

INSPECTION REPORT

IVER VILLAGE INFANT SCHOOL

Iver

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110374

Headteacher: Mrs. Pat Dixon

Reporting inspector: Jo Cheadle
23233

Dates of inspection: 5th – 7th March 2002

Inspection number: 244562

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	West Square Iver Buckinghamshire
Postcode:	SL0 9NW
Telephone number:	01753 655104
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. Jeanette Watkins
Date of previous inspection:	19 th – 22 nd January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23233	Jo Cheadle	Registered inspector	Mathematics; science; information and communication technology; physical education; equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? What does the school need to do to improve further?
9454	Deborah Pepper	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
3678	Thelma Edwards	Team inspector	English; design and technology; geography; the provision for pupils with special educational needs; the provision for pupils learning English as a second language	How well is the school led and managed?
1710	Jo Harris	Team inspector	History; art and design; music; religious education; the provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Iver Village Infant School is situated in a semi-rural environment in the far south of Buckinghamshire, close to the Berkshire border. It is close to the larger settlements of Uxbridge, Langley and Slough. Pupils are drawn from within the catchment area and also West Drayton, Uxbridge, Slough and Hillingdon. The school is part of a shared complex with the Village Hall, the local Library and a local Church. There are current 108 pupils on roll between the ages of 4 and 7. The background of the pupils is varied. It is predominantly white but there are also pupils from several minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than in most schools. The school has a background of educating settled Travellers in the area, and it also takes itinerant Travellers from nearby sites. The percentage of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs for a variety of learning difficulties is close to the national average. Attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year, but is most generally average overall.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Iver Village Infant School is an effective school. The school achieves results in tests that are at least as good as they should be and in mathematics they are consistently better than the national average. The quality of teaching is good and pupils achieve well. In the current Year 2 classes, there is a higher than average proportion of pupils with special education needs. The standards attained by Year 2 pupils are average overall, but the majority of pupils are achieving well on their starting levels. The headteacher leads the school effectively and is supported by a capable governing body. The headteacher, staff and governors work together efficiently and share a common commitment to improvement. Relationships at the school are very positive and good links with parents are highly valued. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' test results in mathematics are consistently better than the national average.
- Pupils attain above average standards in science.
- Teaching is of good quality and therefore pupils achieve well throughout their time at the school
- The school fosters good attitudes to learning and pupils behave well.
- Learning is particularly well planned for children in the reception classes.
- As a result of good support, pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- The headteacher leads the school well. Very productive working relationships between all staff and governors create an atmosphere that promotes good learning.

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology are not high enough. The school is not teaching all the required aspects of these subjects.
- Subject managers do not monitor pupils' progress and standards in some subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1998. There has been good overall improvement since the last inspection, both in relation to the key issues reported and, despite an unsettled period, in many other aspects of the school's work. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' progress in mathematics was found to be unsatisfactory. Pupils now make good progress in mathematics and results achieved in national tests have improved. However, standards in ICT and religious education have declined

since the last inspection. The overall quality of teaching has improved, and during the current inspection a much greater proportion of very good and some excellent teaching was observed. The

monitoring of pupils' progress is now more rigorous and there is clear evidence of how well pupils achieve on their starting levels. However, this monitoring has not yet extended to all subjects of the curriculum. The school now keeps accurate records of pupils' attendance, which were highlighted as being inefficient in the previous report. The overall quality of leadership and management at the school is good and there have been clear improvements in the delegation of responsibilities and a democratic approach to school development.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
Reading	C	C	D	E
Writing	C	C	B	D
Mathematics	A	B	A	B

<i>Key</i>	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

In the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 2, pupils' achieved well above average results in mathematics, above average results in writing and below average results in reading. Pupils taking the tests attained the standards that the school expected of them. Based on their starting levels, pupils of all abilities achieved well. Those tested included a large proportion of pupils with special educational needs, some of whom were also learning English as an additional language, pupils from travelling families and two pupils who began at the school later than in the reception class. The proportion of pupils attaining at the higher level, Level 3, was well above the national average in mathematics and writing and close to the national average in reading, indicating that the school makes good provision for pupils of higher ability.

The range of children's abilities when they start school is very wide, but in general their skills and knowledge are average. During the Foundation Stage children make good achievements. Many children reach the expected levels of the Foundation Stage curriculum by Year 1, despite the fact that the youngest children have only attended school part-time for one term. In years 1 and 2, pupils' achievements continue to be good and, as a rule, attainment by the end of Year 2 is above average. However, standards of work in the current Year 2 classes do not reflect this above average attainment. Pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve well. While there are a good number of pupils attaining levels better than would be expected, the year group also contains a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. These pupils, and also those who are learning English as an additional language, receive good support and are therefore making progress at the same rate as all other pupils.

In English and mathematics current Year 2 pupils are attaining average standards. Standards in science are above average. Pupils achieve well in each of these subjects. In all other subjects, with the exception of religious education and ICT, pupils attain standards that are in line with expectations and make satisfactory achievements. In religious education and ICT, pupils attain at levels that are below expectations. The agreed syllabus for religious education is not fully taught and pupils do not learn enough about other religions, to attain at expected levels. The school does not currently have the

necessary resources to implement the full statutory requirements of the ICT curriculum, and therefore pupils' attainment is below expectations.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning. They take part in lessons with enthusiasm, and enjoy coming to school. They work hard on individual or group tasks. Some pupils lose concentration in lessons because they find listening difficult.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils respond well to teachers' clear expectations of how they should behave. The behaviour of those pupils who find it difficult to listen can sometimes deteriorate in lessons and this affects their learning. There have been very few incidences of bullying at the school.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships are very positive and the school is a harmonious community. Pupils are caring towards each other and enjoy taking on responsibilities.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupils' attendance is close to the national average. The vast majority of pupils arrive punctually in the morning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching was good or better in over half of the lessons observed and very good or excellent in almost a third of lessons. Teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory in two lessons.

Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well because the teachers clearly target individual pupils' needs. Good use is made of ongoing assessment. Teachers effectively change and refine tasks and methods in lessons, so that children make good gains in them. Not enough use is made of ongoing assessment in Key Stage 1. In the unsatisfactory teaching observed during the inspection, teachers did not respond quickly enough to clear indicators that pupils were not learning as well as they should have been. Activities were not well arranged or pupils had lost concentration.

Teachers know pupils very well and this enables them to plan work that is well matched to individual needs. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special needs and those who are learning English as an additional language, are given work that is appropriately challenging, and this encourages good rates of learning. Teachers have high expectations of how pupils will work and behave, and this means that the vast majority of lessons run smoothly and pupils are interested and concentrate well. Sometimes, teachers talk for too long during introductions, and pupils who find it harder to listen for long lengths of time become restless. In such lessons, pupils make satisfactory, rather than good, progress in their learning.

In most subjects, teachers have good subject knowledge, and where this is the case, lessons are based on clear and interesting information that holds pupils interest. This was a strength of much of the very good and excellent teaching seen during the inspection, but not yet a common feature of all teaching at the school. Teachers have weaker subject knowledge in ICT. Teachers have made good use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and much of the very good teaching in lessons was seen in English and mathematics lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The pupils in the Foundation Stage are taught an interesting curriculum with a good range of opportunities for learning. The curriculum for pupils in Year 1 and 2 is reasonably broad and relevant, but does not fully meet statutory requirements. At present, not all areas of the ICT curriculum are taught and religious education does not fully meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved since the last inspection. Pupils have suitable individual targets and, because teachers know pupils very well, their needs are well planned for in lessons. Additional support provided by learning assistants helps individuals to make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. There is no specialist support for pupils learning English as an additional language, but the school makes adequate provision, and these pupils achieve equally as well as all others.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. There are strengths in pupils' moral and social development. Pupils are taught to work and play well together and to understand the difference between right and wrong. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils' spiritual and cultural development. The development of pupils' awareness of their local culture is good, but there are not enough opportunities for them to learn about the multicultural society in which they live.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school cares well for its pupils. All staff know pupils very well and support them effectively in their academic learning and personal progress. The school provides a safe and secure environment. Child protection arrangements are satisfactory.

The school has effective procedures to identify how well pupils are progressing in the core subjects and for pupils with special educational needs. Assessment information is used most effectively in the Foundation Stage and in English.

The school has a very effective partnership with parents, and provides good quality information for them regarding their children's progress. Parents are very supportive of the work of the school. Positive links support pupils' learning well. A parents' questionnaire revealed a high degree of satisfaction with the school, but the school are following up issues including more provision for music and ICT.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the	Good. The headteacher provides a clear vision for the school and its future work. Since her appointment after the last inspection, there is

headteacher and other key staff	now a positive mix of existing and new ideas and initiatives. She has adopted a democratic management approach, involving everyone in processes such as school improvement planning. Correct priorities for raising standards have been identified. The headteacher and deputy headteacher share a good working relationship. The work of subject managers does not yet have a clear enough impact on the quality of teaching and learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are supportive and knowledgeable. Many visit school during the working day and staff and pupils know them well. Governors, through their committees, are effectively involved in the formulation of the school improvement plan. They regularly monitor the progress the school is making towards the targets they have set. Governors have good knowledge of the school's budget and give satisfactory consideration to the principles of best value in making decisions.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Information relating to pupils' attainment is analysed, and emerging issues acted upon. The headteacher has introduced many self-evaluation strategies that enable the school to identify its strengths and weaknesses and set priorities for its development.
The strategic use of resources	Good. All grants are used appropriately. The school budget is well managed, and expenditure is specifically related to school improvement priorities. Learning support assistants are efficiently deployed to support pupils' learning. Resources are adequate and there are enough teachers and support assistants to meet the needs of the pupils.

The school has small classroom bases, but good use is made of communal teaching areas. The lack of a stimulating, separate area for the youngest children to play and learn is the singular weakness of the Foundation Stage provision. Resources are generally adequate, but there is a lack of artefacts in history and religious education. Resources for ICT are currently unsatisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents strongly believe that their children enjoy coming to school. • They are confident that their children are making good progress and the majority feel that they are kept well informed of how their children are doing. • Parents are happy that teaching at the school is good and that children are expected to work hard and do their best. • Parents believe that the school is well led and managed and would feel confident to approach the school with suggestion and complaints. • They feel that the school encourages the development of good attitudes and that children become mature and responsible. • Most parents are happy with the activities that the school provides beyond lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents feel that the school could work more closely with them. • Some parents would like more information about how well their children are achieving. • A few parents do not feel that the school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities.

Inspectors strongly agree with parents' positive comments. The way that the school works with parents is judged to be very effective and all efforts are made to involve parents in their children's learning. Parents' consultation evenings and annual reports contain good information on how well pupils are doing. The range of extra-curricular activities is considered appropriate for the age of the pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children begin school with wide variations in their skills and knowledge. At the time of the previous inspection, findings were that children's attainment on entry to school was at the expected level in language and literacy and better than expected in mathematics. Current inspection findings are that standards in mathematics are now in line with those in language. While there are a good proportion of children starting with very well developed skills and a fair proportion who require support for special educational needs for a variety of learning difficulties, overall, children's attainment on entry is broadly in line with expectations for their age group. Evidence from baseline assessments supports this judgement. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well. Many children reach the expected levels of the Foundation Stage curriculum by Year 1, despite the fact that the youngest children have only attended school part-time for one term.

2. In the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 2, pupils attained well above average results in mathematics, above average results in writing and below average results in reading. Teachers assessed pupils' attainment in science to be below the national average overall. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' attainment was well below average in reading, below average in writing and above average in mathematics. The comparison of pupils' results on the basis of free school meals alone is unreliable in the school's current context. This is because the school cannot provide hot meals at lunch time, therefore, many parents do not claim their free school meal entitlement, preferring to provide a more substantial packed lunch than that which is available free of charge. Moreover, while the proportion of pupils' claiming free school meals may be lower than the national average, the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than in most schools and the percentage of pupils with special educational needs is similar to the national average.

3. The group of pupils taking tests in 2001 began school with lower than average standards. The group included a higher than usual proportion with special educational needs; more than half of the pupils were on the school's register for special educational needs, the vast majority for language needs. In addition, 10 per cent of the pupils spoke English as an additional language, 5 per cent per cent joined the school later than in the reception class and 5 per cent were from travelling backgrounds. Teacher assessments prior to the tests clearly indicated pupils' reading difficulties. While pupils' reading results were below average overall, their attainment at the higher levels, Level 2B and Level 3, was close to the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 in writing and mathematics was well above the national average. In science, based on teacher assessments, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 was above average. Results at the higher level clearly indicate the school's good attention to ensuring that pupils of higher ability also achieve their full potential. Overall results indicate that, in relation to their prior attainment, pupils' at the school achieved well. Pupils' achieved particularly well in mathematics. This is good improvement since the last inspection, when rates of progress in mathematics were found to be unsatisfactory in relation to pupils' prior attainment. The school's data clearly shows the equal progress made by individuals of varying abilities, including those learning English as a second language and those with special educational needs.

4. Taking the results of national tests over the past three years together, and despite the lower than normal results in the 2001 tests, Iver Village results have exceeded the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In writing and mathematics, pupils' results have improved at a similar rate to the national picture. Due to the higher percentage of girls with special educational needs in the 2001 test year, boys' results were better in reading and writing. Overtime, boys do slightly better

than girls in reading, but there is no significant difference in the results of boys and girls in writing and mathematics. As a general picture, results achieved in tests at the end of Year 2 are above average and pupils achieve well. Test results have improved since the last inspection.

5. In the present Year 2 classes, while there are a good number of pupils attaining levels better than would be expected, there is also a high proportion of pupils attaining levels lower than would be expected for their age, due to a range of special educational needs. Overall, standards of work are currently average in English and in mathematics. In science, pupils' attainment is above average. Their knowledge of scientific facts is good and they have a clear understanding of why a test should be fair. They have opportunities to carry out tests and record their work to find patterns in results. Based on prior levels of attainment, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as a second language, are achieving well in English, mathematics and science.

6. In other subjects, with the exception of information and communication technology and religious education, pupils attain at expected levels for their age and their achievements are satisfactory. The curriculum for religious education does not provide pupils with the full range of experiences necessary to reach expected levels. In ICT, pupils' attainment is below expected levels because the school does not have the necessary computer resources to access the curriculum fully. Teachers plan to use ICT wherever possible, but available computers are unreliable, and therefore, pupils find it difficult to work independently. Pupils' achievements in both of these subjects are currently unsatisfactory. At the time of the last inspection, standards in ICT and religious education were judged to be in line with expectations and pupils' achievements were satisfactory.

7. The school has worked hard to ensure that there has been minimal disruption to pupils' learning while the deputy headteacher, who teaches a year two class, has carried out necessary responsibilities during the absence of the headteacher. While levels of attainment vary greatly in the Year 2 classes, there is good match of work to ability levels and this enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are learning English as a second language, to achieve well. Predicted results for tests in 2002 show a more even balance in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics than in 2001.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good overall, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Parents say their children like coming to school and children agree. Parents are very supportive of the attitudes and values promoted by the school. Pupils enjoy the range of activities they undertake at school. For example, they sang with great enthusiasm and gusto during the singing assembly. Year 2 pupils spoke with keen interest about work on the Great Fire of London. In most lessons, pupils show interest in their work as, for example, in a literacy lesson, where they had to guess the nursery rhymes mimed by the teacher. They usually answer questions well, concentrate well during individual or group activities and complete good quantities of work. However, some children find listening difficult, particularly during whole class teaching. They lose concentration and start to chat, to the detriment of their learning. Often, this is where the pace of the lesson is slow but it also happens when pace is brisk.

9. Pupils' behaviour is generally good in lessons, around the school and in the playground. Parents believe that the school promotes high standards of behaviour. Behaviour in most lessons is good as, for example, in a design and technology lessons where pupils persisted with their task despite difficulties in using the materials. However, there is a background of chat in some lessons and assemblies. Playground behaviour is lively, but pupils generally play with consideration for one another. Pupils are polite to adults and generally to each other. One boy asked an inspector whether

she would like to swap her smaller chair for his larger chair. Many pupils use their own initiative to solve small problems, such as moving to a less cramped space to make work more comfortable. Attendance at the school is satisfactory and the vast majority of pupils arrive punctually. There have been no exclusions in the past year. No bullying was observed during the inspection and incidents of bullying are rare.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

10. The overall quality of teaching is good. In over half of the lessons observed, teaching was at least good. The proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching has improved since the last inspection. In almost two thirds of the lessons seen teaching was very good or excellent. Teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory in two lessons.

11. Teaching has many strengths. Teachers have good subject knowledge, make very good use of questioning, plan lessons well, have good knowledge of pupils and their needs and have very positive relationships with pupils. In the Foundation Stage, the good use that is made of the teachers' assessments of pupils is also a strength. In the reception classes, teachers' evaluations of how well pupils are learning direct the way that activities and groups of children are organised, so that children are given the maximum opportunity to achieve the individual targets that are set for them. This good use of assessment ensures that children are provided with the right sort of work, taught in the best way to help them make good progress. The learning support assistant is used effectively because the teachers have a clear understanding of where her help is most needed. All teachers have a clear knowledge of pupils with specific needs, and plan well to include pupils with special education needs, those who speak English as an additional language and those from travelling backgrounds in all learning activities.

12. When teachers' good subject knowledge is evident, pupils make good progress, because lessons are full of information that holds pupils' interest and encourages them to ask questions that promote learning. In a history lesson with Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, the teacher used her good knowledge of the events of the Great Fire of London to present a lively and interactive account. Pupils physically acted out the sequence of events of the fire, from the first smell of smoke to the passing of buckets of water along a line. In doing so, they were able to sequence the events and think carefully about how people reacted at each stage of the fire. They were encouraged to ask questions, such as what happened when the buckets of water could not be passed quickly enough? In follow on work, it was clear that pupils were learning very well; they sequenced events accurately and talked about why the fire was so difficult to put out. They made good use of their previous learning in history, such as the type of buildings of the period. This clearly demonstrated the good progress in their knowledge and understanding over time.

13. Teachers ask questions that make pupils think carefully and help them to understand basic skills and knowledge that promote good learning. In an English lesson with Year 1 pupils, the teacher targeted pupils of different abilities and asked them appropriate questions to check their understanding or consolidate new learning. Pupils recalled the rhyming words they heard in a previous lesson and began to make a poem together. Through questioning and practice, they understood that some words rhyme, but do not have the same spelling pattern. They began to build spelling groups and became more accurate in spelling words in each group. Individual work was well matched to pupils' abilities, including those pupils who are learning English as a second language. Pupils' progress in basic spelling skills was good in this session. Teachers make good use of homework to further reinforce and extend pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Although good use of questioning is a strength of teaching, in some lessons the length of time that is used for question and answer sessions is too long. Pupils spend too much time sitting on the carpet, and some become restless and stop listening. This is also

evident when teachers spend too long explaining the work to be done, when the majority of pupils have already clearly understood and want to start work.

14. Teachers know pupils well and this enables them to successfully plan work that is well matched to pupils' ability levels and prior experiences, but sufficiently challenging to encourage good progress. In a science lesson with Year 2 pupils, the teacher used her assessment of standards attained in the previous lesson and clearly planned for new learning based on this information. Groups of pupils were targeted during discussion time, to reinforce their learning about natural and manufactured materials. For individual work, the teacher regrouped pupils in order to extend the learning of some pupils who had completed earlier work particularly well. The highest attaining pupils were carefully introduced to the concept of materials changing, which led to good discussion about how materials can change overtime. The teachers' good knowledge of individuals enabled her to maximise the progress they made in this session. Planning for pupils with special educational needs was also good. A very practical task was organised to help them look closely at materials and group them as manufactured or natural. Effective use was made of the learning support assistant to help pupils to make the same good progress as others. Pupils had recognised for themselves the progress they had made during the session when they were able to accurately group many more materials at the end of the lesson. The use of ongoing assessment is not always a feature of lessons in years 1 and 2. In both cases where unsatisfactory aspects of teaching were observed, teachers did not respond quickly enough to clear indications that group activities were not working well, or that pupils had been listening for too long and had lost concentration. In both instances, pupils became noisy and did not pay good attention to their work. Their learning was therefore unsatisfactory.

15. Teachers manage pupils well and have very positive relationships with them. They have high expectations about how pupils will behave and work in lessons, and in almost all lessons, pupils respond well and make good progress as a result. At times, how well pupils listen and concentrate varies, depending on the pace of the lesson. When pace slows, for instance, when the teacher too often repeats the instructions for work, pupils do not listen as well, or start to chat. This affects their own learning and the learning of others. In an excellent physical education lesson with reception age children, the teacher used her very good management skills to quickly organise groups, keep pupils active at all times and ensure that all were working safely. Praise and encouragement was given, and pupils tried even harder to catch and throw accurately. All pupils made very good progress. In an English lesson in Year 2, the teacher sensitively offered clues and suggestions when pupils struggled to spell various words with an "or" sound, which could be represented in many ways. Pupils did not feel afraid to have a go and make mistakes, persevering well and therefore making very good progress. The teachers' excellent relationship with pupils helped them to feel confident and try hard.

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

16. The curriculum is satisfactory, overall, as at the time of the last inspection. Children in the Foundation Stage are taught an interesting curriculum with a good range of learning opportunities that cover all the six areas of learning. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taught a reasonably broad and relevant curriculum but it does not fully meet statutory requirements. Not all the areas of communication and information technology are taught, as there are insufficient resources for the subject. The curriculum for religious education does not include another religion in addition to Christianity, which is a requirement of the locally agreed syllabus. The school gives a substantial amount of time to English and mathematics and this has meant that, in recent years, rather less attention has been paid to the other subjects.

17. The school's strategies for teaching the skills of literacy and, in particular, numeracy are effective. The development of both is satisfactorily supported by their use in other subjects. When children are given homework, for example reading, spelling and mathematics, it is the kind of work that extends their learning from lessons.

18. There is good provision for children with special educational needs. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Individual education plans are well designed to support progress. Targets for improvement are clear and assessable, and regular reviews are undertaken to assess progress. Teachers provide satisfactory support for pupils learning English as an additional language, the majority of whom are competent English speakers. No additional, external support is provided for this group of pupils, but because teachers know pupils well, they plan to meet individual needs effectively. Pupils from traveller families are well supported, both by class teachers and by teaching assistants who come into school for that purpose. Attention is paid to meeting the needs of all children and this aim is substantially achieved. There is equality of access to the curriculum and all children are given the same opportunities to succeed.

19. The school's schemes of work are well based on those suggested by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The curriculum is successfully planned to meet the changing needs of pupils taught in single age groups and, as at the time of the current inspection, where there are two age groups in one class. The curriculum is largely planned and taught as separate subjects, but there are good links between subjects such as art and design and technology. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is adequate for the age of the pupils. They have opportunities to learn soccer and tennis after school. Pupils go for walks around the local area and visit Iver nature reserve, the local church, buildings and shops as part of their work.

20. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, with strengths in moral and social development. This broadly reflects the findings of the previous inspection although current provision for cultural development is not as good as before.

21. Spiritual development is satisfactory. Assemblies and acts of collective worship take place regularly and meet statutory requirements. Some make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development, for example, an assembly led by a member of a local church that involved pupils in the story of Zacchaeus. The school has celebrated the major festivals of other faiths. Pupils' experience of the beauty of the local church was evident in the very good drawings they produced after a visit there. However, religious education does not make a strong enough contribution to pupils' spiritual development and pupils are not regularly offered opportunities in lessons for wider reflection.

22. Pupils' moral development is good. Staff have high and consistent expectations of pupils' behaviour, and they praise and reward good behaviour. One pupil in each class is rewarded for their contribution at the weekly celebration assembly. Pupils understand how they should behave and have a clear sense of right and wrong. Parables and stories are used well to promote moral messages, for example The Good Samaritan. The story of 'Little Red Riding Hood' was used effectively in circle time in the reception class to help children understand the need to say sorry.

23. Pupils' social development is also good. Parents believe that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. Pupils respond well to different teaching styles including working in groups and as part of a pair. In one lesson, pupils chose to work in mixed gender groups and then had to write their own labels for diagrams, showing good independence skills. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities and carry them out conscientiously. They have also supported a range of charities.

24. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' cultural development, particularly helping them to understand their own culture, through art, music and history. Singing is a particular strength, and an orchestra and African children's choir have visited the school. However, the school does not include enough opportunities in the curriculum to extend pupils' awareness of other cultures. A Hindu parent has spoken to pupils about Diwali and Japanese students have previously visited the school. Otherwise, the school does not make enough use of the resources of the local area to raise pupils' awareness of the cultural diversity of our society. For example, there are no visits to places of worship, other than Christian churches.

25. There is satisfactory provision for children's personal and social education, and good provision for their health education. Sex education is not formally taught, but it is the school's policy to answer questions in a way that is appropriate to the age of the children. Pupils learn about life cycles in science and history. Circle time discussions generally provide satisfactory opportunities for them to communicate, to listen to what others have to say and to learn the important social skills needed when working as part of a large group. There is still scope for improvements in this area, as there are a significant minority of pupils who find listening difficult and who would benefit from a more planned approach to developing this essential skill.

26. There are good links with the local community. Members of the community and visitors from further a field visit the school. Representatives of local churches regularly lead assemblies. Pupils have learned about the work of the NSPCC and have considered road safety through a puppet show presentation. All of these activities support pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. There are also good links with the local junior school, to which most children transfer, with teachers sharing observations about the needs of particular pupils. Visits are made to the two playgroups that send children to the reception classes. Students from East Berkshire College also spend some time with the youngest classes as part of their training.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

27. The school cares well for its pupils. It provides a safe, welcoming environment and there is a strong sense of community, which is central to its vision. The headteacher and staff know their pupils well and there are very good relationships throughout the school community. As a result, staff support pupils effectively and are responsive to their needs. This supports their learning well. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are provided with quality support to help them make good progress. Good records of pupils' personal development are kept in one class, but not consistently across the school. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall. Parents believe that their children are very well cared for. This positive picture has been maintained, and in some areas improved, since the previous inspection.

28. Child protection has a high profile in the school and a policy is in place. The headteacher is the named child protection officer. Although the head has undertaken extensive training in another authority, other staff have not received recent training in child protection. Training is planned for staff in the near future. Community police talk to children about 'stranger danger'. The school provides a safe and secure environment for learning and working. Health and safety procedures are in place and there is a trained first aider. An accident book is maintained and parents are notified of bumps to the head. Governors are involved in regular risk assessments. The school's health and safety procedures are satisfactory overall.

29. The school has effective procedures for promoting good behaviour. Parents agree that behaviour at the school is good and consistently reinforced by teachers. The behaviour policy sets out clearly the school's values that include respect and consideration, kindness, thoughtfulness and sharing. These values are actively promoted in school and staff reinforce good behaviour through praise and

reward. Certain types of behaviour are not tolerated, including bullying, threatening behaviour and hurting feelings. The policy also includes a code of conduct, but this is not prominently displayed in school or adopted into class rules. Class rules are displayed in some, but not all, classrooms. In some classrooms these are made up of instructions on how not to behave, rather than more useful suggestions of how to behave well. As such, the rules do not always support those pupils who sometimes find some aspects of behaving well more difficult, such as listening while others speak. Pupils are rewarded for good behaviour with praise and stickers. At celebration assemblies, weekly awards are given to individual children and to a whole class. The few incidents of serious misbehaviour are recorded in a behaviour book.

30. The school has adequate procedures for identifying how well children are progressing in English, mathematics and science. Groups and individuals are given targets that help them to improve their work and their behaviour in class. The assessment of the progress of children with special educational needs is thorough. Teachers and support staff have frequently up-dated information and share their observations of how well the individual is doing, leading to a formal review of the individual education plan. All support is managed sensitively and pupils are proud of their achievements. There are no special procedures for the assessment of children learning English as an additional language; their progress is judged in the same way as others in the class. Baseline assessment is well used to identify particular strengths and needs of the younger children. Careful analysis of national and non-statutory test results is carried out and formal teacher assessment of seven year olds is made each year. Pupils' handwriting had been targeted as an area requiring improvement, and the planned strategies for development have been successful. Assessment is less systematically used in the foundation subjects, though teachers keep their own notes and samples of their children's work.

31. The school has good procedures for monitoring attendance. As a result, the attendance of some pupils has improved and the amount of unauthorised absence has decreased. The attendance of traveller children is carefully monitored and the school has good links with the education welfare officer in all cases where attendance is a problem. Parents are reminded regularly in newsletters of the importance of good attendance, but a number of parents still take their holiday during term time.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

32. The school has a very effective partnership with parents which supports pupils' learning well. The quality of the partnership has been maintained since the previous inspection. Parents are very supportive of the work of the school. They believe their children make good progress, behave well and are very well cared for. They value the detailed reports on their children's progress. Parents are very happy with the level of support for pupils with special educational needs and are confident that the school enables pupils of all abilities to make equal rates of progress and attain the standards they should. They find the school welcoming, and particularly value the accessibility of staff, including the headteacher. Parents contribute well to their children's learning by helping them with reading and other homework.

33. The school provides good quality information for parents in the prospectus, governors' annual report and regular newsletters. Reports are of very good quality. They include clear information about how children are achieving for their age in each subject and set targets for improvement. In addition, there are parents' meetings in each term. A small minority of parents do not feel as well informed about progress as the majority. Induction arrangements for the parents of reception children are good and include a meeting during school time about the teaching of phonics. Parents of Year 1 and 2 pupils receive a helpful summary on how they can support their children learning at home but there is limited information about the curriculum. The home school agreement is used appropriately.

A parents' questionnaire revealed a high degree of satisfaction with the school, but the school are following up issues including more provision for music and ICT.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

34. Since the previous inspection in January 1998, the school has changed from a first school to an infant school, losing the Year 3 pupils. In addition, a new headteacher was appointed from May 2000. Unfortunately a lengthy period of illness meant the headteacher was away from school for a period of six months, returning in January 2002. During this time the deputy was the acting headteacher. Parents felt confident that their children's education did not suffer during this time and standards were maintained successfully.

35. The headteacher is providing good leadership, and her clear vision is for all pupils to be happy, well adjusted and to reach their full potential in all areas. She is developing consultative approaches and encouraging democratic systems, so all feel involved and confident to offer ideas and opinions. The governors particularly appreciate this, recognising the headteacher's sensitive, systematic approach to change and development. While she has interviewed all staff individually and taught all classes, she has not monitored the quality of teaching formally, providing feedback afterwards. This is more difficult while she is involved in teaching the youngest children each morning. Inevitably, as result of the school's open plan design, the headteacher is very aware of the standards of teaching through the school.

36. The senior management team of headteacher and deputy headteacher meet together regularly and complement each other well, with a mix of new ideas and established knowledge of the school. The school's system of performance management is established, with the headteacher and deputy as the trained team leaders. However the identification of targets for the headteacher has been delayed due to her absence. All staff, including part-time teachers, co-ordinate a number of subjects. Some are new to the roles, while others are well established, and most provide effective support for colleagues. In general, since the last inspection, the role of subject co-ordinators has been appropriately developed. However, very few have monitored pupils' learning in their subject by scrutinising their recorded work or undertaking classroom observations, though their job descriptions identify this as part of the role. Therefore, most co-ordinators do not have a very clear view of standards throughout the school and this does not support the ongoing improvement of standards. The lack of monitoring pupils' progress was also a key issue at the time of the last inspection. Overall, the contribution of staff with management responsibilities is satisfactory.

37. The school's mission statement and aims have not been revised recently and the headteacher and governors have appropriately identified the need to review these. Currently, many of the aims are reflected successfully in the life of the school, particularly those relating to community involvement, relationships, and developing pupils' moral values and social awareness.

38. The governors are supportive, well informed and involved with school life, even though a number of them are newly appointed. They have well-established committees, each with revised terms of reference. Individual governors are identified to take particular interest in all subjects of the National Curriculum, literacy, numeracy, the Foundation Stage and special educational needs. Many of the governors visit during the school day, often to help in classrooms. They follow the local education authority's advice and suggested protocol for visiting the school, but do not have a planned programme of visits. Governors have a significant involvement in the formulation of the school improvement plan, mainly through their committees, and keep abreast of developments through the detailed information provided by the headteacher and their visits. They are becoming more evaluative and are asking

questions such as 'Have we made a difference?' or 'Is this having an impact?' They are aware of the strengths of the school, and understand the areas requiring development.

39. The headteacher consulted widely prior to the formulation of school improvement plan. It is a very useful working document, with a helpful review of the previous year and a three- year summary of identified priorities for development. The action plans for the current year's targets are good, with identification of strategies, responsibilities, resources required (including costs) and success criteria. They note who is responsible for monitoring and evaluation, but do not contain additional identification of how this is to be accomplished. The identified priorities are fully appropriate for the school at this time.

40. Satisfactory use is made of new technology for school administration, though the headteacher does not have a computer in her office. Financial routines in the school are good, efficiently managed by the secretary. The recent self-audit identified one small point for improvement and this has been addressed. The governors' finance committee is fully aware of the current situation with the budget, where the staffing costs are very high. The headteacher and governors are planning ahead very carefully and keeping spending to a minimum. This year the number of classes was reduced, with a consequent 0.5 cut in teaching staff. Although there was a large carry-forward figure at the end of the last financial year, following an over-estimation of the number of pupils, there was a significant claw back by the local authority. By prudent management, the school should avoid a deficit budget, relying on the surplus for the next two years. Any grants made to the school are spent appropriately. For example, a capital works grant has enabled refurbishment of the toilets to benefit the pupils. Lottery funding and National Grid for Learning funding are to be used to create a computer suite and train the staff. The school has adequate procedures for ensuring that the principles of best value are carefully considered and provides good value for money.

41. The school is quite generously staffed at present. The provision of a part-time teacher to work with the Year 1 pupils from the mixed age classes each morning is much appreciated by the staff concerned and means that work can be planned for single age groups in literacy and numeracy. This is an important factor in promoting pupils' good rates of learning in English and mathematics. Teachers are all well experienced and almost all have been at the school for ten years or more. One classroom assistant supports the reception children in the mornings, and then works with Year 1 pupils in the afternoons. One learning support assistant works with pupils with special educational needs, while another supports a pupil with a statement. All three are effective and are valued members of the team, as at the time of the last inspection.

42. The accommodation is good overall. There are spare classrooms that are used for resources, special educational needs work and one will soon be developed into a computer suite. Although the classrooms are quite small, all classes make good use of the light, communal area to provide additional teaching space. The building is kept very clean and enhanced by displays of the pupils' work. The large hall is shared with the community, as is the car park, and the pupils benefit from access to the public library on site. The school library is well resourced, but is underused at present. The playground is adequate and the large field is used and enjoyed in the better weather. The main weakness, as previously reported, is the lack of a secure, outdoor learning environment for the youngest children.

43. Resource provision is satisfactory. The Friends of Iver Schools Association has provided playground games, literacy and numeracy resources and a new security front door. The main curriculum area requiring additional resources is information and communication technology, which is already planned. In addition, insufficient artefacts are available for history and religious education. Reception children do not have sufficient equipment for outdoor use, such as wheeled vehicles, gardening equipment and climbing apparatus.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve the work of the school and standards achieved by pupils, the headteacher, staff and governors need to address the following issues;

- (1) Ensure that the necessary equipment is purchased and that teachers have sufficient training to teach all statutory aspects of the National Curriculum for information and communication technology at a level that challenges all pupils.
- (2) Ensure that the planned curriculum for religious education includes the study of another religions in addition to Christianity, as required by the locally agreed syllabus.
- (3) Enable subject co-ordinators to monitor pupils' attainment and progress in all subjects, as outlined as a responsibility of their roles in each job description.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	28
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	6	10	8	2	0	0
Percentage	7	22	36	28	7	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR- Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	108
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	6
Special educational needs	YR- Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	19
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.3
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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	17	20	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	16
	Girls	15	16	19
	Total	29	30	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (90)	81 (94)	95 (94)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	15
	Girls	16	19	18
	Total	31	35	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (88)	95 (90)	89 (88)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	6
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	98
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.5
Average class size	17

Education support staff: YR– Y2

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	17

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	239800
Total expenditure	247516
Expenditure per pupil	2427
Balance brought forward from previous year	36846

Balance carried forward to next year 29130

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Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	108
Number of questionnaires returned	61

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	30	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	39	2	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	38	5	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	61	6	0	0
The teaching is good.	64	33	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	39	11	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	16	5	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	36	3	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	42	42	7	2	7
The school is well led and managed.	51	42	2	3	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	44	0	0	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	38	7	3	11

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

44. Children are admitted to the reception class at the beginning of the term in which they will be five. At the time of the inspection, there were nine children, attending full-time, who had been in the class since September, and a further twenty-six attending on a part time basis since the beginning of the Spring term. During the mornings, the headteacher teaches groups of children. Fourteen more will join after Easter and a second class will be established. Parents are concerned that the youngest children will only have one term of part time schooling before joining Year 1, so the school is planning to admit these children on a full time basis after three weeks. This decision is much appreciated by the parents concerned.

45. Induction arrangements are satisfactory. The teacher visits the children in two local playgroups and the children visit the reception class while the headteacher talks to their parents. The teacher meets with the parents very soon after their children have started school, to discuss the work being undertaken and baseline testing arrangements. Formal discussions about children's progress are held termly and a written report, appropriately completed under the headings of the six areas of learning, is provided at the end of the year.

46. On entry to the school, children's attainment changes from year to year and varies widely within each year group. However, children's levels of attainment on starting school are broadly average overall. As a result of the good teaching and broad curriculum, children make good progress and achieve well for their abilities. By the time they join Year 1, it is likely that most of the present, older children will attain the early learning goals in all areas, apart from writing simple sentences. It is probable that only the older, more able children will attain this goal.

47. The quality of teaching seen was satisfactory or better, with one excellent lesson. It is good in all areas of learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Provision for the children with special educational needs is good, with additional, individual support provided regularly. External agencies are involved, as they are to support travellers. The broad curriculum is very well planned to cover the six areas of learning specified for the Foundation Stage. There is an appropriate balance between teacher directed and child-selected activities. Varied activities are planned to provide many opportunities for the children to consolidate their learning. For example, each morning, after whole class teaching time, the children are allocated to a number of different activities or areas, each carefully prepared and shown on a planning board. Features of the good teaching include a calm approach, appropriate expectations for children of differing abilities, high quality teaching of basic skills and good relationships. All adults, including the teachers, classroom assistant and students, are fully involved with the children throughout and the constant oral interaction is very effective. The classroom assistant is a highly valued, effective member of the team and will work with the reception classes full time next term.

48. Procedures for the assessment of the children's progress are very good and the information is recorded in a number of ways. This includes evaluations of lesson plans, with notes about individual children or groups. Each adult completes a very useful observation sheet when working with groups of children. Detailed records are kept of the children's progress with phonic work and reading. The next step, as recognised by the school, is to use this detailed, first hand evidence to complete records for each child in each area of learning.

49. The two interconnecting classrooms used by the reception children are well presented, with displays of children's work. There are areas such as an 'office' for them to practise writing and a role play area. Good use is made of the communal area outside the classrooms for some of the messier activities as well as group teaching. Resource provision is satisfactory. As at the time of the last inspection, the main weakness is the lack of a secure outdoor area with appropriate resources, to be used as a learning area for these young children. The school does not have a policy detailing practice and organisation, in order to establish further the status of the Foundation Stage.

Personal, social and emotional development

50. The children understand class routines and arrive happily and confidently each day. They find their name card and put it into a tray, then settle on the carpet for registration. All respond confidently when their names are called, some in different languages, and are keen to discuss which day it is and the weather conditions. The children work very well in groups, showing good relationships and ability to work without adult supervision. They are confident when using a range of equipment and change for physical education sensibly and independently. In circle times, they show good awareness of right and wrong. For example, following their study of Little Red Riding Hood, they discussed the wolf's behaviour, and this led to discussion of wrong-doing and the need to say sorry. They are encouraged to say please and thank you as they have mid-morning drinks and make good progress in this area of learning.

Communication, language and literacy

51. Most of the children listen attentively to adults and each other. However, there are a few who find listening and concentrating difficult, particularly in the whole class situation. Many children are quite confident speakers and are keen to engage in discussion or answer questions, though at times the boys appear more eager to contribute than the girls. The children enjoy acting out scenes from the nursery rhymes they learn. The teaching of phonics is very good. The youngest children are highly motivated by the stories attached to each sound and they remember the actions as they practise writing the associated letter. Older children are practising blends, such as 'th', making a model of Thin Tim, and writing words that begin with the sound. They enjoy reading and older, more able children, are already reading simple texts confidently. Younger children are appropriately being introduced to the characters and early words for the scheme, so they will be able to start the introductory books confidently. Parents' support for these activities has a positive impact on standards. Children's own writing is valued, with a post box in their 'office' area and displays of their efforts in the rooms. Older, more able children are writing a few sentences in conventional script unaided, while lower attaining children still need help to write conventional words. Almost all write their own name, having had good support for this from the classroom assistant.

Mathematical development

52. Most of the children count and use numbers to ten accurately, some well beyond this. Many activities are planned to consolidate their understanding, such as counting pipe cleaner spiders' legs, saying and singing number rhymes and playing number games. Higher attaining children are secure in their understanding of two numbers making five, whereas the lower attainers are less secure with this, particularly when they were required to work it out in their head. Good teaching helped children to develop their understanding in a variety of ways. For example, one child gave different numbers of coins to others and counted the number left and others worked with shopping lists and change. Mathematical language is used frequently and is well understood by the children. For example, a group sorted out three different sized teddies, chairs, bowls and spoons, following their study of Goldilocks, using words such as 'bigger than, smallest, the same as' confidently. More able children add one more or take one away from single digit numbers. When using the programmable toy, the group showed

good understanding of shapes as one explained that a rectangle was like a square, but its points were further apart than in a square.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

53. The children learn about how things grow as they see their hyacinth bulbs bloom and watch frogspawn. They are developing an understanding of time passing as they discuss days of the week each morning, using such words as yesterday and today. On their walk in the village, the children discussed things they saw. They enjoy using construction materials and share these well as they build together. As part of the study of little Red Riding Hood, the children drew a plan of the route she took through the woods and then constructed it from soft, coloured modelling material, with very good results. They use the computer confidently, showing good mouse control as they dress the teddy. They have an early knowledge of some festivals associated with different religions and have visited the local church. Children achieve good standards in this area of their learning.

Physical development

54. Fine co-ordination skills develop well as the children use scissors, the stapler, glue spreaders, modelling material and the computer mouse. In an excellent lesson, children were taught how to throw and catch, then bounce a ball and many succeeded well. They showed very good awareness of space as they moved round the hall in a variety of ways, stopping at the sound of the tambourine. This supports their large muscle development. The lack of a secure play area for children limits their access to large wheeled toys and other games and activities that develop gross co-ordination skills.

Creative development

55. The children's paintings of daffodils show good attention to detail, following close observation. They have experience many activities such as printing with fruit, their hands and autumn leaves, marbling and making collages. They enjoy singing and know a number of songs from memory, which they sing with actions. They joined in confidently with the rest of the school for a singing session.

ENGLISH

56. The attainment of the majority of children in Year 2 is at or close to the standards expected in reading, writing, speaking and listening, as they approach the end of their time in the school. This judgement reflects that of the last inspection. Standards of writing are not as high as those seen in the 2001 national tests, but reading is better. Pupils are achieving well in relation to their levels of attainment on entry to the school.

57. Pupil's speaking and listening skills are in line with expectations. Most pupils listen carefully when the lesson is interesting. This was seen particularly in a lesson about favourite nursery rhymes, where pupils not only identified the rhyming words, but also enjoyed hearing alternative versions, such as 'Twinkle, twinkle, chocolate bar'. They mostly attend to instructions and respond to questions, with satisfactory understanding. They answer readily; some using extended sentences to try to express themselves clearly. They read poems together, including their own rhyming couplets, with confidence and expression. Stories they have enjoyed are sometimes used as a basis for other work, as when pupils produced a musical composition in response to The Iron Man. Pupils have the opportunity to listen to stories on tape, using headsets. At times, however, when in a whole class or whole school group in the hall, a number of pupils do not listen quietly when they should. This then interrupts the work of the teacher and the learning of other pupils.

58. Reading, overall, is in line with expectations, with a few children doing better. Pupils clearly enjoy books. They engage very readily in shared reading with the teacher in the literacy hour and also

read in groups or individually. They read both non-fiction and fiction books. Many are able to name their favourite authors. The more able readers select their own books within a carefully coded system and some take books home to read from the school's central library. Most pupils understand what they are reading and predict the likely end to a story or recount what came earlier. They make use of the developing knowledge of phonics when they encounter unknown words and can often self-correct a mistake by understanding the sense of the sentence. Pupils use the library, but some, not frequently enough, so they could not explain how they might find a particular book. However, a few of the more able boys had successfully used reference books to research and write about the Great Fire of London.

59. The standard of writing is average overall. Pupils' write for many purposes and they know how to organise their writing to suit their readers, for example, when writing postcards or stories. Writing is developed within other subjects, as when pupils wrote the procedures for making a sandwich in design and technology. Pupils are developing a satisfactory understanding of spelling and its rules. They are able to find 'families' of similar words. They use the phonic knowledge which they are developing in literacy hours when tackling the spelling of unknown words. Most pupils write with a correct use of capital letters and some understanding of basic punctuation. The most able writers produce long pieces of writing, with an appropriate sequence of events and correct use of question marks and, sometimes, speech marks. Handwriting, which has been a recent focus for development, is good. Nearly all pupils write a good clear script, with the more able writers joining their letters. Very little use is made of computers as word-processors to produce a finished piece of work.

60. Pupils, including those with special educational needs or who are learning English as an additional language, are making good progress because the teaching is good. In Year 2, in particular, there is a significant number of pupils who have special educational needs; mostly related to language. In the lessons observed, no teaching was less than satisfactory and sometimes it was very good. The whole class teaching in particular, is well organised with a good choice of resources which interest and focus the class on the work. There is a lively presentation that encourages the pupils to respond well. Occasionally, pupils are kept sitting for too long on the carpet, but in the best lessons, teachers are sensitive to the waning interest of the pupils and move the lesson on. Relationships are good. Both teachers and support staff work well together and this encourages the pupils to do the same. They respond well, sharing materials and discussing their work together. Teachers know the pupils well and their expectations of them are high; though there are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length. They keep detailed on-going records and appropriately match the work to the developing understanding of particular groups of pupils. Teachers' management skills are good and routines are well established. Pupils know what is expected of them and usually settle to work quickly.

61. The curriculum is satisfactory and it is well planned. Pupils have opportunities to achieve in all areas of the English programme of work, including drama. The school's focus on the development of writing is planned to continue. The subject is managed satisfactorily by the co-ordinator. She has many other responsibilities in addition to overseeing English and has little time to observe her colleagues teaching. However, when the focus for development was on handwriting, she observed this being taught in all classes and was, herself, observed teaching by an experienced colleague, with the result that standards in handwriting have improved. The school's resources are sufficient, though there are few tapes of stories in English or community languages and no dual language books available. There is a shortage of computers to be used for word processing and other language programs. The resources are well organised and accessible. The library, in particular, is attractive and enticing to the children.

MATHEMATICS

62. In the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 2, pupils' results were well above average. There has been a consistent pattern of good results in mathematics tests over the past four years. Overall standards in the current Year 2 classes are average. Similar standards were reported at the time of the last inspection. While there are pupils in Year 2 who have good skills and understanding in mathematics, and who attain at levels higher than would be expected in lessons, there is also a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Good attention is given to ensuring that pupils of all abilities, including pupils with special educational needs, those who are learning English as a second language and pupils from traveller families, make equal rates of progress. Pupils make good progress achieve well on their prior levels of attainment in mathematics. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when progress was found to be unsatisfactory.

63. The wide range of abilities in the Year 2 classes is evident in all lessons. Higher attaining pupils confidently count forwards and backwards in tens, while lower attaining pupils need to use a number board, with the help of the teacher pointing, to do so accurately. Pupils develop strategies for calculating mentally. In one lesson, they quickly identified a number between 45 and 53 that had 7 in it, the majority recording the number 47 on their white board. When asked to take away 11 from this number, average and higher attaining pupils quickly calculated the right answer and explained that they took away 10 and then 1. With support, lower attaining pupils reached the same answer and understood the calculation. They used the calculation to find the correct answer to the next question. Work was well matched to pupils' levels in this lesson and all made very good progress as a result. Higher attaining pupils were given tasks that challenged them to think independently. They knew that doubling 30 was 60 and found this easy. In finding a way to double 29, they independently used varying methods and their learning was very good. They explained that 29 is one less than 30, therefore double 29 will be 2 less than 60. They described alternative methods for reaching the same answer. The teacher worked at a slower pace, on a different activity with lower attaining and pupils with special educational needs to make sure that they made equal rates of progress. They understood the concept of doubling numbers and worked accurately with numbers less than 10.

64. In Year 1, pupils have good knowledge of the names and simple properties of a range of shapes. In one lesson, they counted the sides of shapes accurately and described the sort of sides that made the shape. With this information they grouped the shapes by the number and type of sides they had. They grouped the shapes correctly on a Venn diagram. Higher attaining pupils named shapes such as diamonds, kites and ovals. Pupils count confidently up to and sometimes well beyond 20. They count on in twos, forwards and backwards and in one lesson stated that 14 was more than 12, but not as much as 16. In general, standards are better than would be expected in Year 1.

65. The teaching seen in mathematics ranged from unsatisfactory to very good but is good overall. Teaching was unsatisfactory in only one lesson where group activities did not help pupils to concentrate and work well. The teacher did not respond quickly enough to change the activity, although it was clear that pupils were not making satisfactory progress and their behaviour was deteriorating. The overriding judgement is that teachers have good skills in teaching mathematics and numeracy skills and pupils achieve well because of this. Teachers ask good questions that make pupils think for themselves and understand that many ways can be used to reach the same correct answer. Teachers make lessons fun and therefore pupils enjoy learning; they involve pupils in very practical activities that help them to concentrate well and gain better understanding. Pupils are motivated by lively lessons where the pace of work is quick. They listen well and are ready to contribute answers and ideas. The positive relationships between teachers and pupils support this atmosphere, where all pupils feel confident to have a go. When someone gets an answer right after having difficulties, everyone cheers and the sense of pride is very obvious. These are features of teaching that encourage pupils of all abilities to make the same good progress in lessons.

66. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The role of the co-ordinator has developed well since the last inspection, but she still does not regularly monitor mathematics work throughout the school or observe teaching and learning. As such, she does not have a full picture of strengths and weaknesses in standards overall. Good analysis is made of national test results, and non-statutory tests are used to assess standards in each class. However, the lack of detailed monitoring means that sometimes teachers do not teach the precise skills to achieve even better standards. Resources for the subject are adequate, but the lack of ICT equipment affects standards overall. When teachers plan to use ICT, the available programs are not completely relevant to the work in lessons and are hard for pupils to access independently.

SCIENCE

67. In the current Year 2, pupils are attaining above average standards. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were found to be average. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2001, placed pupils below average in comparison with all schools. However, assessments at the higher level, Level 3, were above average. Indications are that a greater proportion of pupils are now attaining at levels higher than would be expected for their age group. Pupils are achieving well in relation to their starting levels.

68. Pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of the word “manufactured” and correctly group materials, as natural or manufactured. They explain that natural materials can be combined to make manufactured materials, and there are also materials that are totally manmade with chemicals. In lessons, they use good methods to record their work, independently working out how to title each area on a Venn diagram. There are good links with numeracy and literacy as pupils develop their recording skills and vocabulary. In a lesson where pupils learned about the properties of materials, they sorted identified those material that were flammable, magnetic, conductors of electricity and absorbent, testing to make sure that their initial thoughts were correct. Higher attaining pupils talked about the absorbency of wood, recognising that results would be different if the wood was left in water for a long time. They explained why wood is painted on a house and confirmed through this discussion that their hypothesis about the absorbency of wood overtime was most probably correct. Lower attaining pupils were supported in grouping materials as manufactured and natural. In discussion at the end of the lesson, it was clear that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, had made good progress.

69. In Year 1, pupils learn about the variety of ways in which materials can be used and how the properties of each material dictate its use. In the best lesson in Year 1, pupils understood the words, translucent, transparent and opaque and gave examples of materials within each group, suggesting a use for each material. When asked to group materials by one characteristic, they thought of original ways to do so. For example, one group of pupils sorted materials by those that made a noise and those that did not. Pupils worked well on practical activities, helping each other and sharing materials sensibly. Pupils’ attainment was above average in this lesson and they made good progress.

70. Teaching in science was good overall. In some lessons teaching was very good and in one lesson seen, teaching was unsatisfactory. In this lesson, pupils’ progress was not good enough because the teacher did not respond quickly to pupils’ waning concentration after a very long session in another subject. Practical work in this session was followed practical work in science at the end of the day. Pupils were tired and did not pay good attention to their work. The pace of the lesson is slow, because the teacher has to give constant reminders about listening carefully. In all lessons, planning is good and builds very well on previous learning. There are clear aims for what pupils will learn, and these are successfully achieved. Pupils are motivated by interesting practical work and try very hard to find out answers for themselves. They respond very positively to being able to choose with whom they will work and how they will present their work. Pupils choose to work in mixed sex groups and make

independent decisions about the best way to label their Venn diagrams. Learning is promoted well in this way. Higher attaining pupils are set challenging work, and those pupils who have achieved well in earlier sessions are moved to work with the most able pupils to raise their attainment further. Good support is given for all ability groups to ensure that pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language, make equally good progress in lessons.

71. The headteacher's management of the subject is satisfactory. However, she does not teach science and has not formally observed others teaching the subject. End of Year 2 assessments have been carefully analysed, but this is the only way that strengths and weaknesses in pupils' standards have been evaluated so far. Resources for science are adequate, but the lack of computers limits the use of ICT for access to databases, and recording work and results in simple graphs and charts.

ART AND DESIGN

72. From the evidence of one lesson, displays, previously completed work and discussions with staff, attainment by the end of Year 2 is close to the national expectations for pupils of this age. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. The work undertaken in art and design provides some useful links to other subjects, such as mathematics, information and communication technology and English.

73. Pupils' achievements overall are satisfactory and sometimes good. The current unit of work 'Can buildings speak?' is providing many opportunities for pupils to experience different techniques in a variety of media. For example, Year 1 pupils have created a small playground frieze. For this, some printed the grass with card and others used a crayon and wash technique for the playground. The pupils cut and curled paper for the trees and rubbed bricks for the building. The overall result is effective. In the lesson seen, these pupils visited the school library to look carefully at the spines of the books on the shelves. They considered the colours, sizes, textures and printing and used a wide range of papers and materials to design a bookshelf.

74. The older pupils, following the same unit of work, began by printing repeating patterns, which provided a useful link with mathematics. Some patterns were produced on the computer. The observational pencil drawings of the outside of the school, displayed in the entrance area, are of a high standard. During the inspection, one of the classes visited the local church to study the structures there. The resulting rubbings of patterns or shields from the floor of the church show improvement as they practised the technique. Some of the pupils sketched in the church, with the most able drawing the arches and items seen through them, showing a developing sense of perspective. Although there is little evidence of three-dimensional sculpture, older pupils are planning designs to use on clay tiles later in the term.

75. Previously completed work shows good use of varied media. For example, the pupils used fabric to make glove puppets and pastels with chalk as they drew tree scenes. The 'spooky' houses, trees and monsters have been made by tearing, folding and twisting light paper, mounted on a dark background. The results are effective, with some successfully creating an 'eerie' feeling.

76. No overall judgement can be made about the quality of teaching as only one lesson was seen. The policy for art and design has not yet been updated to reflect the changes in the National Curriculum. The school is using a nationally recommended scheme of work, but there is no formal system of assessing pupils' achievements. Some samples of work are kept, but these are not mounted in a well-presented portfolio, showing the range and level of work undertaken. Resource provision is

satisfactory and the subject is co-ordinated by a knowledgeable co-ordinator. However, there have been no opportunities for her to undertake any monitoring activities as yet.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

77. Standards of attainment are in line with expectations. Pupils of all abilities are making satisfactory achievements in their designing and making skills because they receive an enjoyable and interesting curriculum and they persevere to solve problems.

78. Pupils have learned to design by initially drawing a plan or sometimes by making models using construction kits. They keep in mind the use to which the object will be put and make clear lists of the resources they will need. Their drawn designs are often labelled and show what they want the finished product to look like. When making, they show that they can join things together securely, using glue or sticky tape. They were seen to carefully assemble, cut and manipulate materials, handling tools carefully and with good physical co-ordination. Pupils successfully made wheeled vehicles, with fixed and moving axles. These were then tested to see how well they performed. In their evaluation, some pupils decided that modifications were necessary, particularly where the wheels were a bit wobbly. Some examples of previous work around the school show that pupils have designed and made Joseph's coat of many colours, have practised sewing pictures on card and, in food technology, have made a sandwich, describing the process in careful detail.

79. The pupils clearly enjoy the work and the projects are well chosen by their teachers. The teaching is satisfactory, overall. Sometimes learning is slowed by a lack of sufficient resources. For example, a few of the older construction kits do not have enough pieces left in them and the selection of useful cardboard boxes left some pupils, at the end of the queue, a little disappointed. However, the relationships in class are good and the sound management skills of the teachers ensure that all pupils enjoy a satisfactory learning experience. The skills of designing and making are being carefully taught and the pupils know what they have to do. Most were seen to work with application and concentration.

80. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Teachers are guided by a good scheme of work. They make their own assessments of pupils' progress and keep samples of their work. The subject co-ordinator gives satisfactory educational direction to the subject. Monitoring is accomplished by a study of the finished products and samples of work. There has been rather less focus on design and technology recently than there was at the time of the last inspection, because national priorities have changed and more time has been given to the teaching of core subjects. As a result, attainment and progress are not as high as during the last inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

81. Only one geography lesson was observed during the inspection. Judgements are made on this lesson, on a scrutiny of the small amount of work available from previous lessons and of the planned curriculum. Standards of attainment are in line with expectations and the children make satisfactory progress. Judgements are similar to those at the time of the last inspection.

82. It is clear that elements of the National Curriculum have been taught to the children and they have some understanding of different kinds of areas and how they might differ. This was seen in the Year 2 lesson where children made comparisons of Iver and the island of Struay, thoughtfully considering human and physical differences. They have made lists of what they might expect to see in town, countryside and seaside, sometimes drawing on their own experiences. In a good link with history, children have thought about what they might have seen at the seaside 100 years ago compared

with today. The early skills of mapping are being learned, though no plans of the classroom or the local area made by the children were seen.

83. It is not possible to judge the quality of teaching across the school, but plans show that the pupils are receiving an interesting curriculum that includes visits to local areas of interest. Parents have helped by accompanying classes in their walks to look at shops and buildings in the village. The scheme of work is based on that suggested by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and is broad and balanced in terms of the national requirements for the subject.

84. The management of the subject is generally satisfactory, though the co-ordinator, being part-time, does not teach the subject and cannot give a lead in this way. There are sufficient resources and they are replenished as necessary. They are carefully organised and available to teachers. Teachers make their own assessments of pupils' progress and keep their own records and samples of work.

HISTORY

85. As at the time of the previous inspection, standards are judged to be in line with national expectations for infant pupils. Evidence includes observation of one lesson, displays, scrutiny of pupils' previously completed work and discussion with pupils and staff. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make at least satisfactory progress.

86. Pupils are enjoying the current topic on The Great Fire of London and speak very knowledgeably about the sequence of events. They understand the living conditions of the time, where the fire started, why it spread so quickly, and how it was eventually extinguished. The younger pupils have made zigzag books showing the sequence of events. In a very good lesson, older pupils learnt first hand how difficult it is to pass buckets of water along a chain of people, and recognised that it would be ineffective when dealing with a raging fire, on a hot, windy day. They know that the main source of information for us is from the diaries of Samuel Pepys. A group of higher attaining pupils used reference books to research further information, while some of the lower attaining pupils recorded the sequence of events. They were delighted with the resulting tape. The very good teaching was lively, with many questions to establish the pupils' understanding and well planned, appropriately challenging activities for pupils of different ages and abilities, all leading to a very enthusiastic response.

87. Previous work shows a study of then and now. The youngest pupils compared toys now with some from a hundred years ago. Older pupils took the theme of seaside holidays a hundred years ago. They learnt about clothes people would have worn, how they would have travelled to the seaside and the sorts of activities they would have engaged in and compared them with the equivalent today. Some wrote postcards as if from the seaside in the past, giving good opportunities for the pupils to use their developing literacy skills.

88. The school is following the nationally recommended scheme of work, but there are no visits undertaken to enhance the curriculum. The amount of recorded work in pupils' folders is limited, though at times they record appropriately in other ways, such as the zigzag books, or for display. In one classroom there is a very good display of the Great Fire, with a frieze of the scene of burning houses and boats on the Thames. The pupils' writing is in the first person, as though they are present at the time, and is of a good standard. At present, there are no formal assessment procedures to record pupils' achievements. Although there is an adequate supply of books for the subject, there are very few artefacts. The co-ordinator is a part time teacher and does not actually teach the subject,

and, as such it is difficult for her to monitor standards. As reported at the time of the previous inspection, there has been no monitoring of the subject through the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

89. No lessons were seen where ICT skills were taught, and ICT was used only in two lessons during the inspection. In both of these sessions, computer programs were used to support learning in mathematics. In one lesson, the program was not totally relevant to the topic, but was used well by the teacher to develop pupils' awareness of shapes. In the other session, a program was used to reinforce the counting skills of lower attaining pupils. Mouse control was also developed in this session. The computer used for this work is very unreliable and has stopped working altogether on previous occasions. Pupils' attainment is below the level that would be expected for their age group and their achievements are unsatisfactory. At the time of the last inspection, standards were found to be in line with expectations.

90. The lack of quality resources for ICT work has a direct impact on the standards that pupils achieve. There are not enough computers for each class and those that are available are unreliable. As a result the school can not implement the statutory curriculum for the subject. The school improvement plan details the planned use of national funding to purchase resources and create an ICT suite. Teachers have already received some training and the planned development for the subject will involve more opportunities to improve their skills. Management of the development of the subject has been well organised, although rather slow. No judgement can be made about teaching, as none was seen.

MUSIC

91. From the limited evidence available, pupils' overall standards are close to those expected for their age, though in the one lesson seen, standards were above average. In this excellent session, the whole school came together to enjoy singing. The pupils showed great enthusiasm and all participated fully throughout, with actions when appropriate. This enthusiasm was also noted at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils know many songs by heart and sing them unaccompanied, with the teacher leading the singing strongly. At times, two-part singing was accomplished very successfully. Pupils listened attentively as the teacher clapped the rhythm of nursery rhymes for them to recognise and they repeated rhythms clapped, showing good concentration. They demonstrated awareness of different elements as they sang loudly or softly, quickly or slowly, following the teacher's conducting. The excellent teaching in this session sustained a brisk pace throughout, firm control and a lively, purposeful style, which sustained all the pupils' attention and involvement. She was well supported by several members of staff, who joined in with the singing and actions.

92. Pupils listen to a variety of music as they come into the hall for assembly each day. The title and questions are usefully displayed outside the hall. During the inspection, questions posed about the music were 'Is there a special pattern to the music?' or 'What sort of dance do you think the American Indians would do to this music?' Pupils moved their hands to the rhythms as they came into and left the hall, showing awareness of the mood of the music.

93. Pupils report that they have listened to 'The Hall of the Mountain King', but have not used percussion instruments or composed music recently. Evidence from previous years shows a good standard of composition. For example, having heard the story of 'The Iron Man', the pupils worked in groups to compose 'The Music of the Spheres', using graphic scores and recording the results. These were of a good standard and the pupils used their voices, as well as pitched and non-pitched percussion instruments, to create evocative sound pictures. With the current emphasis on the core

subjects of the National Curriculum, less time is allocated to music and these sorts of activities are undertaken less frequently, which has an obvious impact on standards in general.

94. Pupils have opportunities to perform in church and in concerts at school. They sing to elderly residents at harvest and Christmas time. They enjoyed hearing the New Mozart Orchestra and their subsequent writing shows they learnt a great deal about a range of instruments. For example, one wrote 'The flute plays high notes. It is a very long instrument.' Another wrote 'My favourite piece of music was the first bit because it was gentle and it was making me fall asleep.' Music contributes well to the pupils' cultural development, with such experiences as hearing a drum group or an African children's choir.

95. At the present time there are no extra-curricular activities. The published scheme in use through the school is helpful, though there is no formalised system for assessing pupils' progress or planning for new learning. The subject is adequately resourced and enthusiastically managed, though there has been no monitoring of classroom practice to improve the overall quality of teaching and learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

96. Based on the two lessons observed and discussions with pupils and teachers, by the end of Year 2, pupils attain at levels that are expected for their age. Their achievements in physical education are satisfactory. Standards have been maintained at the level found during the last inspection.

97. The school benefits from the use of a good sized hall that is shared with the community centre. There is ample space for gymnastics and indoor games activities. In Year 1, pupils showed their skills in copying, repeating and performing a set of simple actions in response to a taped dance and drama programme. They worked with acceptable control and co-ordination. No overall judgment can be made about the quality of teaching as too few lessons were observed in total. Outside accommodation is also spacious, but there have been recent concerns about possible subsidence on the grassed area that may affect its use in future. The school offers an appropriate range of after school sporting activities, for which parents pay. These include tennis and football. Many parents are very happy with this provision, though a few feel that there too few extra-curricular opportunities for their children.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

98. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This is no longer the case. The new agreed syllabus requires in-depth study of Christianity and one other religion and this is not yet happening. Pupils make satisfactory progress in those aspects of the subject studied. For example, the focus on different festivals last term helped the pupils to recognise features of Christmas, Eid, Diwali and the Chinese New Year. Pupils remember the visit by a Hindu parent. She and her daughter, who is a pupil at the school, wore saris and told the story of Rama and Sita. The pupils explored a sari, measuring it and seeing what it was made from and how it is worn.

99. Year 1 pupils' books about 'Special Times' include some detail about these festivals as well as Mother's Day, St. Valentine's day and birthdays. Older pupils have considered the qualities of a friend and they know a number of Jesus' parables that have been used by the teachers to reinforce the Christian message of friendship and forgiveness. For example, pupils have clear understanding of 'The Good Samaritan' and which traveller was the true friend of the injured man.

100. Just one lesson was seen during the inspection. Good teaching showed firm subject knowledge and a very well planned lesson, which involved the pupils and successfully held their interest. Having played the music ‘Sheep May Safely Graze’, to set the calm scene, the teacher told the class the parable of ‘The Lost Sheep’. This provided helpful moral development, as the pupils were encouraged to discuss right choices and appropriate behaviour. The second parable used, that of ‘The Two Sons’, was well used to reinforce the message of forgiveness for wrongdoing.

101. Some assembly themes supplement the pupils’ understanding and knowledge. For example, during the inspection, a visitor took an assembly and told the pupils the story of Jesus and Zacchaeus. Pupils were involved throughout and gave good attention as the visitor showed how Zacchaeus had climbed into a tree to see Jesus. The messages of friendship and not cheating were clear and the pupils recognized that Jesus cares for everyone.

102. Pupils visit the local church, but have no opportunities to visit places of worship of other religions. There is a good supply of books but few artefacts to help pupils’ understanding. The decision has not yet been taken as to which religion to pursue in depth. The amount of time allocated to the subject meets the locally agreed syllabus recommendation of approximately 5 per cent of curriculum time. One of the priorities identified in the school improvement plan is to ensure the pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum, and this subject is one requiring specific attention. The subject is led by a knowledgeable co-ordinator, but there have been no opportunities for any monitoring of pupils’ learning.