in discussions through the use of well planned questioning. Support assistants also ask open-ended questions skilfully when working with groups. This helps pupils to think carefully about what they are doing in their work. In consequence, the school rarely uses commercial worksheets because pupils are supported to complete similar tasks to their friends in an on-going verbally supportive manner. A good example of a modified curriculum was seen when a pupil's passion for football was used as a focus through which to develop his targets.

31. The provision for extra-curricular clubs including sport is weak. There are no clubs taking place, although the new team of staff are keen to introduce a programme to broaden the range of practical opportunities to enhance learning. There are satisfactory links with the local and wider community. The local Brownies and Guides use the school for their meetings, a theatre group has visited the school and the school participates in local fetes in the summer and at Christmas. The interim headteacher has plans to widen these experiences for the pupils but at the moment they remain underdeveloped. Links with the local middle school are very good and make the transition to the next stage of learning smooth and usually trouble free for the pupils. Teachers regularly exchange visits, with teachers from the middle school helping in lessons on a weekly basis. Pupils also visit the middle school prior to their transfer.
32. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This sustains the findings of the last inspection. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is particularly well supported by thought provoking school assemblies. The local vicar, who is also the chair of the governing body, and other community members make a valuable contribution to the provision leading a community assembly each week. Pupils are given time to listen to music, stories and reflect upon all that they have heard. The pupils participate in developing the stories by acting out roles as well as interacting with the adults who lead assemblies. They are thanked for their helpful contributions, which raise confidence in developing speaking skills. The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship. Spiritual development is also supported in 'circle times' when pupils are encouraged to talk about special events and actions. These sessions are sensitively led by teachers and support assistants who join in with the pupils and make these times reflective and special. The values and beliefs of others are celebrated and recognised as important ways of finding out about one another and learning to live harmoniously together. This also enhances the pupils' social and moral development.
33. The links that are made across the curriculum to enhance pupils' development are a strong feature of much of the school's work. Teachers act as a good team. They form good relationships with one another as well as their pupils and provide good role models to promote pupils' social development. Small group work is well balanced with whole class activities in many lessons. This gives pupils effective opportunities to relate to adults and one another in a wide range of situations. In consequence, they are encouraged to co-operate, take turns and to share resources, for example, in science. This also supports moral development. Pupils learn right from wrong as they are expected to share and care for one another as well as resources. The small number of pupils who can be easily distracted and disruptive are particularly well supported in this respect. The calm and patient approach of all the adults who work with them is a further example of positive approaches that are consistently applied to avoid and prevent conflict.
34. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Subjects such as music and art make valuable contributions to learning. For example, a variety of music is played in assembly time and the work of artists from different backgrounds and cultures stimulate and inspire pupils' art work. While pupils have had the opportunity to work with a visiting artist, visits to places of interest such as galleries and museums have been limited. In religious education lessons, the study of the Sikh and Hindu religions has helped pupils to understand and value the cultures of their friends. Pupils have shared their knowledge with their

classmates and positive steps have been taken to provide resources to extend further pupils' knowledge of other cultures. Good links are evident in English where books about people from other countries and historical backgrounds feature regularly in lessons.

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

35. Pupils are very well cared for. Standards are better than the good level reported at the time of the last inspection. Staff provide very good, sensitive personal support. This allows pupils to feel secure and develop positive attitudes to learning.
36. Procedures and awareness in relation to child protection are very good. The interim headteacher rightly recognises the importance of regular reminders to staff, to raise awareness of potential issues and to ensure careful and sensitive handling of any concerns. Pupils' personal development is monitored well. Staff know the pupils and their backgrounds very well and this allows them to give good individual support. Personal needs are dealt with very effectively. Staff are particularly aware of the needs of children who are new to the school and provide most sensitive and caring support. Very good procedures and a warm, inviting environment help pupils to settle very well in Reception classes. At the end of sessions particular care is taken to ensure all children remain in the school until collected by a responsible person. Health and safety procedures and monitoring are good. All appropriate risks are assessed thoroughly. First aid and accident procedures are good. The school is clean, tidy and secure.
37. The school has a good behaviour policy. The strong emphasis on developing pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem is having a positive impact on their attitudes to school. Procedures to deal with potential issues, such as bullying or racist behaviour, are very good and parents and pupils are confident that the school handles them fairly and effectively. Aggression is dealt with calmly and staff give strong support, helping pupils to resolve conflict and play together. Scope is limited by the lack of play equipment and quiet areas in the playground. Monitoring systems and the training of staff to deal with racial incidents are very good.
38. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. Records are maintained very consistently and allow staff to pick up potential problems quickly. The Education Welfare Officer is involved well and provides good support.
39. The assessment of pupils' learning is good and has improved since the last report. However, more could be done to monitor and measure the gains pupils make during their time, however brief, at the school. While reading, writing, spelling and mathematics are assessed regularly, targets to help pupils learn are usually set over periods of a term. While this arrangement is similar in most schools, the high levels of pupil movement means that too often targets are not met and both teachers and pupils do not celebrate the successes that have been achieved. Pupils need precise targets for their learning which can be met in short time scales. This would enable teachers, parents and pupils to recognise and celebrate progress, however small the steps might be, and promote success and self esteem. Teachers maintain records of achievements across subjects and the system, while comprehensive, needs to be adjusted to meet the specific challenges of the school's circumstances.

40. The school includes special needs pupils in all of its activities including the national assessment tests. The assessment of their progress is comprehensive and all staff involved in providing support make valuable contributions. There are regular, well documented reviews of individual education plans which have precise and achievable targets. The group plans are also reviewed regularly but do not meet needs as effectively. This is because the targets are too wide. Individual plans are more effective because they are simple in construction and systematically build upon strengths in learning. Outside agencies are appropriately involved. Parents are invited to support their children's needs in a learning partnership but some families find it difficult to provide the support requested. The school is continuing to develop strategies to improve this. As a result, a number of pupils have a greater awareness of their targets than their parents. The variable levels of support inhibit rates of progress made by this group of pupils. Too often the school is working in isolation to meet pupils' targets, even though they have been shared with home.

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

41. The school works hard to develop the partnership with parents. Parents are confident that the school is supportive of their needs and see the provision as a strength. Despite the school's considerable efforts, a significant proportion of parents do not maintain regular contact with the school. The partnership with parents is, therefore, satisfactory overall and provision is similar to that described in the last report.

42. Although attendance figures are lower than average, parents gave positive views of the school at the pre-inspection meeting, in the parental questionnaires, and in discussions with inspectors. They feel their children like school, make good progress and behave well. They praise the leadership of the headteacher, the standards of teaching and believe the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. Inspectors agree with most of the parents' positive views. A small number of parents wanted more activities to support the curriculum, and showed concerns about the level of homework provided. Inspectors agree that the school does not provide a satisfactory range of activities outside of lessons to support the curriculum but find that the level of homework is appropriate for the age range of the pupils.

43. The school provides parents with sound information about their children's progress. Annual reports give helpful detail on attainment and progress and good information on personal development. They do not consistently provide precise targets for improvement or areas for development to encourage parents to become more involved in supporting their children's learning. Curriculum information is shared well with parents in regular newsletters and evening meetings are used to explain how literacy and numeracy are taught. The school provides an "open door" to parents, who feel very welcome especially when helping to settle their children at the start of the day. Good home links are developed with parents of pupils entering the Foundation Stage. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed to enable them to be involved fully in decisions about their child's education. They are invited to attend all reviews about their children's needs but these invitations are not always taken up. Some of the difficulties arise as a result of the movement of parents in, out and away from the school's area. Frequently

moves take place at review times, which hampers progress and the schools' ability to provide tailored provision.

44. Parents support social events and are eager to watch performances. While reading books and diaries go home daily, very few parents make comments. Parents are invited to help in the classroom but few are able to give a regular commitment. The school works hard to remind parents of regular, prompt attendance. Most are supportive and co-operate well with the school but a significant proportion of children continue to be absent too often.

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

45. The interim headteacher is providing very good leadership and, in the short time she has been at the school, she has accurately identified priorities and created a strong ethos for teamwork and school improvement. The significant recent changes in staffing arising from promotions, the secondment of the headteacher to support local work and staff moving away from the school mean that most teachers have joined the school this academic year. The longest serving teacher has been in post for two years. Similarly, there have been many changes to the governing body.
46. This significant amount of movement of staff has caused some instability and some pupils have been taught by several teachers over the last year. There is now a feeling of optimism and staff are eagerly setting in motion a rigorous programme of improvement to refine aspects of existing good practice. Staff value their inclusion in devising the new school plan. Subject leaders have audited their subjects, identifying issues for development. The very good relationships between staff are supporting on-going discussion and collegiate decision making which means that the pace of change is rapid and the commitment to improve is excellent. For example, the consistent implementation of the behaviour policy at all levels supports pupils in challenging circumstances very well and ensures their inclusion in all aspects of school life. The caring ethos, created by the team, also provides a support structure which the pupils and their families and carers value. The quality of leadership is strong and, despite the significant changes, it has been sustained since the last report.
47. The parents find staff very approachable and know that every effort will be made to understand their needs. The school deals with exceptional levels of pupil movement well. In the last three years about four in ten pupils have moved into or out of the school each year. The impact of this consistent level of change means staff prioritise developing relationships and adjust their curriculum plans as class compositions and needs change weekly. Sometimes pupils do not know if they will see their friends again, particularly when moves take place overnight. This requires special management and a strong feature of the school ethos is the promotion of self-esteem. The learning environment is one where pupils feel safe, valued and supported to do their best. Trauma and social conflict is managed with calm, clear direction and where the school is unable to meet the demands of some situations, outside agencies are involved. New plans to convert the disused kitchen area for community use are just one example of how the staff hope to increase support for children and their families. While attendance figures are lower than those seen in most schools, the school secretary operates an effective first day contact system, known and

understood well by the community. Again, difficult circumstances are managed sensitively. Confidentiality is a feature of the support which helps to promote trust and confidence. Procedures operate in the best interests of the pupils. The school secretary provides very good support and the day-to-day management of her duties is very effective. She provides a warm welcome and frequently provides a listening ear for parents and their children.

48. The school plan is of good quality and details clearly the long-term overview of the school's work. This is under review and new ideas are providing a positive framework for the future. Staff have already identified the need to draw together the assessment, monitoring and evaluation procedures to make them more coherent and rigorous and to ensure that all staff and governors have opportunities to be included. This will support the measurement of the progress individual pupils make during their frequent short stays at the school. Governors offer good support. They hold regular meetings and are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and community needs. They do their best to consider the value that is added to learning within a transient community and regularly take advantage of local training opportunities. The chair of governors maintains close contact with the headteacher and the literacy and numeracy governors have been involved in monitoring provision. The principles of best value are applied appropriately.
49. The school has a very clear policy of support for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, which ensures their needs are met well and they are included fully in the school's work. Provision is good. The strong team approach ensures staff work closely together. Provision is managed by the interim headteacher. Working alongside staff she has begun to evaluate information and provision to identify priorities for improvement. Roles are clearly defined and the flexible approach to support pupils is comprehensive. External support is drawn upon as and when it is needed. The advice given is used well to enhance learning. Teachers and support staff have good training opportunities that enable them to develop their roles effectively. Provision for special educational needs has a high status in the school improvement plan, which confirms the school's inclusive approaches. The interim headteacher has a clear view of needs, and the identified action to improve the clarity of tracking the progress of these groups of pupils is appropriate. The recently appointed coordinator is well informed and enthusiastic. There is a positive determination to deliver high quality support and a thorough and accurate understanding of the steps to take to make improvements. The school's accommodation gives appropriate space for withdrawal of pupils although the majority of support is in class. Resources adequately meet needs.
50. The school benefits from good financial management and has a secure funding base on which to build. The relatively high surplus at the start of the current financial year has accrued through savings in the teaching budget arising from staff changes and a cautious approach to spending. The school has prudent plans to spend the surplus in line with appropriate educational priorities, including resources for teachers and playground facilities. Future financial planning takes full account of known commitments and pupil numbers and links well to the school development plan. Good use is made of specific grants. For example, the element of the school budget allocated to support the management of high mobility is being used to provide support for pupils during

their early days at the school. Budget monitoring and day-to-day administration are effective.

51. The development of systems and practice to improve effectiveness and reduce the impact of turbulence on teaching and learning is appropriate. The aim to provide a stable staffing structure and develop a collegiate approach to curriculum management in which all teachers monitor and moderate practice is likely to provide greater stability and coherence to the school's work. Performance management has been implemented appropriately and staff training needs have been identified along with a structured programme of support. The school is embracing the challenges of change with enthusiasm. Bearing in mind the challenging social circumstances it provides good value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

### **52. In order to build on the many strengths of the new teaching staff, their optimism, commitment and capacity to succeed, the school should:**

- Develop a broader range of practical opportunities for pupils to improve their communication skills, learning and personal independence through:
  - investigative work, drama and role play
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their communication skills and ICT in all subjects
  - developing the range of extra-curricular activities
  - ensuring that practical activities are precisely timed to sustain pupils' interest and enthusiasm and engage them in decision making.  
Paragraphs: 9, 11, 16, 21, 26, 31, 34, 66, 75, 80-1, 83, 85-6, 97, 102, 109
- Review the arrangements for teaching history and geography to:
  - teach the subjects more frequently and regularly
  - enhance pupils' experiences of visits to places of interest and draw on the experience of visitors from within and beyond the community  
Paragraphs: 9, 26, 106-07
- Monitor, assess and evaluate standards more rigorously by:
  - making early assessments of pupils' achievements when they join the school at non-standard times
  - systematically tracking the precise gains in learning for individuals and groups of pupils
  - setting precise time-related learning targets to enable pupils and adults to celebrate success and raise personal expectations
  - systematically and frequently evaluating the effectiveness of provision.  
Paragraphs: 2, 22-3, 39-40, 48, 67, 69, 81, 91, 102.

### **The governors should consider the following more minor issue for inclusion in the action plan:**

- Replace group education plans with individual education plans to set precise targets for learning for all pupils with special educational needs  
Paragraph 30
- Use ICT more fully to support pupils with SEN  
Paragraph 24
- \*Improve the range and quality of books in the library  
Paragraph 69

**\* Denotes that the school has already recognised the issue and has included reference to it in its school development plan**

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	48
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	11	29	6	0	0	0
Percentage	4	23	60	13	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR-Y3
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		136
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		23

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR-Y3
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		25

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	20

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	35
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

%
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#### Unauthorised absence

%
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School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.6

School data	0.8
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	20	21	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	17
	Girls	16	17	18
	Total	29	31	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (78)	76 (89)	85 (92)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	17	17
	Girls	17	18	17
	Total	31	35	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (86)	85 (92)	83 (86)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	5
Black – other	3
Indian	6
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	
White	89
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y3**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	28

#### **Education support staff: YR-Y3**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	98.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

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

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	315,989
Total expenditure	312,747
Expenditure per pupil	2,234
Balance brought forward from previous year	24,938
Balance carried forward to next year	28,180

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	136
Number of questionnaires returned	48

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	33	2	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	33	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	46	2	2	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	50	17	6	6
The teaching is good.	50	46	2	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	48	6	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	33	2	2	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	42	2	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	40	46	8	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	46	42	2	2	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	46	6	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	6	25	21	10	38

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

53. The good provision noted at the time of the last inspection has been developed well and is now very good. Children receive a very good start to their education in the Reception class and are prepared well for work on the National Curriculum.
54. Children begin school part-time in the term following their fourth birthday and commence full-time schooling in the term following their fifth birthday. On entry to the school, few pupils have had any formal pre-school experience and most pupils have very low attainment in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Their physical and creative development is a little better, being about average. This is reflected in the assessments undertaken a few weeks after entry. The three-point entry arrangement means that the summer born children have less experience in the Foundation Stage. This is significant disadvantage given the very low attainment on entry factor. The school is planning to move to a one-point entry system in the next academic year in line with local changes to procedures.
55. Teaching is very good but cannot compensate fully for the very low starting point of many children on entry. By the end of their time in the reception class, about half the children are unlikely to attain the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical understanding and knowledge and understanding of the world. Most children are likely to achieve these goals in their personal, social and emotional, creative and physical development. In all aspects of their development, children of all abilities achieve very well and make rapid progress in lessons.
56. The mostly sound teaching identified in the last inspection has improved significantly and is now never less than good and mostly very good in all the areas of learning. Activities are now successfully matched to children's needs with sessions of appropriate length to sustain interest and concentration. Relationships between the children, teacher and teaching assistants are excellent and inspire confidence in the children. The teachers and teaching assistants work very successfully together and are particularly good at maximising learning opportunities through consistent and appropriate interventions in all activities. Effective and sensitive questioning and support develops the children's learning well. There were weaknesses in the assessment systems for tracking children's progress but these have been adapted this year and are now better focused on the national stepping stones to learning. Assessment is now more effective in identifying precisely what progress has been made and what the children need to do next. Planning is good and lessons are well structured so that activities move at a good pace and keep children's interest and enjoyment high. Planning is adapted successfully to meet the needs of both four and five-year-olds.
57. Children benefit from a good home/school link project whereby an adult worker establishes and maintains communication with children's parents. This helps parents to understand how to assist their children prior to starting school and

illustrates the importance of their role as partners in their children's development.

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

58. Children love school and are interested and motivated to learn. All adults who work in the reception class provide good role models. They have a consistent and sensitive approach that develops confidence and self-esteem well. Children learn quickly what is right and what is wrong. They learn to participate as part of the class or a group and begin to realise the importance of sharing and taking turns. These developing skills were exemplified when children worked on the computer, in the sand and water and when playing with tricycles outdoors. The older children are developing independence and work alone for increasing periods of time. Children are often seen working happily and purposefully at a computer or making a model. Teachers are expert at taking every opportunity to develop children's learning in this area. During one lesson, for example, a broken bird's egg was brought into the classroom unexpectedly. The teacher immediately stopped the children and drew them around the see the egg. Through sensitive questioning she turned the moment into a period of wonder for the children whilst stressing the importance of care and concern for all living creatures. This was very effective in developing children's spiritual awareness. By the age of six, most children are motivated to learn and confident to try new activities. Whilst their concentration span is improving well, it remains short and a significant minority are easily distracted.

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

59. There are many opportunities for children to develop speaking and listening skills. Children are encouraged to share their ideas and experiences at the start of the day and to talk about what they have learnt. Teachers provide a very good range of opportunities to listen, share and enjoy stories, rhymes and music. These are usually linked effectively to a central theme. During the inspection, for example, much of the children's work was linked to the story of the Hungry Caterpillar. Most children find difficulty organising, sequencing and clarifying their thinking and consequently the staff focus on these aspects. Every opportunity is taken to talk and listen to the children and to develop their vocabulary. Most have little experience of books or early reading and writing experiences. Teachers help to compensate for this by providing a good range of attractive books and adapting the National Literacy Strategy to develop learning. In a lesson for the five-year-olds, for example, the teacher introduced and reinforced early phonic skills very effectively. Children's interest was captured when items beginning with the letter 'h' were produced from a basket. The sound of the letter was emphasised as each object was produced and then the Big Book session was used to reinforce this. The teacher, for example, asked; 'Can you see anything beginning with h?'

60. Early writing skills are developed well with opportunities provided for the children to see adults writing, and for children to write for themselves. The children are encouraged to form letters carefully and to write over the teachers' writing. The older children are able to write their own names independently and the above average children put simple words together in a sentence. By the end of their time in the Foundation Stage, about a half of the children speak clearly and audibly, read most words by sight in a simple first reading book and know most letter sounds. They write their own names and simple sentences

clearly. Other pupils are extending their vocabulary well but have difficulty expressing themselves clearly. They are beginning to recognise letters and simple words in labels and books. Their writing has improved well but remains below average for their age.

### **Mathematical development**

61. Children are gaining good experiences of mathematics through a variety of well-planned activities and show interest and enjoyment in all that they do. By the time they enter Year 1, about a half of the children are able to recognise, count and order numbers to ten and add numbers to nine successfully. Other children find difficulty when working with numbers beyond five. Most children show sound understanding of comparison when, for example, drawing one large, one medium and one small teddy bear. Most children recognise basic two-dimensional shapes and about a half accurately follow a simple sequence of, for example, square-triangle-square. Above average children follow a sequence involving a colour as well as shape sequence. Most children are using everyday words such as above, below, in front of and behind to describe position. Early number activities are effective in developing understanding for the younger four-year-olds. In a mathematics activity for the children who attend part-time, for example, role-play was used very well to develop early understanding of subtraction. The children acted and sang the rhyme 'five little seeds sitting in a row, a bird flew down and took one away.' As well as being enjoyable for the children, the activity developed learning very effectively.

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

62. Most children have had few opportunities to experience the world outside their immediate environment. As a consequence, much of the teaching is geared effectively to providing opportunities for pupils to explore, observe and talk about living things, objects and every day events. By the time they enter Year 1, most children are developing sound understanding of change over time in activities such as weather recording and seasonal variations. They develop awareness of change in living things when looking at their topic on caterpillars. Most children know that caterpillars turn into butterflies and moths, and above average pupils use the word cocoon when describing the various stages in the development of caterpillars. All children have regular experiences using computers and use the mouse and simple keyboard skills successfully to draw images and play number and word games. They have had access to programmable toys to support their learning. Despite good opportunities to support their learning in this area, a significant minority of the children have difficulty selecting their own resources and adapting their work where necessary. They find it difficult to ask questions about why things happen and talk about their environment in terms of what they like and dislike.

### **Creative and physical development**

63. By the end of the reception year, most children move with confidence and safety both in the main school hall and outside in the playground. Teachers provide a good selection of toys such as tricycles, scooters and wheelbarrows. These develop children's physical control and co-ordination well. Adults and teachers develop these skills effectively by suggesting simple challenges, for example by asking children to see if they can steer the tricycle round a series of obstacles. In activities in the school hall, they move well to music. In a lesson

using the music and rhyme the Wiggly, Wobbly Scarecrow, for example, children showed a good range of movement. All children are encouraged to dress and undress themselves for activities in the hall and put on their own painting aprons and coats at home time. In activities such as making caterpillars from malleable materials they use paper, card, glue and paint to express their ideas, showing improving hand-eye co-ordination and bold use of paint. They are taught the correct way to hold paintbrushes and pencils. Teachers provide many opportunities for children to explore and respond to their environment. They explore how sounds can be made, for example, and sing simple songs from memory. In a music activity with the older pupils, for example, children recalled the music from the *Carnival of the Animals* and commented that it had a fast pace. A good variety of activities using sand, water and role-play are set up where children are able to express and communicate their thoughts, ideas and feelings.

64. Some limitations are placed on these aspects of the children's development since there is no covered and secure outdoor play area. Children cannot move freely into and out of the classroom and there is no fixed climbing equipment for them to explore and develop learning in an outdoor setting. There are plans to remedy these shortcomings.

## ENGLISH

65. Standards in reading and writing in last year's national tests for Years 2 pupils were below average but about the same as schools in similar circumstances. The very high mobility and low level of attainment on entry make direct comparisons between year groups difficult. The school is beginning to analyse results in detail to reflect the differences in performance between pupils who stay at the school and those who join during Years 1 and 2. Against this background of difficulties the school has maintained national trends, annual improvements are evident and the school's standards have risen since the last inspection.
66. Inspection evidence indicates that the new teaching team has a very clear view of what needs to be done to begin to raise standards higher. The good quality of teaching linked to the well-implemented literacy strategy is supporting pupils well. However, pupils need more opportunities to express themselves through drama and role-play to improve speaking and writing skills. The school has already recognised this and included this initiative in the school improvement plan. Pupils progress is accelerated by good teaching and regular attendance. There is no significant difference in the standards achieved by boys and girls.
67. The school has begun to analyse the test results. Early assessments in the Foundation Stage are used to identify and meet children's needs. However, there is not enough rigour in the tracking systems that measure rates of progress over short periods of time, to raise pupils' expectations and the standards they achieve more systematically. Targets are set but they are not yet precise enough. While all work is marked, comments do not consistently identify what pupils need to do to improve further. The school recognises the need to continue its on-going review of the accuracy of its targets in its improvement plan. The school's future capacity to succeed in meeting the pupils' needs more effectively is very good.

68. Speaking skills are below average. Although the range of language used is limited, listening skills are effectively developed to a satisfactory level through well-constructed lessons. Teachers maximise opportunities for pupils to listen with care and attention. The school is following the structure of the National Literacy Strategy but quickening the pace of opening discussion times so that pupils concentrate to a higher level. Listening skills are consequently being sustained. Speech is constrained by the low level of communication skills pupils have when they start school. While very good opportunities to develop vocabulary are provided in the Foundation Stage the pupils start the Year 1 curriculum at levels below those of most pupils. It is through the patience and skill of their teachers that they begin to contribute successfully to whole class discussions. Examples of the different strategies used by teachers are seen in all classes. In Year 1 a poem was used as a model to shape pupils' writing. A colourful resource book was used by the class teacher and questions were asked of pupils of all abilities to ensure their inclusion. Frequently pupils use one-word responses but the teacher patiently and skilfully shapes these into sentences which pupils repeat. In Year 3 the class teacher provided a good role model when portraying the different characters in the story of *The three little pigs*. The pupils were engrossed in this story as a result. They eagerly took on roles themselves as the teacher skilfully involved the class as narrators choosing the most confident pupils to become individual story characters. The use of puppets captures the imagination of younger pupils and ensures they enjoy the stories. Pupils are encouraged to read the words from the book the teacher shares with them. They begin to speak with greater confidence using their own words to talk about the characters that they have been introduced to. The pupils clearly understand the difference between a story and play script.
69. Teachers and support staff hear pupils read regularly in school. The pupils all have home and school reading diaries but frequently pupils rely on their older brothers and sisters to help them. The most able pupils read with fluency and expression by the time they are in Year 2. In Year 3 they talk confidently about characters and predict what will happen. These most able readers have favourite books and authors such as J.K. Rowling and Tolkien. They use their knowledge of letter sounds to help them to read unfamiliar words. This skill is still not being used effectively enough by the middle attaining readers who continue to rely on adult support rather than applying their skills independently. The pupils are well supported by teachers and support staff on a day-to-day basis but the tracking systems do not demonstrate clearly the amount of progress the pupils make in specific periods of time. There is an obvious enjoyment of reading, encouraged by teachers and support staff who read stories expressively. However, more books of good quality are needed in the school library to help teachers to support continue to improve reading standards.
70. Teachers provide good support to pupils to improve the quality of their writing. There are opportunities for pupils to write for a variety of reasons. Poetry, play scripts and stories are just some of the styles introduced to develop understanding of the various purposes of writing. By Year 3 skills improve and stories include the use of speech marks as pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of punctuation, story settings and use of descriptive language. Recent developments show good improvement and consistency between classes, which is supporting raising standards. A good feature of teaching is the use of good quality examples of stories and poetry to inspire pupils.

71. Standards in handwriting are taught systematically and regularly throughout the school. There is a good scheme of work that builds steadily upon skills and ensures good presentation. The pupils give care and thought to how they form letters into words. They do not always apply these skills independently in lessons other than their handwriting lessons. Teachers' supportive marking of handwriting helps pupils to improve and they look eagerly for the positive and helpful remarks. The regular practice and testing of words supports the development of spelling accuracy. Teachers link the teaching of sounds to word lists on a weekly basis. Pupils are expected to use of dictionaries to help them to spell words accurately and automatically look for patterns in their spellings in consequence.
72. Teaching is good and there are examples of very good teaching in both the infant and junior classes when pupils are encouraged to work imaginatively. This is an improvement since the last inspection brought about by the enthusiasm and commitment of the new teaching team and the effective implementation of the literacy hour. Teachers plan carefully to meet the needs of all pupils. They provide imaginative tasks that receive increasingly imaginative responses from the pupils. The teachers match the levels of work thoughtfully to meet needs appropriately. The marking of pupils written work does not consistently help pupils to know how to improve their work.
73. Support staff are well deployed and provide effective high quality support to pupils. In opening discussions they often monitor pupils' responses and this information is then used to inform planning and discuss the best way to give further support. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are also supported well. Support staff work sympathetically with pupils to ensure their understanding of the content and tasks of lessons. Staff ask pertinent questions and encourage pupils to use specific language so they become more confident in their responses. Support staff are fully aware of pupils' targets and the level of contributions they are expected to make to their learning.
74. The focus given to developing English skills in the literacy hour sessions is beginning to be transferred to other subjects. This is beginning to have some beneficial effects in lessons in subjects such as religious education and science when pupils attempt to write more extensively. There is, however, too little use of ICT to support pupils to plan and produce their writing.
75. The subject is well led by a recently appointed co-ordinator. She has made a good start on analysing pupils' performance in English in national tests and day-to-day schoolwork. A useful review of the policy has also been made. There is a clear and appropriate action plan to improve standards in English. Literacy is likely to continue to feature in the school plan as the school continually strives to meet the needs of the changing profile of pupils. Apart from the library provision, there are good resources available to support this.

## MATHEMATICS

76. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 2, standards were below the national average, although the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level 3 was similar to the national average. However, standards were better than those in similar schools and the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level was well above average. Given pupils' very low attainment on entry to the school and the high mobility factor, this represents good achievement and indicates good teaching. This overall picture is reflected in the inspection findings. Standards are below the national average by the end of Year 2 and Year 3, but pupils of all abilities achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and teaching is good. Pupils who have special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, made good progress in the lessons seen and this was reflected in the scrutiny of their work over the past year. The staffing instability in Years 1 and 2 has resulted in a dip in pupils' progress over the year but this has been accelerated with the appointment of permanent staff.
77. Standards were described as average and progress satisfactory at the time of the last inspection. The overall trend in performance shows good improvement and results have increased in line with the national upward trend. The quality of teaching and pupils' progress is now good rather than satisfactory.
78. By the end of Years 2 and 3, pupils' knowledge and understanding of basic number operations is a stronger element in their work and standards are closer to the national average. Pupils in Year 1 order numbers to 100 and put a missing number into a simple sequence. Above average pupils calculate missing numbers on a 100 square placing the correct numbers above, below, in front of and behind any given number. Pupils develop sound understanding of place value (the position of a number affects its value) and know, for example, that 34 is made up of 3 tens and 4 units. Pupils in Year 3 develop this knowledge well and add correctly 100 to 941. By the end of Year 3, most pupils work with reasonable accuracy on addition, subtraction, multiplication and division sums. They use their knowledge of place value to calculate simple problems involving money. The work of a significant minority of the average and below average pupils is often affected adversely by their slow mental recall of number facts. They need to use their fingers to answer basic calculation questions such as 3 plus 4 and 9 minus 4.
79. Despite some good teaching, most average and below average pupils have difficulty using and applying their skills in mathematics. Below average literacy skills have a detrimental effect on their ability to communicate their ideas in the subject verbally and in written forms. Pupils find it hard to overcome difficulties and reason through a problem to decide which operation or strategy is needed to solve it. They have difficulty explaining why an answer is correct. Above average pupils are more adept in these aspects of their work and achieve sound standards. They explain and discuss what they are doing using correct mathematical terms. In Years 2 and 3, they use words such as rotation, symmetry, digit and pattern correctly.
80. By the end of Year 2, work on shape, space and measures, indicates sound understanding of some of the properties of basic two-dimensional shapes; for example, pupils record the number of sides and corners. Pupils use everyday non-standard and standard units to measure length and mass. Scrutiny of work and discussion with pupils shows that those who are above average

measure with reasonable accuracy, whilst most average and below average pupils often make mistakes and find estimation difficult. Most Year 3 pupils extend their understanding of shape satisfactorily and draw lines of symmetry on a range of regular shapes. In all year groups pupils experience difficulty communicating their findings in simple tables, charts and graphs, although in the analysis of pupils' work over the year, this aspect is not emphasised enough. There is little evidence of pupils using computers to consolidate and extend their understanding in mathematics.

81. Teaching and learning in the lessons seen are good and build successfully on the strong foundations built in the reception class. The three-part structure of the numeracy hour is well established and has had a good impact on the consistency in teaching and pupils' achievements. On some occasions, when teaching is satisfactory, the opening whole class session, designed to sharpen pupils' quick recall of number facts, is not conducted at a quick enough pace to fully capture the pupils' attention. This means that the session is not as effective as it might be in developing pupils' mental agility. Whole class discussions to introduce the main group activities are characterised by good questioning, emphasis on the correct vocabulary and effective use of resources such as whiteboards and number charts. In a lesson for pupils in Year 1, for example, the teacher used a 100 number square effectively to develop pupils' knowledge of number patterns. Group sessions during the numeracy hour are well organised and all adult help is utilised effectively to help pupils who have special educational needs to make good progress. Good focused teacher support for particular groups of pupils has a good impact on their learning. Analysis of pupils' work over the past year indicates that not enough use is made of computers to develop pupils' learning in the subject. Assessment systems and information are not used well enough to set specific learning targets for individuals and groups in lessons. There is scope to improve further the rate of progress by giving specific time related targets for each pupil to achieve.

82. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory and developing well under the leadership of the new co-ordinator who has been in post since January. A good action plan has been drawn up to include monitoring of teaching and learning through observation of teaching across classes and work scrutiny. There has been good analysis of pupils' performance in national tests in order to develop the mathematics curriculum.

## **SCIENCE**

83. In the 2001 teacher assessments at the end of Year 2, the proportion of pupils who attained the expected levels was below average but about the same as similar schools. The proportion attaining the higher levels was below similar schools. Pupils did particularly well in one aspect of the subject – 'life and living processes' where their attainment overall was above average and they were able to draw on their first hand experiences. There is room to develop experimental and investigative work further to support the practical application of knowledge to problem solving situations. While standards appear to be lower than those described in the previous report pupils have very low levels of knowledge and understanding when they start school. Overall those who stay at the school make the best progress because their learning is not interrupted. This is evident in the school's analysis of test results. Standards at the end of

Y3 remain below average but pupils make good progress, especially in their use of scientific language.

84. The frequent teaching of the subject, which is timetabled regularly, ensures pupils make steady progress in developing their scientific skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are also supported well. Teachers and support staff work ensure they are fully included in lessons and understand their tasks. Teaching is good and one excellent lesson was observed in Year 2. Careful planning meant that clear links were made to previous work and pupils were supported to link their work in literacy to science, recording by labelling diagrams of plants. This worked very well and by the end of the lesson all the pupils were using words such as petals, root and flower head. The teacher drew very good attention to the conditions necessary for plant growth, involved pupils with special educational; needs in describing the outcomes of their investigations and encouraged pupils to give reasons for outcomes.
85. Across classes the analysis of work shows appropriate curriculum coverage. However, the pupils have difficulty sustaining their knowledge over time and applying the skills and processes they have learned to new situations. This is why their attainment appears to be below that of many pupils of similar ages in other schools. Investigative work happens frequently but it is usually teacher directed and there are not enough opportunities for pupils to select resources and plan experiments independently. In Year 3 the teacher planned two experiments to show how conditions affect plant growth and how water, dyed with food colouring, passes through the stem and veins to leaves. Resources were prepared well but pupils were not enabled to organise and construct the experiment independently. While there is challenging behaviour in this year group, pupils understand how to set up a fair test and need more opportunities to apply and use this knowledge independently in small groups. Pupils describe in simple terms their investigations into materials which are man made and natural, how objects can be moved by pushing and pulling and the importance of healthy eating. They understand that drugs should only be taken when prescribed by a doctor and there are good links to their personal and health education.
86. Too often all pupils conduct the same investigations and this can be restricting for more able pupils. The older pupils need more opportunities to contribute their own ideas for experiments rather than always carrying out the teacher's instructions.
87. Throughout the school, the learning objectives are shared with the pupils at the beginning of the lesson and this helps them to have a clearer understanding of the work they are covering. At the end of the lesson pupils are given opportunities to evaluate whether they have achieved the lesson objectives well enough. This helps pupils and teachers to know what they need to learn next.
88. Teachers use questions effectively to check what pupils already know and to make sure they have understood their tasks. This is particularly effective when teachers challenge pupils to explain their thinking and use appropriate vocabulary. For example, more probing questions enabled a group of Year 3 pupils to use terms such as 'chlorophyll' when describing the effect of sunlight on plant growth. Pupils understand how circuits are constructed but they prefer to demonstrate knowledge practically. Written and oral work are impeded by limited language that inhibits attainment at a higher level.

89. Resources are well prepared and are of a good range and quantity. These are enhanced by the effective use of the school's grounds. The support assistants are well deployed and enhance learning through using the same questioning techniques as teachers. The needs of pupils with special needs and those with English as an additional language are met well.
90. Relationships are very good throughout the school and pupils are not afraid to make mistakes because teachers emphasise how they can learn from them. For example, in a Year 1 lesson pupils were investigating how blocks of ice melt. There was huge excitement as some pupils experienced this for the very first time. One tried to dry the ice with a towel and the teacher drew attention to his idea, asking him what had happened, how his hands felt and whether the ice was now dry. This encouraged careful thought and description based on first hand evidence. This example indicates the importance of promoting investigative learning to broaden pupils' experiences.
91. Throughout the school pupils' work is neatly presented and regularly marked. However, there are few precise targets set to help teachers keep track of individual pupils' progress through their recorded work. Overall, teachers keep comprehensive class records but the methods of assessing and recording individual pupils' progress could be improved and is in the process of being reviewed to ensure a more thorough approach. This will help teachers to build up a more accurate picture of individual progress as pupils move through the school, particularly in relation to investigating and experimenting skills.
92. In the lessons observed pupils' attitudes were very good. For example, pupils are keen to carry out investigations and are eager to respond to questions. They listen well, for short periods of time and follow instructions carefully. They become excited and absorbed in what they are doing as they discover something new for the first time. On occasions, when lessons are too long, the noise level rises, pupils lose concentration and are less well motivated.
93. The co-ordinator has had responsibility for science since September. She is keen to develop the subject further and has a good understanding of what needs to be done, particularly in monitoring teacher assessment and tracking the progress of each pupil. At present she keeps a careful check of teachers' planning and time has been set aside to enable her to observe teaching.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

94. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 3 are above the expected level. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress. This sustains the standards and level of progress found at the time of the last inspection.
95. A major strength in the artwork throughout the school is the way that it supports learning in many subjects. This is achieved by developing the specific skills and techniques of creating art work in the context of lessons on other subjects. Work is skilfully displayed around the school and confirms the effectiveness of these links. The good resourcing of the subject ensures a variety of media is available for pupils to use to express themselves creatively. This gives pupils effective opportunities to express themselves in visual form where they have difficulty in expressing themselves in words. Work in Years 1 and 2 builds well upon the good experiences in the Foundation Stage class. Examples of this are

illustrations of rhyming words such as "jeep" and "sheep" when paint and materials are used as joint media. The sophisticated technique of joining different materials together is a strong on-going feature of all of the art and design work throughout the school. It continues to be used when the work of famous artists is being studied. An example of this is the high quality pencil observational drawings that are a starting point for illustrating the style of L. S. Lowry. The observational drawings are next translated into the pupil's own version of an urban environment but in the artists' style, using crayons and colour washes. By Year 3 the pupils make acutely sensitive observations of the world around them. They work individually or in small groups as they observe plants and flowers. They produce work to accurate scale that shows line and depth are clearly understood. Light and shade are included in the detail as drawings are improved. This work formed a good starting point to produce a three dimensional picture of a sunflower using a combination of paint and seeds.

96. Teachers plan art and design experiences to build upon one another so that the pupils gradually accrue a wealth of knowledge and understanding about making art. Teachers imaginatively create opportunities for pupils to see how art can be used to express their ideas. Resources are provided to encourage exploration of media and pupils show high levels of concentration because they enjoy the chance to be creative. They behave well and usually share resources willingly.
97. There is a secure understanding amongst staff of the importance of providing pupils with appropriate opportunities to express themselves through art. The range of media used does not yet include sufficient use of the computers as artistic tools. There is, however, a willingness to try many avenues of making art in order to support pupils' expressive development. The subject is well led and managed and skills and techniques are developed through the policy that is linked clearly to the national guidelines.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

98. By the end of Years 2 and 3 the work in design and technology is similar to that expected for pupils' age. All pupils, including those who have special educational needs and English as an additional language, achieve standards similar to those reported previously. There has been improvement in teachers' planning. A new scheme of work, based on national guidelines, has been introduced and this has given a much more consistent base from which teachers plan their work. Whilst this is relatively new, it has begun to improve the development of pupils' skills in the subject from topic to topic.
99. Little direct teaching was seen during the inspection, although the analysis of teachers' planning and pupils' past and present work indicates that it is at least satisfactory across the school. There are some indications of good teaching where examples of pupils' work show the teacher has built successfully on previous learning. The teacher in the mixed Year 1 and 2 class, for example, built effectively on the basic assembly skills developed in Year 1 when pupils made puppets and developed wooden frameworks for models of wheeled vehicles. This activity also gave pupils the opportunity to work with bench saws and vices. They drew and labelled their designs beforehand. Pupils in Year 1 also designed and made their own story picture boards with simple sliding images. The teacher made this more meaningful for the pupils by linking it effectively to the work they were doing in literacy. Pupils have experiences

which develop their understanding of key elements in food technology, for example, when designing pizza toppings. However, these opportunities are infrequent and not well developed. There are plans to purchase new resources to better support the development of food technology

100. In the one activity observed during the inspection, the teaching was satisfactory. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were designing and making a coat in connection with the story of Joseph and his coat of many colours. By linking this to work in religious education, most pupils saw a reason for the work and were enthusiastic and eager to start. The teacher introduced the activity and explained clearly what the pupils were expected to learn. Some good questioning by the teacher developed the idea of evaluating a design in relation to its purpose; for example, when asking; 'Why is it important not to sew all the way round the two pieces of material?' Pupils were able to draw around a template they had made and cut out and sew two pieces of material together with reasonable control and accuracy. A small minority of pupils found difficulty in sharing equipment and did not achieve as much as most others. Pupils were, however, keen to talk about their work and were proud of their efforts.

101. Scrutiny of pupils' work in Year 3 indicates sound development of pupils' skills in planning and communicating ideas, working with tools and equipment and evaluating products. Pupils in Year 3, for example, have designed and made attractive and soundly constructed photograph frames to display their clay ceramic tiles of fish. They have made satisfactory paper and card model World War Two aircraft linked to their work in history. Pupils have worked on simple handlooms to develop weaving skills with wool. Two pupils talked enthusiastically about a model buggy that had been made from a construction kit and included an electric motor.

102. Given the recent staff changes and reallocation of posts of responsibility, co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has good knowledge of how the subject should be developed. There is a good policy and scheme of work, although there are no established whole school systems to record pupils' progress as they move through the school. This makes it more difficult for the teachers to plan work that builds on pupils' strengths and consolidates any weaknesses. Computers are not used enough to extend and consolidate pupils' skills and knowledge in the subject.

## **HISTORY and GEOGRAPHY**

103. Very little teaching of history and geography was observed during the inspection and judgements on teaching and standards have been made based on the analysis of planning, pupils' work, displays and discussions with staff and pupils.

104. Attainment in both Year 2 and Year 3 is below national expectations although the progress made is satisfactory given the very limited experiences pupils have of life beyond Milton Keynes. Planning for both subjects is based on a two-year rolling programme of work, which covers all the required elements of study. Good links are also made to other subjects such as art and design and religious education.

105. In the two lessons observed, one in history and the other in geography the quality of teaching was very good in one lesson and sound in the other. In the very good history lesson in Year 1, the pupils explored artefacts from the Victorian period, comparing houses and homes of the past with their own. Very good organisation and good quality resources meant that pupils concentrated and were highly motivated. The opportunity to hold objects such as a flat iron and metal washing bucket enabled them to discover for themselves similarities and differences between modern appliances and those used in Victorian times. Very good questioning which valued the responses of all pupils ensured that everyone had the chance to share their thoughts and ideas. The good support from the learning support assistant enabled lower attaining pupils to express themselves and to record their learning in pictures. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are supported well and are fully included in all aspects of the lessons. By the end of the lesson, all pupils had gained confidence to express their ideas. Year 3 pupils extended their knowledge of the local area in geography. The teacher's clear introduction and well organised resources helped to support pupils to recognise features in and beyond their environment. Displays show pupils develop good map reading skills and good links are made to mathematics as they read simple grid references. Although pupils are introduced to different locations such as seaside places, some find these ideas difficult to understand because they have not seen the sea.
106. Tasks are well planned, set in meaningful contexts and use a range of helpful resources. They are, at times, too long in length to sustain pupils' full interest and motivation. Teachers interact frequently to review the objectives of learning and encourage longer periods of concentration. They work hard to maintain appropriate noise levels by sampling successful investigations and praising pupils' efforts. Pupils find the subject specific language difficult to use and do not have a broad range of personal experiences of visits to museums or countries abroad to draw upon. Staff make good use of the cultures and experiences of the pupils. The lack of a television inhibits the use of videos and film extracts to bring these subjects to life, however pupils use books effectively and although they find it hard to recall the names of famous people they have studied they remember some important facts about events such as 'The fire of London' and refer to pictures they have created.
107. Pupils study either history or geography at any one time and the teachers use the national schemes of work to support the curriculum. However the two-year rolling programme is not as effective as it could be. Pupils find it hard to sustain their skills and knowledge during the periods of time when a subject is not taught. Because many pupils join and leave the school so regularly there are often gaps in their learning that require teachers to review the delivery of the schemes of work to meet their needs. This weakness has already been recognised and the new subject leaders have undertaken a review of the provision. Teachers have secure subject knowledge but there are too few opportunities for learning to be enhanced through educational visits, visitors to school and the use of videos and role-play. More adjustment is needed to reflect the wide range of abilities and limited experiences of the pupils.
108. Throughout both subjects, pupils' social and cultural development is supported well. Teachers encourage pupils to express their feelings and

emotions and to consider the impact of their actions on the environment and on each other.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

109. By the end of Years 2 and 3, standards are similar to the national expectation. All pupils, including those who have special educational needs and English as an additional language, achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. At the time of the last inspection standards were judged to be below average and pupils' progress was unsatisfactory. Improvement has been brought about by an increase in the number of computers available, planning and delivery of a wider range of experiences across all aspects of the subject and greater staff confidence and expertise. There are some good examples of computers supporting work in other subjects; for example, in art and design pupils in Years 1 and 2 use a painting program to develop drawing skills and mouse control and in science they access a CD-ROM encyclopaedia to find information about an animal of their choice. Overall, however, there remains room for improvement in this aspect of the subject, highlighted as an area to be developed in the last report. This is an important aspect for future development since computers provide a good medium for pupils, particularly the lower attaining pupils and those who have special educational needs, to express and present their thoughts and ideas in forms that are not dependent on paper and pencil methods.
110. Pupils are introduced to computers in the Foundation Stage and develop good confidence and basic keyboard and mouse skills. By the end of Year 2, pupils of all abilities build well on these basic skills well and are aware that computers can help them present pictures and text in various ways. Above average pupils explain how their work can be saved by giving it a file name and know how to retrieve a file. Most average and above average pupils load simple programs successfully and use the space bar, enter, caps lock and backspace keys to type and edit text. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of how the subject is used outside school and know, for example, that washing machines and microwave ovens need to be given instructions in order to work. They have had opportunities to use tape recorders and earphones. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 have had recent experience sending and reading e-mail to and from friends in the school. They talked confidently and with sound knowledge about how this had been achieved. By the end of Year 3, pupils' skills have been built on well and they are able to investigate CD-ROM encyclopaedia and the Internet to research topics and print out pictures and information.
111. Most teachers are new to the school and have brought with them good knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject. On the basis of two observations of direct teaching of groups of pupils in Year 2 and Year 3, an analysis of pupils' work and discussion with a group of Year 2 pupils, the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory with examples of good teaching. There had been technical problems with the network system during the inspection week and this placed some limitations on the work pupils were doing. In both activities observed during the inspection there was good support for pupils as they worked and this enabled them to make effective progress. Whilst clear instructions were given in both sessions to the whole group, the introduction times were a little too long. Pupils were anxious to use the computers and start their tasks and began to fidget and lose concentration. When working in pairs, they co-operated well, for

example, one pupil read out instructions whilst the other operated the computer, and then they reversed roles. The teacher's secure subject knowledge and good questioning enabled pupils to learn vocabulary such as menu, search, scroll and text relevant to the program.

112. In a good activity for pupils in Year 1, the teacher developed pupils' awareness and understanding of control technology. Through operating pixies (programmable toys) to move in certain ways, pupils were beginning to recognise that some devices need instructions to make them work. Good questioning developed learning well in the activity; for example, the teacher asked the pupils searching questions; 'Tell me how we can make the pixie go left?' and; 'If you press the forward button three times, what will happen?' Simple problems were set for pupils to solve and this developed their understanding well through trial and error. By the end of the activity, pupils were able to make the pixie move forwards and backwards and turn at right angles. The practical nature of the tasks ensured that levels of interest and enjoyment remained high and there was delight when the pixie reacted in the way the pupils had anticipated.

113. The new co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has good subject knowledge. She has a clear vision for the future development of the subject. ICT is a priority action issue in the school development plan with appropriate intentions to extend the use of computers across subjects, use computers more to develop the learning of pupils who have special educational needs and extend training for the staff. There is a sound assessment system based on the good scheme of work and all teachers use this to track pupils' progress. This has been operational for about a year and is beginning to have a marked impact on the development of pupils' skills from year to year. There are good resources for the subject with good access to two shared computer suites.

## MUSIC

114. The teaching of music is of good quality. In the three lessons observed, two were good and the other was satisfactory. In Years 2 and 3 standards are about average and similar to those described in the last inspection report. The quality of singing in assemblies supports well the celebration of cultures and the spiritual dimensions of learning. Pupils sing tunefully and through good teaching, understand how to vary volume and pace. In a singing assembly, the interim headteacher very skilfully helped pupils to reflect on the quality of their singing, created a sense of joy in celebrating through music. She helped pupils to understand the importance of listening, to reflect on the feelings music can promote, to value moments of silence, and to value the joy of sharing a whole school experience.

115. In a lesson observed in Years 2 and 3 the teacher combined reflection, humour and good subject knowledge well. This helped pupils to sing enthusiastically and recognise patterns in music. Good reinforcement of listening and appraising music enabled pupils to compare movements from *The Carnival of the Animals* by Saint-Saens. They also made links to the music introduced at the start and end of assemblies. Although pupils do not find it easy to recall the names of famous composers they do recall names through frequent and regular reinforcement and the consistent encouragement to attempt difficult pronunciation.

116. In a lesson in Years 1 and 2 pupils were eager to play their percussion instruments. They took turns, with the help of the teacher and support assistant, and through games managed to locate sounds and identify instruments. A very small proportion with behavioural difficulties found it hard to sustain concentration but enjoyed singing and improving their repertoire of songs. Through the good support of teaching assistants, pupils with special educational needs an English as an additional language are included fully in lessons.
117. Opportunities are taken outside of lessons to develop pitch and tone and an appreciation of music. For example reception-aged children sing the register and in the infant and junior classes the music by bands such as Glenn Miller is introduced through dance. This creative dimension supports learning well and helps pupils to broaden their experiences and to appreciate how music can contribute to the enjoyment of their daily lives. Pupils sing in two parts by Year 3 and understand the importance of a conductor to lead their performance. By Year 2 pupils follow symbols and play their instruments at the right time, following the teacher's lead.
118. Music is managed well but there are no opportunities beyond lessons to enhance learning and enable pupils to extend and reinforce the skills learned in lessons. The subject makes an important contribution to the life of the school and pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

119. Standards in physical education are above those expected of most Year 2 and 3 pupils. These standards are similar to those described for Year 2 pupils in the last report. As they are now above average throughout the school this is an improvement. Pupils make good progress as a result of good teaching. The pupils with special educational needs make special efforts to show control in their physical education work. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also pay careful attention as they listen to instructions and carry them out efficiently. All strands of physical education are taught although it was not possible to observe all of them during the inspection week. Nevertheless, planning clearly indicates that the same focus is given to learning the skills of physical education in all of its strands.
120. The need for safety is given appropriate emphasis by teachers. The pupils respond sensibly, carrying or lifting equipment in gymnastic lessons with care. At the beginning of all physical education lessons pupils prepare their bodies for exercise. Teachers also pay equally good attention to cooling down activities on completion of exercise. Pupils enjoy the challenge of many of the activities that teachers have devised carefully.
121. Activities in Year 1 and 2 classes thoughtfully follow on from those in the Foundation Stage class. Consequently, the pupils use the large space of the hall, playground or field effectively. In gymnastic lessons pupils sequence movements and link movements to create shapes as they jump and slide with precision and control. After using the floor space the pupils show good control as they transfer movements, repeating sequences on apparatus such as mats and benches. In a games lesson in Year 3 pupils worked enthusiastically in self-selected pairs, catching and throwing small balls with accuracy. In a dance lesson the precision of steps improved as the teacher encouraged pupils to

work individually, in small groups and as a whole class to refine their sequences of movements to the distinctive music of Glenn Miller. The success and enjoyment was clear as the class teacher worked patiently and enthusiastically alongside pupils, encouraging and refining movements to improve their performance. The pupils responded positively in consequence.

122. Pupils' keen enthusiasm for physical education is a strong feature of their good progress. There are a small number of occasions when the challenging behaviour of a small minority of pupils interrupts the pace of learning and progress is more limited. This was evident when a games lesson was transferred from outdoors to indoors because of poor weather. Pupils have ample opportunities to practice a wide range of skills because teachers plan a range of tasks and opportunities. Resources are well used to enhance the pupils' skills. Lessons are generally well structured because teachers are confident about their subject expertise. They act as good role models for pupils as they join in and demonstrate many of the activities. At the same time they value pupils' efforts by asking pupils to demonstrate their skills for their friends. Sensitive evaluation enables pupils to improve their performance.

123. There are no extra-curricular activities to develop the skills competitively. The new team of staff recognise that the pupils' knowledge and understanding would be well supported by such opportunities

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

124. Standards in religious education match the expectations of the local syllabus for Year 2 and 3 pupils. This sustains the judgements in the last report for Year 2 pupils and reflects an improvement for Year 3. This is due to the current good quality of teaching. As a result all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have positive attitudes to learning in religious education. A particular strength is evident in teachers' skilful use of the knowledge of pupils who come from non-Christian backgrounds, and those whose home language is not English. These pupils are fully included in activities and helped to explain their beliefs and customs to others. Good links are made to cultural development.

125. In Years 1 and 2 the pupils learn through practical approach. The story of *The dinosaurs and all that rubbish* is a familiar one used to consider corporate responsibility for the conservation of the world. The story is thoughtfully related to the story of Noah and the ark in the Bible. The pupils develop their understanding of the complex idea of responsibility as they respond eagerly to their teacher's questions phrased to check their understanding of the story's meaning.

126. In Years 2 and 3 the story of Noah and the great flood is again used to explore the meaning of signs and symbols. This is a good feature of the work linking familiar stories told in English lessons to develop their use in different contexts. As the pupils know the story they are more easily able to consider the messages and meaning of the story. On this occasion they learned that symbols of the dove, the twig and the rainbow are about peace, growth and God's promise. The verbal work supports written skills effectively so that extended writing is beginning to be produced to a sound standard. In another class the teacher skilfully used the expert knowledge of a pupil from a Sikh home background. She compared similarities and differences in wedding

ceremonies sharing her own wedding memories with the pupils. The pupil from a Sikh home background then shared photographs of her parents wedding with her classmates. This approach valued both religions and gave pupils opportunities to develop their communication skills.

127. Pupils make the fastest progress when practical resources are used. This brings learning to life and provides opportunities for the pupils to handle special artefacts and learn how they form important parts of worship. The teachers plan thoroughly to ensure that a range of world faiths is valued. This reflects the caring and inclusive nature of the school.

128. The pupils concentrate well and increase in confidence as they consider the impact of religions on the world. The focus on learning about the lives of others through supports the development of their knowledge and understanding and respect for others. Because teachers make lessons interesting they begin to make good verbal contributions to whole class discussions as well as increasing the amount of written work by the time they are in Year 3. Their work is well supported by a good range of resources that help to promote understanding of the differences and similarities in religions. The programme of work is appropriately founded upon joint use of national and local guidelines.