

INSPECTION REPORT

GRAYS COUNTY INFANT SCHOOL

Newhaven

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114441

Headteacher: Mrs Christine Dale

Reporting inspector: Mr Richard Harris
21542

Dates of inspection: 10th – 13th June 2002

Inspection number: 245258

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 and Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 -7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Western Road Newhaven East Sussex
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Duncan Campbell
Date of previous inspection:	2 nd – 5 th March 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21542	Richard Harris	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9454	Deborah Pepper	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) 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?
2522	Janet Miles	Team inspector	English English as an additional language Design and technology Equal opportunities	
21904	Diane Gale	Team inspector	Science History Geography	
22934	Judy Riches	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
1710	Thelma Edwards	Team Inspector	Foundation Stage Religious education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Grays School is situated in the Meeching ward of Newhaven, an area identified for regeneration. Grays is bigger than other primary schools with 332 boys and girls aged from three to seven. The Nursery annexe is some distance from the main site and accommodates two morning and two afternoon sessions for 50 full-time equivalent children aged from three to four. On entry to the Nursery, children's attainment is generally below average. About 65 per cent of Nursery children transfer to the main site which accommodates three forms of entry for Reception children and pupils in Years 1 and 2. Currently, 36 per cent of pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs, which is above the national average. In addition, 1.4 per cent of pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need, which is similar to the national average. Pupils come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. The 18.4 per cent of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. Most pupils are of White UK heritage and there are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language. Staff turnover has been very high.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Despite the very high turnover of staff, the school has maintained an overall satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. It is led effectively and is doing a good job in challenging circumstances. The overall quality of teaching is good and very good in the Foundation Stage. This has led to recent improvements in standards in reading, numeracy and science, although these are not yet reflected in the school's National Curriculum results. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well, but higher attaining pupils underachieve because they are not always challenged sufficiently. By Year 2, standards in speaking and writing are too low. The curriculum meets pupils' needs, but the total amount of teaching time is below the recommended national minimum and this affects the overall balance of the curriculum. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The school is led effectively by the headteacher and senior staff. Action taken to improve standards in reading, numeracy and science is beginning to bear fruit and the school is achieving many of its aims, particularly in relation to pupils' personal development.
- The standard of teaching is very good in the Nursery and Reception classes and good overall in Years 1 and 2. Consequently, most pupils make good progress in lessons.
- Teachers and support staff know pupils well and provide a very good level of care. As a result, the individual needs of pupils with special educational needs are met.
- Pupils' personal development is very good. The very strong provision for pupils' social and moral development results in a fully inclusive school where relationships are excellent, pupils are well behaved and have very good attitudes.
- The school has very good links with its parents and the community that it serves. Parents are fully confident in the headteacher, governors and staff.

What could be improved

- Standards in speaking and writing are too low by the end of Year 2.
- Improve planning for the use of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.
- Review and improve the amount of teaching time in Years 1 and 2.
- Improve the use of assessment information, so that pupils' progress is tracked and higher attaining pupils are identified and challenged by more demanding tasks.
- Improve the strategic management of the school by governors and by curriculum co-ordinators.
- Raise attendance levels by improving the school's monitoring procedures.

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 March 1998 and responded satisfactorily to its former weaknesses. For example, science is now taught as a discrete subject and staff training needs have been addressed. The school's context has changed significantly over the past four years. Children enter the nursery with a wide range of prior attainment but many have below average attainment. Over one-third of pupils are now on the school's register for special education need. The pace of planned improvements has been stalled because of the very high, and often unexpected, turnover of staff. Despite this, the school has achieved most of its aims, particularly in terms of improving pupils' personal development. The good quality of teaching has been maintained and further improved in the Foundation Stage where it is now very good. Pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes to lessons have been maintained. Although results in national tests have declined, the headteacher has taken effective action and been particularly successful in improving standards in reading. The school is now well placed to make the further improvements necessary, particularly in speaking and writing, because the headteacher has secured a strong, shared staff commitment to raising standards.

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	D	E	E	E*
writing	D	D	E	E
mathematics	C	D	E	E

Key

very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

Compared to all schools, results have been consistently below or well below average in reading and writing. In mathematics, results have fallen year-on-year and were well below average in 2001. Results are no less favourable when compared to similar schools and last year's results in reading were very low and in the lowest five per cent nationally. Teachers' assessments in speaking and listening and in science indicated that pupils' standards were below the national average and well below average when compared with similar schools. The downward trend in the school's results has not compared favourably with the upward national trend. Several factors have contributed to the trend in test results. For example, literacy and numeracy skills are not sufficiently applied in the teaching of other curriculum subjects, children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is declining with many demonstrating speech and language delay and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is increasing. Although the school's past national test results indicate that boys do not perform as well as girls, particularly in mathematics, inspection evidence indicates no significant differences in their attainment.

The very good teaching across the Foundation Stage ensures children achieve well. By Year 1, they reach average or above standards in most areas of learning. However, despite the high quality provision, most children do not reach average standards in speaking and reading. This is because many have speech and language delay. Listening skills are very good and children make satisfactory progress in their writing because of their good development in fine motor skills.

The headteacher and staff are systematically addressing the previous low results in national tests. By Year 2, overall standards are average and pupils make good progress in lessons. Standards in English are average overall, but there are variations within the subject. Whilst

standards in listening and reading are average, the standards in speaking and writing are below average. This is because there are too few opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas and to write extensively and many have a speech and language delay on entry. Pupils attain average standards in mathematics and achieve well in numeracy. They also reach average standards in science, information and communication technology, art and design, geography, history, and design and technology. Standards in music are average overall and above average in singing. Standards in religious education are average and in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in physical education are above average because of the high expectations of what pupils can do. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well overall against the targets in their individual education plans. The very few pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as their peers because of the school's good induction arrangements and teachers' awareness of pupils' individual literacy needs. Higher attaining pupils are progressing satisfactorily in reading, but are insufficiently challenged in most other subjects and consequently underachieve.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good and contribute to their progress in learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good because rules are understood and consistently reinforced by all staff.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent relationships promote very good personal development and the full inclusion of its pupils.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory with regular lateness by some pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are strengths of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good

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

The good quality of teaching has been maintained. It has improved further in the Foundation Stage, where it is now very good. This is having a beneficial effect on pupils' standards and progress. Pupils with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language receive good support which helps them to achieve well. However, higher attainers often underachieve because they are insufficiently challenged in lessons. The teaching of basic skills is good in English and satisfactory in mathematics and has led to recently improving standards in listening, reading and numeracy. However, the application of basic literacy and numeracy skills is not planned well across the curriculum. In lessons, teaching is good overall in English, science, music and physical education. Teaching is satisfactory in numeracy and most other subjects. Two unsatisfactory lessons were seen.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. The amount of teaching time in Years 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall. Good systems and support ensure the targets in their individual education plans are reviewed regularly and often reached.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. The very few pupils are well inducted and their needs are met.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. The school ensures excellent provision for pupils' social development, very good for their moral, good for spiritual and satisfactory for their cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall, but the use of assessment is unsatisfactory. A few potential health and safety issues were reported to the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall, but the strategic roles of curriculum co-ordinators need further development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Unsatisfactory overall. Governors are supportive of the school, but their strategic role needs further development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory and needs further improvement so that all available data and assessments are used.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Principles of best value are beginning to be applied.

Overall, there are sufficient learning resources, but there is a shortage of computers in the Nursery. Despite the very high turnover, staffing levels are good. The accommodation is good, but the maintenance of the Nursery building is a constant drain on the school's budget.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is well led and managed. Children like school, are well taught, behave well and make good progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The range of extra-curricular activities.

The school has a very strong partnership with its parents and this makes an important contribution to pupils' learning. Inspection findings support the positive views that parents have about the school. The team found the range of extra-curricular activities to be satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

1. Standards on entry, at the time of the last inspection, were broadly average overall. Since then, attainment on entry has changed significantly and this affects comparisons with current standards and those attained by pupils at the time of the last inspection. Nursery children come with a wide range of prior attainment and more diverse special educational needs (SEN). A significant number of Nursery children also require support with their emotional development. Overall, children now enter the Nursery with attainment that is below average, particularly in speech and language. On average, about 65 per cent of Nursery children transfer to Grays' Reception classes. A few children enter Reception having attended playgroups and some have had no pre-school experience. The school's own monitoring systems show that most children who attain better than average standards in the Nursery do not always transfer to Grays' Reception classes.
2. Nursery children receive a flying start to their education and achieve well because of the high quality provision and the very good standard of teaching and care. Children's special needs are identified early and catered for so that they are able to make good progress against their prior attainment. This very good picture is continued into the Reception classes. Despite the split site, teachers and support staff in the Foundation Stage ensure the continuity of children's learning through careful and successful induction arrangements. The teaching and level of care in Reception classes are of a similar high standard to the Nursery. Consequently, Reception children, including those with SEN, continue to thrive and to build successfully on their previous learning.
3. By the start of Year 1, children achieve particularly well and attain above average standards in their personal, social and emotional development and also in their physical development. This good achievement has been maintained since the previous inspection. The majority reaches average standards (known nationally as the Early Learning Goals) in their mathematical development, creative development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. However, for most children, it will take longer to reach the Early Learning Goals in most aspects of communication, language and literacy, because of their overall below average attainment on entry, particularly in speaking skills. By the start of Year 1, although their listening skills are very good, skills in speaking and reading remain weak, despite the teachers' best efforts. This weakness affects children's progress, not only in language and literacy, but also in most other areas of their learning.
4. The very good quality of teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes impacts very positively on children's learning. Children learn through a good balance of adult-led and child-chosen activities. The needs of the different groups within Nursery and Reception classes are planned and met. This includes pupils with SEN and the higher attainers who are given tasks to extend their ideas and thinking skills and are challenged to do their best. As a result, children achieve well in all areas of their learning and are well prepared for their work in Year 1. For example, by the start of Year 1, they have experienced well-adapted elements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.
5. Results in the 2001 national tests, at the end of Year 2, based on average points, were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics when compared to all schools nationally. Teachers' assessments in speaking and listening and in science indicated that standards were also well below average. Compared to schools of a similar context, results in 2001 were well below average in writing and mathematics. Results in reading were in the lowest five per cent nationally. Since 1998, the year of the last inspection, results in reading, writing and mathematics at Grays have followed a downward trend, whilst the national picture has been one of steady improvement in all three subjects. This is because of the declining standards of children's attainment on entry to the Nursery, the increasing

proportion of pupils with a wide range of SEN and because curricular planning does not identify where and how literacy and numeracy skills will be taught and applied across the curriculum.

6. Recent and past results of national tests indicated some differences between the relative performances of girls and boys at Grays. For example, boys' attainment in mathematics has been consistently lower than the national picture over the past two years. In comparison, girls at Grays have performed closer to the standards in mathematics attained nationally by girls. However, evidence from the current inspection indicates no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls in mathematics. In reading and writing, past results suggest that both boys and girls at Grays have underperformed compared to their counterparts nationally. Again, no significant differences were found during the inspection.
7. Standards in the work seen in Year 2 are average in English, mathematics and science. This is a similar picture to the standards in those subjects at the time of the last inspection. However, within the subject of English, there are variations in standards. For example, standards in listening and reading are average, but in speaking and writing, standards have declined and are now below average. This is because pupils in Years 1 and 2 receive insufficient opportunities to discuss their ideas and to write extensively.
8. Most pupils in Year 1 and 2 are good listeners and are keen to respond to adults' questions, but many have difficulties in expressing their ideas and opinions clearly in extended sentences. The good use of drama to support pupils' development in speaking, identified in the previous inspection, is now less in evidence across the curriculum.
9. The school successfully uses the National Literacy Strategy in Years 1 and 2 on a daily basis to improve standards in English. Guided reading sessions are used well to support pupils' standards in reading. Teachers also find other times during the day to support pupils' reading skills. In addition, a 'catch-up' programme in literacy, together with programmes for teaching the systematic learning of letter sounds, have also contributed to the recent improvements in reading standards. This strong emphasis on the learning of phonics is also beginning to improve standards in spelling. Pupils confidently use their range of reading skills when attempting new texts or unfamiliar words. They know when they have made a mistake and correct themselves without prompting. Most middle and higher attaining pupils in Year 2 read fluently and use expression, but many are not challenged to read a sufficient range of genres, styles and authors.
10. Writing standards are too low by the end of Year 2. This is because pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not have sufficient opportunities to write extensively and for a range of purposes. The lack of teaching time for some subjects restricts pupils' opportunities to write at length and to practise skills learnt in the 'literacy hour'. In addition, teachers' marking does not help pupils to improve the quality of their written work. Whilst all pupils have individual targets to support their improvement in writing, these are rarely referred to in lessons. The presentation of pupils' work is generally unsatisfactory. Handwriting skills are taught regularly, but are unsatisfactory because pupils are not reminded to apply them when writing independently. Few pupils choose to join up their letters and consequently they do not achieve the higher levels in national tests.
11. Standards in the work seen in mathematics are average in Year 2. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, particularly in their number work, because of the successful use made of the National Numeracy Strategy and the satisfactory and sometimes good teaching seen in lessons in Years 1 and 2. Pupils gain particularly from the mental/oral activities at the start of lessons. However, plenary sessions, at the end of lessons, are less well used and consequently vary significantly in their impact on pupils' learning. Too often such sessions are too short to be of use. The school has rightly focused on improving pupils' numeracy

skills, but this has resulted in less emphasis on other aspects of mathematics such as 'space, shape and measures'.

12. Standards in the work seen in science are average in Year 2 and similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection. Teaching is good and supports pupils' progress in learning so that they make satisfactory gains in their knowledge across the different aspects of the subject. By Year 2, pupils' notion of the need for a fair test in an investigation is sound. For example, pupils can predict likely outcomes in their experiments with simple electrical circuits. However, an overall shortage of teaching time limits pupils' opportunities carry out investigations in depth.
13. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) were found to be above average at the time of the last inspection. Standards in the current work are average in Year 2. This is partly due to the very high turnover of staff, a previous lack of expertise in ICT and also to the significant National Curriculum changes in the subject since the time of the last inspection. Pupils benefit from the discrete lessons where ICT skills are planned and taught on a regular basis and also from planned opportunities to apply their ICT skills in some other subjects.
14. Standards in the work seen in religious education (RE) are average in Year 2 and in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This mirrors the standards in RE at the time of the last inspection. Pupils demonstrate a satisfactory knowledge of religions such as Christianity and Judaism and can recount some of the stories from the Bible. All pupils achieve satisfactorily against their prior attainment, but insufficient teaching time for RE limits pupils' opportunities to discuss and to write about their work.
15. Standards in physical education (PE) are above average in Year 2 and have been maintained since the time of the previous inspection. However, although pupils achieve well, their progress in some lessons is affected by the current fragmentation of time for the subject. Standards in music are average and generally reflect those found previously. Standards in singing have improved further and are now above average. Pupils achieve well in music because of the good quality of teaching and of the expertise and enthusiasm of the co-ordinator. Pupils' experiences in music have led a positive impact on pupils' development of listening skills. Standards in geography, history and design and technology (DT) have been maintained and are average. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in each of these subjects. Regular visits out and visitors to the school have enhanced pupils' learning experiences. Pupils' satisfactory progress in DT is supported by a specific week dedicated to the subject. Standards in art were well above average at the time of the last inspection. The subject has undergone changes nationally since then and now includes aspects of design. Current standards are average because the school has been tardy in responding to the National Curriculum changes to the subject and the insufficient teaching of skills as pupils progress through Years 1 and 2.
16. Pupils receive limited opportunities to use their basic literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Consequently opportunities are missed for pupils to apply what they know, particularly in writing. In addition, the lack of teaching time in geography and history limits pupils' opportunities to discuss and to record their work. The picture for the use of skills in ICT across the curriculum is better. This is because teachers plan regular opportunities for ICT in the dedicated literacy and numeracy sessions. However, although pupils use a range of ICT programs to support their learning in reading and numeracy, opportunities to use ICT for drafting and improving the quality of their written work are limited.
17. The overall good quality of teaching ensures that pupils with SEN continue to make the good progress in lessons seen at the time of the last inspection. Nursery nurses and teaching assistants (TAs) are well trained in aspects of SEN and provide very good support in developing pupils' receptive and expressive language. For example, in one

effective session a nursery nurse extended speech and language skills further by encouraging pupils to talk about their picture of a clown. In English, pupils with SEN achieve well in reading and make good progress against the literacy targets in their individual education plans (IEPs). Pupils with SEN achieve satisfactorily in mathematics because teachers plan tasks that often match their prior learning. However, IEPs rarely feature targets in mathematics when many pupils clearly demonstrate needs in the subject. Specific support programmes linked to aspects of pupils' physical and emotional development are of all-round benefit to targeted children and to the very few with statements of SEN. For example, the 'nurture groups' and the activities that take place to improve pupils' co-ordination skills improve children's confidence in their own abilities. External support agencies also make a valuable contribution to the overall good progress of pupils with SEN.

18. The very few pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) achieve as well as their peers because of the school's good induction arrangements and teachers' awareness of pupils' individual literacy needs. Pupils are confident in mathematics and gain from the school's use of visual aids such as a commercially-produced numeracy resource.
19. Higher attaining pupils are progressing satisfactorily in reading, but are insufficiently challenged in most other subjects and consequently underachieve. For example, they rarely use strategies such as redrafting to improve the quality of their writing and few turn independently to dictionaries and thesauri to improve the range of their vocabulary. In mathematics, higher attainers underachieve because tasks do not sufficiently extend and challenge their thinking. There is a similar picture in science where higher attaining pupils could be expected to develop their science skills at a faster rate. Sometimes work in ICT is insufficiently challenging for higher attainers. For example, the game of 'guess who', where pupils asked questions to find the identity of a classmate, impacted satisfactorily on aspects of their learning in English, but did little to extend their capabilities in ICT.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

20. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are very good and make an important contribution to their learning. These high standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The inspection team agreed with parents that their children are happy, secure and grow in confidence at Grays. Children acquire a thirst for learning in the Nursery and this continues across the school. As a result, pupils enjoy all aspects of school life and are responsive in lessons. Pupils are attentive and follow instructions. They concentrate well during whole class sessions, settle quickly to individual or group tasks and take an obvious pride in their work. Pupils with SEN have a positive attitude to learning. When working individually or in a small group they often show an improved level of confidence. They persevere with challenging tasks and enjoy the sessions. The very few pupils with EAL are fully included in lessons and, as a result of the care they receive, they demonstrate good attitudes to their work.
21. Pupils' behaviour is very good in lessons, around the school and in the playground. Parents are right to be pleased with the very good standards of behaviour at Grays. During lessons, pupils are polite to staff and to each other. Teachers and support staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour which they enforce consistently, yet gently and fairly. Pupils respond well because they know and understand the school's 'Golden Rules'. These are displayed in classrooms and all members of staff regularly remind pupils about them. There were no exclusions recorded at the time of the previous inspection. The school's very good procedures and high expectations in regard to behaviour have resulted in no exclusions in the past year.
22. Teachers and support staff praise and encourage pupils regularly. This climate of praise enables pupils to develop their self-esteem. Pupils with identified behavioural difficulties

are helped to conduct themselves well by the sensitive handling from staff, who remind pupils of their behavioural objectives and reward them when these are met. No bullying or other inappropriate behaviour was observed during the inspection and such incidents are very rare.

23. The quality of relationships within the school is excellent and the school is a harmonious and supportive community. Teachers and support staff know and understand children's individual needs and treat pupils with respect and sensitivity. All staff provide very good role models for pupils. As a result, pupils develop very positive relationships with adults and other pupils. During the inspection, pupils often displayed considerable maturity in the way they supported and interacted with children with specific special needs and those with behavioural difficulties.
24. The personal development of pupils is very good overall. The school's 'Global Citizenship' programme helps them understand the beliefs and values of others. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities and show initiative when given the opportunity. Parents commented that Year 2 pupils acted as very good guides during the school's 'Open Day'. Pupils tidy up resources efficiently, return registers to the office and are happy to be a 'helping hand' in their class.
25. At the time of the last inspection attendance was good. Attendance is now unsatisfactory. Last year it was 93.4 per cent, which was below the national average and represented a fall compared with the previous year. A small number of pupils have very poor attendance records and the school has worked intensively with their families, occasionally with success. Although most pupils arrive at school on time, a significant minority is regularly late.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

26. At the time of the last inspection, the quality of teaching was good across the school. Despite the very high turnover of staff, this good quality has been maintained and further improved in the Foundation Stage where it is now very good and occasionally excellent.
27. In the lessons seen, the overall quality of teaching was good or better in six out of every ten and very good or excellent in just over three out of every ten lessons. This level of very good and excellent teaching is almost double the proportion previously found. The overall good quality of teaching contributes significantly to pupils' good progress and very positive attitudes in lessons.
28. The very good quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage represents an improvement since the last inspection where teaching was judged to be good. Teaching was never less than satisfactory and two lessons, one in the Nursery and one in Reception, were excellent. This high standard of teaching impacts very positively on the quality of provision and the rate at which children learn. All children are fully included and are expected to succeed. Children with SEN are well supported by the very good teamwork of teachers, nursery nurses and TAs. Consequently, children with SEN achieve well and make good progress. Parents are right to be pleased about the quality of relationships between their children and the adults who work in the Foundation Stage.
29. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is good in English and has led to recent improvements in pupils' reading and listening skills. Standards in reading are improving because of the school's strong and successful emphasis on the systematic learning of letter sounds and the effective use of the National Literacy Framework to teach important skills in the guided reading sessions. The teaching of speaking and writing has been less successful because each has received insufficient emphasis outside of the 'literacy hour'. The lack of available teaching time in some subjects also restricts pupils' opportunities to talk, to develop their

ideas and to write at length. The regular teaching of drama, identified in the previous report, is not now in evidence. Consequently, whilst standards in listening and reading are rising, the standards in speaking and writing have declined since the time of the last inspection.

30. The teaching of mathematics was good overall at the time of the last inspection. Teaching is now satisfactory, although some good teaching regularly occurs. Where teaching is good, teachers make effective use of quick-fire questions at the start of lessons. The recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy are used well as a basis for planning, but the plenary session, at the end of lessons, is often cut short so that lessons are not always rounded off well. Where learning is particularly good, teachers set high expectations of what all pupils can do, lessons proceed at a brisk pace and the level of challenge is high for all pupils. Pupils make good gains in their mathematical learning when they were encouraged to explain their methods.
31. At the time of the previous inspection, too few science lessons were seen and consequently no judgements were made on the overall quality of teaching. Since that time, improvements have been made to teachers' subject expertise in science and consequently, the quality of teaching is now good, particularly in Year 2. The information given to pupils at the start of each lesson works well. Pupils are clear about the learning objectives and the purpose of each lesson. Where lessons proceed at a brisk pace, pupils stay interested and involved in their tasks. A strong emphasis on the teaching of important vocabulary supports pupils' understanding of key scientific principles as well as developing their literacy skills. There has been less emphasis on the importance of teaching science skills. This results in pupils needing too much direction when carrying out their investigations.
32. Previous weaknesses related to ICT lesson planning have been addressed and teaching is satisfactory. However, the quality of teaching is not as good as it was at the time of the last inspection because staff sometimes lack sufficient expertise. In the best lessons, teachers use clear demonstrations, explanations and instructions which enable pupils to employ a range of programs linked to their work in other subjects. Whilst there is good use of specific reading programs as well as programs to support the learning of initial letter sounds, the use of ICT to draft ideas straight onto a screen are missed.
33. The overall quality of RE teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good. In effective lessons about 'name-giving', teachers made good use of RE resources and artefacts such as a Jewish skull-cap and Christian robes for ceremonies such as the 'naming of babies'. Such opportunities helped pupils in their understanding of some of the similarities and differences between religions.
34. The quality of teaching in other subjects is generally satisfactory and sometimes good. For example, Teaching in art and design is satisfactory, although not as good as at the time of the last inspection. Teachers and support staff make sound use of the good quality resources for the subject, but the teaching of skills, such as those needed for drawing, is not sufficiently planned. Pupils made good gains in learning where they were challenged to mix their own paints and to review their initial designs. The quality of DT teaching is satisfactory. No judgements on DT teaching were made at the time of the last inspection so comparisons are not possible. Where learning is effective, staff present tasks to pupils as problems to solve and challenge those with the most ambitious designs to review their ideas. Music is taught well and is good overall. This represents an improvement since the last inspection where teaching was found to be broadly satisfactory. Effective teaching is characterised by the high expectations and strong focus on improving pupils' skills in the subject. This is evident at the planning stage, where teachers work together to identify the progression of skills to be taught. Teachers' subject knowledge is often good and they use it well to split lessons into shorter, well timed activities that maintain pupils' interest and

keep their active involvement high. Similarly, PE skills are taught systematically in Years 1 and 2 and teachers build on the good progress made earlier in the school. The overall good quality of PE teaching has been maintained, although on one occasion teaching was unsatisfactory because pupils were kept inactive for prolonged periods.

35. No judgements could be made on the quality of teaching in geography and history as too few lessons were seen due to the arrangement of the timetable. However, from all other available evidence, it is clear that pupils are taught important historical and geographical facts, but have few opportunities to develop the skills of inquiry and investigation. This is due to the lack of teaching time for both subjects.
36. Although basic skills are generally taught well in dedicated literacy, numeracy and ICT lessons, literacy and numeracy skills are rarely planned into lessons in other curriculum subjects. Recent improvements in reading standards are due to the strong emphasis in the teaching of letter sounds from an early stage. However, the lack of planned opportunities to discuss their work and to write at length in other subjects limits pupils' achievement in speaking and writing. Pupils are supported in their numeracy development by the consistent way teachers use a commercially-produced visual aid. This enables pupils to make good gains in their understanding of place value.
37. Pupils with SEN are taught well throughout the school. This is similar to the quality found previously. Appropriate training has increased staff knowledge of the pupils' range of special needs. Teachers and support staff have high expectations of what pupils with SEN and those pupils with statements can do. Some of the specific programmes planned to support and address pupils' needs are taught well and are helping to raise pupils' confidence in themselves as learners. For example, teachers and support staff use a range of multi-sensory approaches to teach specific skills to improve co-ordination. Multi-agency links are managed well and pupils gain from the work of the school nurse, educational psychologist and staff from the Peacehaven Speech and Language Centre. Together they combine to ensure pupils' good support by drawing up individualised programmes for pupils.
38. The very few pupils with EAL are well supported and fully included in lessons. As a result they gain in confidence and quickly build on their level of spoken English. The use of visual aids such as 'puppets' in some literacy lessons and commercially-produced visual apparatus in numeracy enables pupils with EAL to make similar progress as their peers.
39. In most lessons, there are particular strengths that contribute to pupils' very positive attitudes. Teachers manage their pupils well using a consistent and even-handed approach. Consequently, no unsatisfactory behaviour was seen. Excellent relationships, interesting content and a thorough knowledge of individual pupils support pupils' motivation and interest in lessons. Learning intentions are made clear to pupils at the outset, but are not always returned to at the end of lessons, particularly in mathematics. Consequently, lessons are not always rounded off well. Occasionally, the lack of time for some lessons is not helpful to teachers. For example, one lesson in PE was so short that pupils had no time to get changed.
40. Subject knowledge is generally satisfactory and improving in ICT. Teachers use their subject knowledge to make lessons interesting and enjoyable. Pupils respond very positively to the use of humour; for example, the use of puppets such as 'Colin the Counting Crow' in mathematics. Teamwork is very good between teachers and support staff. Nursery nurses and TAs are well briefed about lessons and deployed to effectively support pupils, particularly those with SEN. Resources such as commercially-produced aids, miniature whiteboards and class computers are used efficiently.

41. Teachers plan lessons together in year group teams and this provides support for new and newly qualified staff. Lesson planning makes clear what pupils are expected to learn, but does not provide the extension activities that are needed to challenge the higher attainers further. Teachers' procedures for day-to-day assessments are now improved in science and are broadly satisfactory in other subjects. However, this valuable information is not used well, particularly in tracking the progress of potential higher attaining pupils, and this accounts partly for their underachievement. Marking is regularly carried out, but is unsatisfactory overall because few written comments are made that tell pupils what they need to do to improve their work. Homework in reading, spellings and mathematics is set regularly and generally supports pupils' learning. The homework for mathematics is a useful addition, but is often the same for all pupils and, as such, does not match the range of pupils' prior attainment.

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

42. The quality and range of curriculum opportunities are good in the Nursery and Reception classes and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Overall, the school provides a satisfactory curriculum that meets statutory requirements and includes provision for RE. The school has successfully placed a strong emphasis on the development of pupils' reading skills. The curriculum promotes pupils' intellectual, physical, creative and personal development whilst preparing them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.
43. The Foundation Stage curriculum is broad and balanced and is securely linked to the nationally recommended six areas of learning. However, although the curriculum in Years 1 and 2 is broad, it is not as well balanced as it was at the time of the last inspection. The amount of daily teaching time falls below the nationally recommended minimum. This results in insufficient time for some subjects such as RE, history and geography and, in the case of PE, some fragmented lessons. Consequently, there is insufficient time for pupils to discuss and to record their work in any depth.
44. The school has implemented satisfactorily the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and planning for English and mathematics is firmly based on the national recommendations. However, curricular planning does not identify where and how literacy and numeracy skills will be taught and applied across the curriculum and this is a significant contributory factor to the school's decline in national test results.
45. Provision for pupils with SEN is good overall. Literacy targets in their IEPs are concise and measurable, but IEPs do not include pupils' needs in numeracy.
46. Provision for pupils with EAL is satisfactory. The very few pupils have acquired good levels of spoken English because of the good support they receive, particularly during literacy and numeracy lessons.
47. Grays is socially inclusive of all its pupils and this is a major strength of the school. The whole school is strongly committed to providing opportunities for all of its pupils and valuing them equally. Boys and girls work co-operatively together and are given equal status. Pupils are ensured equality of access to the school's curriculum. Although the school has good procedures to identify, monitor and review the needs of pupils with SEN, such procedures are less secure for its potentially higher attaining pupils.
48. The arrangements for pupils' personal, health and social curriculum are good and are supported by an extensive policy and scheme of work. Some topics are taught through 'circle time', others through other curriculum areas and some through assemblies. In addition, teachers promote many aspects of personal and social education in their everyday interactions with pupils; for example, encouraging pupils to value each other's

contributions, requiring turn-taking and setting high standards for behaviour. Other aspects of personal, health and social education are provided through lessons in science, geography and PE. The importance of drugs awareness and sex education is promoted satisfactorily through the school's science curriculum.

49. The contribution made to pupils' learning by the community is very good. This is because there are a very wide range of links with the local community which enrich the life of the school. Sport is promoted effectively through the partnership with a local secondary school. Following the full 'Sure Start' funding awarded to the Meeching Valley ward, a family worker is to be appointed to the school in the near future. The school is also part of a local education business partnership. This provides several benefits to the school such as computer courses for parents as part of a local technology initiative. In addition, local craftspeople visit the school for 'Craft and Plant Day'. They demonstrate their skills and work with pupils on activities such as 'origami' and 'cake-icing'. Other visitors to the school have included puppeteers, an artist in residence and representatives from the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (Oxfam). Such experiences combine to deepen pupils' experiences across the curriculum.
50. Pupils' learning is also enriched by a satisfactory range of extra-curricular musical and sporting activities and further enhanced by regular visits to places of interest, such as the local church and the town of Newhaven. The school has good links with a range of partner institutions. The school hosts the local schools' 'Music Festival'. A 'parent and toddler' group meets twice a week in the Nursery school. Links with the local junior school are being extended and staff at Grays share their behaviour management strategies with a local school. In addition, Grays is an active member of a cluster of Newhaven schools that provide each other with mutual support.
51. The previous inspection concluded that the school provided well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, at that time, there were few opportunities in art and music for pupils to experience the cultures of other countries. This weakness has been successfully addressed. In so doing, the school has improved the overall provision for pupils' personal development further so that it is now very good overall.
52. Provision for pupils' social development is excellent. This leads to very positive relationships within the school. Pupils are given regular opportunities to work in pairs and small groups. They are also encouraged to work collaboratively and to share equipment and learning resources. In a number of lessons, pupils are given opportunities to share and celebrate each other's work and spontaneously praise the work of their peers. All pupils, particularly those with SEN, of whatever nature or difficulty, are included fully in all activities by adults and other pupils. The school's focus on raising pupils' self-esteem is supported by the very positive role models provided by adults. Classrooms are organised to help pupils develop independence skills. 'Circle time' is used effectively to reinforce pupils' social development. Pupils listen to each other with respect and are given opportunities to explore their feelings, values and opinions. Some pupils are able to do so articulately, but others lack the vocabulary to express their opinions. The school also helps pupils understand the wider needs of the community; for example, by supporting 'Homestart', a local charity which works with families with young children.
53. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. It is particularly strong where high quality teaching, for example, in the Foundation Stage, includes a mix of awe and excitement for children. This was characterised in a lesson in the Nursery where children were thrilled by the beauty of a shell under a microscope. Assemblies and acts of collective worship take place daily, meet statutory requirements, are of good quality and provide pupils with suitable opportunities for celebration, prayer, reflection and stillness. For example, they responded with real concern to an assembly about human actions that pollute the world. This was followed up in sessions such as 'circle time' where pupils

identified how they could make a difference to the environment in Newhaven. Pupils overall have a more secure understanding of values than beliefs. Lessons in RE contribute to their knowledge of different faiths. Their understanding of personal belief is satisfactory by the end of Year 2, and is helped by the themes related to 'special people' in assemblies, such as Elizabeth Fry and Florence Nightingale.

54. The very good provision for moral development is reflected in pupils' knowledge of what is right and wrong and the respect they show for visitors, adults and each other. Teachers and support staff are positive and encouraging in their interactions with pupils, constantly reinforcing moral and behavioural expectations and regularly praising achievements. This impacts well on pupils' responses in lessons and no unsatisfactory behaviour was observed. The school's strong moral code helps pupils to grow visibly in self-confidence. The school's recent review of its behaviour policy ensures that rules are applied consistently. Good behaviour is rewarded with stickers and certificates. The recent introduction of gold cards for behaving and listening in assembly works well.
55. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' cultural development. They develop an understanding of their own cultures through the taught curriculum; for example, a film and photographic study of Brighton. Visitors also enrich the school's provision so that pupils gain from practical experience of different crafts from this country and from around the world. For example, an artist in residence worked with pupils on a weaving project. The school helps pupils to understand different cultures through history, geography, art and music. The story of the 'Awongalema Tree' was used in a very effective lesson where pupils chose instruments from a range of cultures to match the sounds of animals. In English, enlarged texts with cross-cultural themes are used well in year group assemblies. The school's 'Global Citizenship' project has both extended pupils' understanding of other cultures, as well as encouraging a sense of responsibility for the local and world environment. However, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to appreciate the cultural diversity of their society because there are insufficient visits to places of worship of other faiths or visits from adherents of other faiths.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

56. The steps taken to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are good, largely because of the quality of relationships and the way children are cared for and nurtured. These ensure that the school cares well for its pupils and provides a safe and welcoming environment where children grow in confidence and maturity.
57. The care for pupils and their families remains a priority as it was at the time of the last inspection. Parents are rightly pleased with the standards of care the school provides and commented particularly on the quality of the induction of their children to the Nursery and the main school site. Class teachers and support staff use their excellent understanding of pupils' individual needs to guide them sensitively and positively, promoting their sense of self-worth. New pupils are properly inducted so that they become aware quickly of the school's routines. The school nurse makes a very effective contribution to the care and welfare of pupils, liaising with other agencies where there are any concerns.
58. The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good, particularly for pupils with SEN and those with full statements of SEN. Teachers know their pupils well and maintain good records on pupils' individual circumstances and medical needs. Teachers keep a profile on each pupil and monitor the awards of certificates and stickers to ensure that all pupils are properly encouraged by these incentives. Pupils' personal development is referred to in their individual annual reports, which are sent to parents.

59. The school has excellent procedures for developing good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour and bullying. A working party of staff recently reviewed the school's behaviour policy. Teachers and support staff are fully committed to the policy's aims and it is implemented consistently throughout the school. The very good behaviour observed during the inspection shows the effectiveness of the policy. Behavioural records are kept for individual pupils, where necessary. Parents are right to feel pleased that any form of bullying is not tolerated at Grays. In discussions, pupils in Year 2 confirmed with inspectors that any bullying or racial harassment would be dealt with quickly and effectively.
60. Although the headteacher works in close co-operation with the school's education welfare officer to improve the current unsatisfactory levels of attendance and lateness, the school's procedures for monitoring attendance are unsatisfactory overall. At present, attendance data are not monitored systematically to plot overall trends. Because a late book is not kept, it is difficult for the school to evaluate trends in punctuality.
61. Arrangements for child protection are good. The importance of child protection has a high profile within the school and teachers and support staff are alert to any indication that a child might be 'at risk'. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are the designated adults who share the responsibility for managing any child protection concerns. They have attended recent training and have good links with social services and other external agencies. The school has adopted the LEA's child protection policy, supplemented by a school policy which includes procedural information and advice on identifying abuse. However, although teachers and support staff know whom to refer any concerns, the policy does not name the designated adults for child protection.
62. The school makes good provision for the health and safety of the school community. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and site manager carry out health and safety audits of the two sites at least annually and improvements are made as a result. However, governors are not sufficiently involved in these visits or in the follow up. Some potential health and safety issues were identified during the current inspection and the details reported to the school. Arrangements for the collection of pupils at the end of the school day are safe and secure. In addition, safety procedures for school visits and security on both sites are good. Regular fire drills and equipment testing are carried out, but the school has not yet carried out a full risk assessment. There are good arrangements for first aid, the storing of medicines and health records at both sites.
63. The procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are good in the Foundation Stage and are used well to plan further teaching and learning. However, in Years 1 and 2, although procedures for assessing pupils' progress in lessons are generally satisfactory, insufficient use is made of such information to gauge pupils' progress. This unsatisfactory picture has permitted overall low standards in writing and the general underachievement of higher attainers. By contrast, pupils with SEN are carefully assessed and their literacy targets are rigorously monitored. Good systems are in place to enable pupils with SEN to succeed. Their progress is monitored well and specialist support from a variety of external agencies is sought when needed and used effectively.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

64. The school has retained its very strong partnership with parents and this makes an important contribution to pupils' learning. Prior to the start of the inspection, parents expressed very favourable views about the work of the school. Parents are right to believe that the school expects their children to work hard and helps them to become mature and responsible. They find staff, including the headteacher, approachable and feel welcome to visit the school. There were no significant criticisms and the inspection team confirms the very positive views of parents. A very few parents would like to see more extra-curricular

activities. The inspection team disagreed with this view because the school provides a satisfactory range of musical and sporting activities.

65. The school provides very good quality information for parents and works hard to involve them in their children's learning. The Nursery booklet and a separate school prospectus provide clear and easily understood information. However, the prospectus does not inform parents of their right to withdraw their children from RE lessons and the daily act of collective worship. Parents are kept informed about the school's activities on a regular basis. In addition, 'curriculum mornings' about numeracy and literacy promote parents' understanding of these national initiatives.
66. Parents of all pupils are kept well informed about their children's progress through twice-yearly consultation evenings, where targets for future learning are shared. There are also opportunities for informal contact at the beginning and end of the school day. Pupils' progress in reading is checked on regularly and record books are kept updated. The annual, end-of-year written reports are of good quality and personalised for each child. They sometimes provide direction about what pupils should do to improve further. Parents of pupils with SEN are especially pleased with the information and the support they receive. They are fully involved in the statutory reviews of their children's progress. Where pupils are enrolled at short notice, such as children from Traveller families or families who are refugees, the school is quick to contact parents to ensure their children's good induction.
67. The school's desire to seek the involvement of all parents is good. Many parents actively help and support the school. Parents also help on school trips and have been involved in the 'story sacks' project in support of their children's reading. Seasonal celebrations are well attended. There is an active and hard working Parents' Association, the Friends of Grays School (FOGS), which organises fundraising and social events and raises significant sums for the school. Computer courses for parents are run in the school as part of a local initiative. However, despite the school's best efforts, a significant minority of parents does not sufficiently support their children's learning at home. For example, despite home/school agreements, the homework policy meets with variable degrees of success.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

68. The headteacher, ably supported by the senior management team, provides sound leadership. On a day-to-day basis the school is well administered. The action taken by the headteacher to address the decline in results in core subjects is beginning to bear fruit, particularly in reading and mathematics. However, more urgent action is now required if standards in speaking and writing are to improve. The headteacher has ensured that important reading skills, such as letter sounds and blends, are now taught systematically across the school. Through the monitoring of lessons and supporting where necessary, the headteacher has gauged the impact at classroom level on standards in reading. Early indications are that this will improve results in reading from their current very low level. However, whilst there are policies and schemes of work for most subjects, no such documents have been adopted to guide teachers in their work on improving pupils' speaking and listening skills and on the application of basic literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.
69. The headteacher has successfully managed a very high turnover of staff. This pattern of mobility has now stabilised. Although this has stalled some of the proposed improvements, she has ensured that the school's key aims have been kept high profile and that many have been achieved. She has successfully established a shared staff commitment to improving standards and the school is well poised to bring about future improvements.

70. Through effective teamwork, the headteacher has maintained the good provision for pupils with SEN. The Foundation Stage has been adapted to take account of the current national recommendations for children in Nursery and Reception classes. The overall good quality of teaching has been maintained in the school. Overall, the school has responded satisfactorily to its former weaknesses, identified at the time of the last inspection. Good attention has been given to weaknesses in science and this has impacted positively on standards. Science is now taught as a discrete subject and aspects such as 'physical processes' are well planned and taught. However, curricular planning still remains a weakness in some other subjects because there is a lack of taught time and insufficient emphasis on the teaching of investigative and research skills.
71. The headteacher delegates some important responsibilities to senior managers. For example, the deputy headteacher has extensive expertise in the Foundation Stage curriculum. She has successfully led and managed important changes that have significantly improved the quality of teaching and learning for the school's youngest pupils. She has been well supported by the senior teacher who also leads the Reception team. Together with the staff, they have ensured the continuity and progression in learning for children across the Foundation Stage. The deputy headteacher is now in a good position to support the headteacher and staff in improving standards further in Years 1 and 2.
72. The roles of curriculum co-ordinators are generally underdeveloped. This is because they do not monitor the impact of policies and current organisation on teaching and learning. Whilst most teachers and support staff have job descriptions, those of co-ordinators are mostly generic and too vague. Consequently, co-ordinators' job descriptions do not identify what is expected of them in the short and longer term. Pupils are withdrawn on a regular basis from lessons, such as mathematics, to attend a range of activities related to their particular needs. The impact on pupils' learning, as a consequence of these withdrawal sessions, has not been evaluated.
73. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) works part-time. She is also the co-ordinator for ICT. Both of these areas have been the focus of recent, major national initiatives. In the limited time available to her, the SENCO has managed the provision for SEN satisfactorily. The register for SEN is carefully maintained and is up-to-date and the school's policy for SEN is in line with the requirements of the new SEN National Code of Practice. Pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) are reviewed regularly and are shared with parents. Targets are mostly linked to literacy and are clear so that the progress of individual pupils can be measured.
74. Overall, the school's self-evaluation systems are unsatisfactory and insufficiently rigorous to have a positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning. Difficulties have been caused by the unprecedented and very high turnover of staff and the resulting large number of co-ordinators who are relatively new to their responsibilities. However, data analysis of results in national tests is developing and some action, for example in reading, has been taken as a result. The school now has its own wealth of assessment information, but has not used it effectively to identify strengths and weaknesses within groups or across subjects. For example, there has been limited action to check on the relative achievements of boys and girls or the identification of potential higher attainers. Currently no one has overall responsibility for the overview of assessment in order to ensure its co-ordinated use and to gauge its impact of teaching and learning.
75. The strategic role of the governing body is unsatisfactory and there is scope for the greater development of governors' roles in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. For example, governors are not sufficiently involved in evaluating the impact of their adopted policies and the progress of the whole school development plan. However, governors are well led by the Chair, who visits the school regularly and is clear about its strengths and weaknesses. There are nominated governors for the oversight of literacy and numeracy

and SEN who carry out their roles conscientiously. Whilst the expertise of some governors has been used well - for example, in the drawing up of spreadsheets to present financial information, - overall, they rely too heavily on guidance from the headteacher and the Chair. Governors fulfil most, but not all, of their statutory duties. For example, there are important omissions from the school's prospectus, including the publication of attendance data and the rights of parents to withdraw their children from acts of collective worship.

76. Despite the interruptions caused by constant changes to staff, the performance management process is on target and complements the school's determination to raise standards through improving the quality of teaching and learning. Lesson observations by the headteacher have taken place in connection with the process. The subsequent feedback, action points and relevant support agreed with teachers have already contributed well to improving the quality and consistency of teaching and learning.
77. Financial planning is sound with careful attention to linking the whole school development plan to budget costs. The school looks ahead. For example, the headteacher and governors are aware of the possible impact of the falling roll in the Nursery. They have been prudent to ensure there are sufficient funds to allow for any shortfall or further repairs for the maintenance of the Nursery building and this accounts for the higher than usual underspend. They are considering what action to take to stem this recent trend both in the short and the longer term. The few recommendations from the last auditor's report have been addressed. The recently appointed school bursar provides very good advice and support and ensures that the headteacher and governors receive appropriate information on budget spending. The principles of 'best value' are applied satisfactorily in some aspects of the school's work, but need further development, if they are to become well-embedded in the decision-making processes.
78. Additional funds for raising standards are used appropriately to target and support the staff's professional development. The senior teacher competently manages the training of support staff. This has increased their expertise, particularly in relation to the needs of pupils with SEN. For example, 'Makaton', a form of sign language, is now used to support some pupils with statements of SEN. Programmes to enable pupils in Year 1 to catch up in reading and writing are used very effectively. Similarly the regular involvement of pupils in a graded letter/sound programme is supporting lower attainers' achievements in literacy. The budget to support pupils with SEN is also used well and is targeted appropriately. The cost of educating pupils at Grays is relatively high. However, given the below average attainment on entry and the overall average standards by Year 2, the good achievement of pupils coupled with the overall good quality of teaching, the school provides satisfactory value for money. Spending for ICT development has been used satisfactorily to increase provision for the subject, but more computers and hardware are needed in classrooms and in particular the Nursery. The school has replaced several computers and there is a planned programme for improving further the ratio of computers to pupils. The appointment of an ICT technician, who works part-time, ensures the efficient use of what the school has. New technology is well used in school administration.
79. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are satisfactorily managed. Despite the very high turnover of teachers, the school is well staffed to teach the National Curriculum. Some classes are taught by teachers who are temporary appointments and some are taught by more than one teacher, with responsibilities shared over the week on a part-time basis. However, such appointments operate well and to the satisfaction of parents. Teachers are supported by a good number of nursery nurses and teaching assistants who are deployed effectively to work with groups and individuals. The difficulties with staff turnover have taken up a good deal of the headteacher's time. However, she has ensured that classes are taught by competent and conscientious staff and has been successful in keeping the likely negative impact of such changes on pupils' learning as minimal as possible.

80. Learning resources are satisfactory overall, but there are some shortcomings in the provision for ICT in the Nursery. Resources are generally well maintained and used carefully and safely by pupils.
81. The potential problems of being on a split site are overcome well. The Nursery building has been adapted imaginatively and is managed well by the deputy headteacher and staff. Teachers and support staff have made it a very attractive and stimulating environment for children. Good use is made of every room and available space to enhance learning. External space has been carefully considered so that it provides a full range of learning experiences. The Nursery is a safe, clean and secure site, but is in constant need of maintenance and repair and consequently is a drain on the school's budget. The main site accommodates the Reception children and Years 1 and 2. It is attractive, clean and well maintained. All available space is used effectively, including the library, hall and outdoor areas. The creative areas outside classrooms are always busy and used for a range of purposes. The outdoor playground and grounds are used well as a learning resource and are adequate for present numbers.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

82. The governors, headteacher and staff should address the following matters in their action plan:

1 Raise standards further across the curriculum and particularly in speaking and writing at the end of Year 2 by:

- drawing up a scheme of work for speaking and listening that ensures pupils' progression across in Years 1 and 2 and builds on the good work in the Foundation Stage; (paragraphs: 68, 72, 156)
- providing enough time, as well as regular opportunities across the curriculum, for pupils to speak, plan and discuss their ideas together and with staff; (paragraphs: 7, 29, 36, 43, 108, 147, 155)
- restoring the use of drama across the curriculum to promote the use of speaking skills; (paragraphs: 8, 29, 108)
- providing enough time as well as regular opportunities, across the curriculum, for pupils to write extensively and for a range of purposes; (paragraphs: 7, 10, 29, 36, 43, 110, 111, 147,157)
- improve the skills of drafting and redrafting in order to improve the quality of writing, pupils' handwriting skills and the presentation of their work; (paragraphs: 10, 16, 32, 111, 112, 150, 156, 163)
- ensuring pupils receive regular planned opportunities to use their basic literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. (paragraphs: 6, 16, 36, 44, 68, 112, 120, 132, 150, 157)

2. Improve the current imbalance of the curriculum by:

- increasing the amount of daily taught time to at least the recommended national minimum; (paragraphs: 43, 70)
- reviewing the current lesson timetables to ensure that all subjects receive sufficient amounts of time. (paragraphs: 12, 14,15, 29, 35, 39, 43, 70, 128, 147, 177, 179, 182)

3. Improve the use of assessment so that staff can track pupils' progress and plan work that builds on their previous learning by:

- evaluating the school's available data to check on trends and the relative achievements of the different groups of pupils; (paragraph: 74)
- reviewing the use and effectiveness of assessment systems; (paragraphs: 41, 63, 122, 131, 145, 152, 157, 165, 173, 178,184)
- drawing up a marking policy that is monitored and improves the consistency and impact of marking in each subject; (paragraphs: 10, 41, 115, 122, 150)
- clearly identifying those pupils who are potential higher attainers and using assessment data to provide them with more challenge in lessons. (paragraphs: 19, 41, 47, 63, 111, 113, 121, 126, 128, 153, 163)

4. Improve the quality of leadership and management further by:

- developing the strategic roles of co-ordinators so that: (paragraphs: 72, 74, 133, 166, 184)
 - they monitor rigorously the impact of subject policies and assessment information on teaching and learning; (paragraphs: 72, 74, 139, 146)
 - they monitor, in their subjects, the impact of the withdrawal times on pupils' learning; (paragraphs: 72, 123, 128, 145)
 - they ensure pupils' progression in skills in all subjects; (paragraphs: 15, 31, 34, 35, 70, 134, 150)
- developing the role of the governors in the strategic management of the school and ensuring that all statutory requirements are met; (paragraphs: 62, 75)
- improving the current monitoring systems for pupils' attendance and punctuality and using this information to target regular absentees and latecomers.(paragraphs: 25, 60)

83. In addition to the above, the following points for development should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:-

- review pupils' individual education plans, in order to include, where appropriate, targets in mathematics; (paragraphs: 17, 45, 118)
- improve the plenary session at the end of mathematics lessons; (paragraphs: 11, 30, 122)
- ensure pupils experience a reading diet that includes an adequate range of genres, styles and authors; (paragraphs: 9, 109)
- attend to the potential health and safety issues reported to the school. (paragraph 62)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	74
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	44

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	18	27	25	2	0	0
Percentage	3	24	36	34	3	0	0

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

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)	282
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	38

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	91

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.3
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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	42	47	89

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	32	33
	Girls	37	40	41
	Total	62	72	74
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70 (65)	81 (78)	83 (82)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	33	34
	Girls	40	40	42
	Total	69	73	76
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (76)	82 (83)	87 (77)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	279
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: N – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.4
Average class size	25.6

Education support staff: N – Y2

Total number of education support staff	17
Total aggregate hours worked per week	341

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	632,138
Total expenditure	597,468
Expenditure per pupil	2,118
Balance brought forward from previous year	7,859
Balance carried forward to next year	34,670

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	14.8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	15
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3
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	362
Number of questionnaires returned	101

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	18	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	70	30	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	38	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	53	38	5	1	3
The teaching is good.	90	10	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	70	27	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	86	14	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	33	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	69	30	1	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	86	12	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	72	27	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	27	8	0	14

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

84. Most children enter the Foundation Stage by attending Grays Nursery. The Nursery building is some distance away from the main school, where the three Reception classes are housed. Children enter the Nursery at the ages of three and four on a part-time basis and attend either the morning or afternoon sessions. To help ensure equality of opportunity, the morning and afternoon sessions are of equal length. Most children attend the Nursery for three full terms before transferring to one of the Reception classes the following September. A significant minority also transfers to several other schools in the area, according to parental choice. On average, about 65 per cent of Nursery children transfer to Grays' Reception classes. A few children enter Reception having attended playgroups and some have had no pre-school experience. The school's own monitoring systems show that most children who attain better than average attainment in the Nursery do not transfer to Grays' Reception classes. A high number of children with SEN attend the Nursery, as well as a significant number of other children who require particular support. Overall, children enter the Nursery with attainment that is below average, particularly in speech and language.
85. The induction programme for new parents and children is well considered. There is an annual 'Open Day' for new parents and a visiting day for both parent and child. Introductory booklets for parents give valuable information about the Nursery and Reception classes. These documents are clear and well presented, and are made attractive by the inclusion of children's drawings. Parents are very well informed about the Foundation Stage curriculum. Useful suggestions are made about ways in which they can help their children learn at home and some parents regularly help in classes. Transfer arrangements from the Nursery to the Reception classes are good. The co-ordinator of the Reception classes meets all the Nursery and Playgroup children before they transfer. Following this, teachers and support staff meet together to discuss how well the children have settled after transfer.
86. The overall quality of teaching is very good in all areas of learning in the Foundation Stage and is a significant factor in ensuring all children's sustained progress. On entry into the Nursery, detailed assessments are made of individual children's particular strengths and where they will require help. Many are immature for their age and this shows particularly in their generally underdeveloped speaking skills. Many children also need support with their personal, social and emotional development. Assessments of the children's progress are carefully made and are used well in the planning of further work. Informative records are kept. Teachers and all support staff contribute their observations on how well the children are achieving. Formal and informal discussions with parents provide opportunities for home and school to discuss what is going well and where further support is needed. Following assessments, teachers share the results with parents and agree together any targets set for the children. Despite the potential for difficulties because of the split site, there is good liaison between the Nursery and Reception staff. In the autumn term the school assesses the progress of the Reception children who transferred from the school's Nursery. These 'baseline assessments' show that, although children make good progress in the Nursery, many of those who transfer to the Reception generally attain below the LEA and national averages.

Personal, social and emotional development

87. The above average standards in children's personal, social and emotional development have been maintained since the last inspection. By the start of Year 1, children's achievement is very good. This is because this area of learning has been a major focus. Children with SEN gain from being identified early and from the well-targeted support they

receive. These factors combine to ensure children with SEN achieve well against their prior attainment and gain in confidence in their abilities as they move through the Foundation Stage.

88. Children settle quickly and happily to Nursery routines. They understand what to do and choose from a wide range of well-prepared activities. They share equipment and take turns. They work confidently together in pairs or larger groups, both in the classrooms and in the outdoor environments. They relate well to the teachers, Nursery staff and the several parents who help them with their work. In Reception, children continue to be enthusiastic learners and work happily together in the many activities and tasks provided. They show positive attitudes to classroom routines and respond well to their teachers' high expectations of both their work and their behaviour. They are immediately attentive when their teachers require them to listen. They take pleasure in their own and other class members' achievements. This was seen in class assemblies and also in a lesson in a Reception class. For example, without prompting, the children requested a 'good work' sticker for a child with SEN who had completed something really well. The children's good achievement is supported by the adults' friendly and positive manner, coupled with a calm and consistent approach. This approach is particularly helpful for children with SEN who are experiencing emotional difficulties. Teachers and support staff provide very good role models in the way they interact with the children and by the way they value their efforts. Independence is encouraged at every turn and children were observed taking responsibility and persevering with challenging tasks. For example, in their 'pirate' topic, girls and boys concentrated hard when cutting and sticking their individual treasure-boxes.

Communication, language and literacy

89. By the start of Year 1, standards in this area of learning vary, but are generally below average despite remaining a strong focus for development, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. For example, standards in writing are average by the end of the Foundation Stage, but standards in reading are below average. Because of their lower starting point, it now takes longer for most children to reach the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy and consequently they attain less well overall than at the time of the last inspection.
90. By the start of Year 1, although listening skills are above average, speaking skills remain weak. This affects the progress being made not only in language and literacy, but also in most other areas of learning. Most of the children with SEN have needs that relate to their delay in language development. They receive good support and achieve well against the literacy targets in their IEPs.
91. Children in the Nursery class enjoy listening to stories and looking at the wide range of books available to them. They also take books home to enjoy and children were observed returning and selecting new library books with their parents. Nearly all listen attentively and most can respond appropriately to simple instructions and questions. The majority communicates confidently with other children, but few find it easy to engage in discussions because their speaking skills are underdeveloped. They enjoy the familiar nursery rhymes with their repeated phrases, sometimes singing and re-reading them with pleasure in the class 'Rhyme Book'. They are beginning to try writing for themselves for example, when they make small books about the 'Mister Men' or 'Jack and the Beanstalk' or when writing labels to go with their creative work. They understand that marks on paper can carry a meaning. Some children make a good attempt at writing their names and are beginning to learn that letters have particular sounds. Reception children enjoy listening to stories and browsing through the good range of books available to them. Some higher attainers in the Nursery can name their favourites. They sometimes rewrite their preferred stories and rhymes. They listen to stories on tape and try to follow the words in the books.

92. By the start of Year 1, the contrast between standards in children's speaking and listening skills affects other areas of language, such as reading, which needs an increasing spoken vocabulary and confidence with words for good progress to be made. As a consequence, standards in reading are below average by the start of Year 1. Teachers in the Reception classes are very aware of this. They, together with good help from the support staff, spend much time talking with the children. Also, regular opportunities are found for children to practise their speaking skills. For example, in a particularly good lesson, children worked in pairs, talking to one another about a chosen topic, and then reported back to the class. They mostly listen very well and understand what they are being asked to do, but a significant number does not find it easy to speak clearly or at length. Small groups of children talk confidently together about their work and in larger groups some respond readily to the teachers' questions, but in a more formal discussion, such as a class or large group, many have difficulty expressing their thoughts. They listen carefully to one another, but many do not readily respond and develop the discussion.
93. Standards in writing are on target to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception. Teachers provide a good range of interesting activities so that children are keen to write for a number of purposes. For example, they write labels for their good quality role-play areas, such as the 'veterinary surgery' in one of the Reception classes. Also, they prepare written questions to ask the 'vet' about their pets. They closely observe the growth of seeds they have planted and write about how these have grown over time. By the end of the Foundation Stage, many are beginning to form letters clearly and correctly and are developing confidence in their own abilities as writers.

Mathematical development

94. By the start of Year 1, children reach average standards in their mathematical development. Although this is below the standard found at the time of the last inspection, when compared to their below average attainment on entry, children achieve well in this area of learning. This is because teachers and support staff devise many opportunities to encourage children's mathematical learning. Children with SEN also achieve well because work is suitably matched to their prior attainment.
95. In the Nursery, children can count accurately and sing number rhymes. Children are able to count up to 10 'pork pies', carefully pointing to each pie and matching the correct number. In preparing for singing, children counted their group size and were able to reach 23. Higher attainers knew that with two children away it should be 25. When using large dice, some children showed they could identify a number from the pattern of the dots without always needing to count. Nursery children identify and know the names of some basic shapes and, when cooking, find that a ball of cake mixture can be rolled out flat. When lifting and carrying objects, they are able to say that some are heavier than others. Good use is made of other areas of the curriculum to aid their development in mathematics. For example, they use the large apparatus to pretend to be pirates on a 'pirate ship'. They climb nimbly and learn quickly that they can move through, over and under spaces.
96. In Reception, teachers and support staff provide a variety of stimulating activities and make learning in mathematics fun to do. Puppets are used very successfully to engage children and even the most reluctant learners are quickly enthralled. For example, sometimes the puppet 'Colin the Counting Crow' asked the questions. Teachers are also successful in linking mathematics to other areas of learning, such as computer work, art and music. This good planning strategy not only supports the standards that children reach in mathematics, but also impacts positively on other areas of learning. Such experiences impact well on learning and Reception children build successfully on their prior attainment in numeracy. For example, they double single digit numbers and find out which are odd and which are even. They work out and record simple addition and mentally work out one

more or one less in numbers up to 10. Children find and copy out numbers from a number square, working out how many days are left before their impending visit to the zoo. Children count out coins and use them in their imaginative role-play. Groups and individuals work with construction sets of geometrical shapes and build detailed castles and other structures. Although restricted by their speaking skills, throughout their work, they learn mathematical language, such as 'more', 'less', 'greater' and 'smaller'. In discussions, some higher attainers can explain how they have found a particular answer to a calculation.

Creative development

97. By the start of Year 1, children reach average standards in their creative development. All pupils, including those with SEN, achieve well and are learning to use different media, tools and techniques.
98. In the Nursery, children produce good quality paintings of ships and collages of sea pictures. These are displayed to produce a bright and attractive environment Nursery environment. Children are stimulated by the lively topic of 'Pirates' and by walks and visits in and around Newhaven. Nursery children show they can look in detail at objects as they draw and paint them. They choose the colours they wish to use and mix them to make their own tones. They look at the work of famous artists and try to copy their styles; for example, the finger tip paintings of the artist, Derain. In music sessions, they sing well and, with evident enjoyment, they clap out the rhythms of their own names and play a good range of untuned musical instruments. They use their imagination well when pretending to be 'pirates' on board their ship or in the rowing boat. They heartily join in songs such as 'Yo! Ho! Ho!' Parents and other family members contribute and enhance the children's creative development. For example, some, who are musicians, have played for the Nursery children in the recent past.
99. In Reception, children extend their painting skills and their knowledge of different media. They have also been stimulated by walks around Newhaven which have resulted in good quality paintings of boats, fire-engines and the local fish shop. By encouraging the children to scale down some paintings, teachers have taught different techniques such as the use of smaller and finer brushes. Charcoal is successfully used to draw 'Teddies', with some higher attainers successfully attempting to show the texture of fur. Their colourful paintings of concentric circles have been effectively displayed to reflect the style of the artist, Kandinsky. Three-dimensional work is extended to the use of modelling plaster, with children producing detailed elephants and snowmen. Computers have been used well to produce closely observed drawings of bikes and trains. As part of their music, and in a good link with design and technology, children have made and tested musical instruments that produce different sounds when shaken. They sing tunefully. They frequently sing together in their classrooms as well as in music assemblies in the hall. Role-play areas help the children to use their imagination, but they vary in quality. In the best examples, such as the 'veterinary surgery', children interact and act out different roles, extending their language skills as well as their personal and social development.

Physical development

100. By the start of Year 1, children attain above average standards in their physical development. All pupils, including those with SEN, achieve very well against their prior attainment and are challenged to do their best. This good physical development also benefits children's skills in other areas such as handwriting and their use of pencils, scissors and paint brushes.
101. In the Nursery and Reception classes, children successfully develop their fine motor and gross motor skills in both their indoor and outdoor play. For example, Nursery children

show good co-ordination when cooking. They correctly use their fingertips to rub fat into the flour and manage utensils well as they roll out the mixture for their 'Cheesy Vehicles'. When working as 'pirates' on their ship, the children demonstrate good gross motor skills as they climb and move in and out of spaces on the large apparatus. They scoot around on a range of tricycles and other outdoor equipment showing increasing precision in their ability to control direction and speed as they go.

102. In Reception, children competently use tools to draw, cut and stick. They handle and build models with construction sets and, when working outside, show good co-ordination as they skip and play hopscotch. Children demonstrate that they can control their bodies and balance well when performing in physical education lessons with a range of apparatus in the hall. For example, in an effective lesson, the teacher paced the work well, allowing time for skills to be practised on each piece of apparatus. She made clear her high expectations, both of behaviour and the skills she would be looking for, as they balanced, jumped and landed. The children responded well. The good selection of activities in the classroom and outside support children in their success in making good all-round progress in their physical development.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

103. By the start of Year 1, children attain average standards in this wide-ranging area of learning. Children, including those with SEN, achieve well overall. However, the exception is in aspects linked to their development in ICT, which is unsatisfactory in the Nursery because of the lack of computer hardware and programs. This lost ground is quickly made up in the Reception classes where the improved level of ICT resources is used well.
104. Activities in the Nursery, such as cooking and working as 'pirates', support the good progress of children. However, opportunities to achieve well in aspects of ICT are limited because there is only one computer available to Nursery children. They occasionally experience work with a 'floor turtle', but this is not regular because it has to be borrowed from the main site. Children's achievement is helped by their regular experience of other technology such as cassette-recorders and they can control a tape satisfactorily. When they do access the computer, children use the mouse competently and some can click and drag and work through a program. When given the opportunity, children enjoy using a CD-ROM on 'Pirates' brought in by a parent. In all other aspects of this area of learning, Nursery children achieve well. They study maps and consider what they might find on an island. They find maps in reference books and refer to a large map of the world on the wall. They consider how human beings grow and change. For this work, parents brought in photographs of the children as babies. These have been studied and class members identified. In the outside area, children planted seeds and are growing vegetables and flowers. A trip to the beach has allowed children to study and identify shell-fish, crabs and jellyfish. Such experiences impact significantly on children's attainment in this area of learning.
105. In Reception, the previous limited progress in ICT is quickly made up because children have frequent access to computers and other types of hardware. Photographs show children directing a programmable toy, to find places on a map. This work followed a visit to Newhaven has resulted in children contributing to a large map with paintings showing where they have been. Some work in class is based on the Bible story of Noah's Ark. Such work successfully lent itself to mathematics where children investigated 'pairs' and 'doubles'. Reception children use the school grounds regularly for their investigations and record in a variety of ways the animals found there. Children were undaunted that their cardboard bird-feeder was damaged by a squirrel and have redesigned and successfully made a new one out of a plastic bottle. In the remaking of it, they solved many construction problems. In a return to their photographs of themselves as babies, Reception children have considered and written down what they can do now, compared with what they could

do as babies. Teachers make this area of their learning stimulating and challenging and regularly involve the parents.

ENGLISH

106. The downward trend in results is being arrested, particularly in reading, by the actions taken by the school. In the work seen, standards in English are broadly in line with the national average by the end of Year 2. Achievement is good for most pupils, including those with SEN and the very few pupils with EAL. However, there are contrasting variations within the subject that reflect the emphasis and actions taken to address the decline in standards since the last inspection. For example, standards in listening and reading are now average by the end of Year 2, but below average in speaking and writing.
107. The good quality of teaching, the successful emphasis on the learning of letter sounds and the effective use of the National Literacy Framework, all combine to ensure the good pupil progress in lessons in Years 1 and 2. Pupils build satisfactorily upon the solid foundations achieved in the Nursery and Reception classes. In Year 2, the achievement by pupils over the year is good in listening and reading, but unsatisfactory in speaking and writing. There were no marked differences between the relative attainment of girls and boys.
108. In the current Year 2, most pupils listen attentively to teachers' explanations and instructions and to each other's contributions in discussions. Speaking skills are less well developed. Although pupils make their needs and wants understood and respond clearly to teachers' direct questions, they do not confidently and articulately express opinions, use a wide vocabulary or form complex sentences. This is because there are too few planned opportunities for pupils to practise and extend their speaking skills across the curriculum and drama is not used as extensively as it was at the time of the last inspection. Those pupils with specific speech and language difficulties are well supported in literacy lessons and in small group work with learning experiences matched to the targets in their IEPs and as a result they achieve well.
109. Reading standards are clearly improving because of the actions the school has taken. By Year 2, standards are average with pupils achieving well in response to the good teaching. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 read accurately and use a good range of strategies to tackle unfamiliar words. They correct themselves and use their knowledge of letter sounds and blends to support their reading. Middle and higher attaining pupils in Year 2 read fluently and use expression and are able to re-tell the stories and discuss the story line. Only the very few higher attaining pupils are really confident to predict and offer opinions about the texts they have read. Very few pupils employ descriptive language when expressing their opinions on books they have read. This is because most pupils are not experiencing a sufficient range of genres, styles and authors.
110. Standards in writing are below average by Year 2. Although lower than in the previous inspection, standards in writing are now improving with the best achievement evident in Year 1. This is because of the additional support in literacy provided for pupils who were not achieving the expected standards for their age. Such good quality intervention provides targeted pupils with enhanced skills which they are using to improve their reading and, in particular, their writing skills. The school's work on improving the confidence of pupils has contributed to achievement in writing. This is particularly noticeable amongst the boys who are motivated to persevere with their writing. However, standards are below average because most pupils lack a range of descriptive vocabulary and language needed to reach the higher levels in national tests. Standards in spelling are improving because pupils now have sufficient knowledge of letter sounds.
111. The use of grammar and punctuation by higher attaining pupils is satisfactory, but sentence structure tends to be simple and the employment of conjunctions limited. Most

pupils do not have a grasp of how to make their writing more effective. The use of ICT does not include sufficient opportunities for pupils for drafting in order to improve the quality of their writing. It is only very recently that Year 2 pupils have had the opportunity to write more extended pieces. Pupils' opportunities to write independently are limited by time constraints in other subjects.

112. The quality of English teaching is good overall and this mirrors the picture at the time of the last inspection. Good teaching leads to positive pupil attitudes and provides a firm basis for raising standards further. Teachers have a good understanding of how to teach literacy through the National Literacy Strategy and have developed effective skills in making children aware of the ways to decipher words. A key strength in literacy sessions was the very good identification of the different needs of the groups within the class and the match of the activities provided to meet their needs. The activities were well paced and there was no valuable learning time wasted. Teachers made it very clear to the pupils what they were to learn and how this would help them. In most lessons, teachers never missed an opportunity to consolidate, extend and provide new learning experiences. Teachers made good use of many of the available resources such as enlarged texts and miniature whiteboards. The talents and skills of support staff were used effectively to help children make good progress. However, the use of literacy skills across the curriculum, which was sound at the time of the last inspection, is now unsatisfactory. Handwriting and presentation of work is below the level expected for Year 2 pupils, which also represents lower standards than those found in the last inspection.
113. The school ensures that the different needs of most pupils are identified and supported. Pupils with SEN achieve well against the literacy targets in their IEPs. Their individual needs are identified early and are provided for in a variety of ways. For example, they benefit from small group work when they are withdrawn from their class. Also, they gain from the good quality help from support staff in literacy and other lessons where they have to use their reading and writing skills. The very small number of pupils with EAL receive good teaching in classes and achieve well. The higher attaining pupils are clearly identified by the school, but too few reach the higher levels because there has been insufficient challenge in the use of texts and writing tasks.
114. The good quality of teaching ensures that pupils' attitudes to reading and writing are very good. The school's concerted efforts to develop pupils' self-esteem are impacting on their attitudes and they are willing to try their best. Pupils feel valued and take a real pride in their achievements. Teachers give warm praise when it is justified.
115. The procedures and use of reading assessments are effective. They help teachers to identify those who need additional support, to track the progress of individual pupils and set targets for improvement. However, in writing the systems do not provide the same high quality of information. This results in difficulties when teachers plan their work. The marking of pupils' work is undertaken on a regular basis, but overall it is unsatisfactory because teachers do not give pupils enough guidance on what is developing well and where further improvements are needed. Consequently, pupils continue to make similar errors over time.
116. The English co-ordinator is new to her post and consequently has not had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. However, her impact on standards in reading is already apparent and the leadership and management of English are good. She provides a very good model of teaching and is in a good position to provide clear direction and strong leadership for her colleagues. The current English action plan clearly identifies priorities and what needs to be done. However, more quantifiable targets are needed so that improvements in standards can be monitored effectively. The new initiatives such as the development of the library and the introduction of the reading progress records are making a positive difference to pupils' learning and are beginning to

have an impact on standards. The library, set up by the English co-ordinator, is well used and contains an adequate level of reference books. The home-school reading programme is effective in supporting the learning of pupils, particularly those who are read with regularly at home.

MATHEMATICS

117. In the work seen, pupils in Year 2 attain average standards in mathematics and these are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. In the time between the last inspection and national tests in 2001, results in mathematics have fallen. They are now improving because of the effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy, the satisfactory and sometimes good teaching and the action taken by the subject co-ordinator.
118. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. For example, pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress in lessons, particularly where they benefit from the skilful interventions of support staff. However, the lack of mathematics targets in some pupils' IEPs does not help their progress in the subject. Higher attainers underachieve because they are not provided with sufficient challenging tasks or extension activities. In lessons, there were no significant differences between the attainment of girls and boys.
119. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a sound knowledge of place value to 100 with higher attainers secure in their understanding and use of numbers in excess of three digits. This secure foundation supports pupils in their calculations. For example, most pupils can calculate confidently with numbers to 20 and tackle simple problems. They can identify basic mathematical shapes and tell clock times to the hour and most, to the half-hour. Many pupils can construct a pictogram showing the way they travel to school and are able to say which means of transport is the most popular. When given the opportunity, higher attainers tackle more advanced addition and subtraction calculations confidently. Pupils are generally more assured when working with numbers, the number system and calculations than they are in solving problems, or tackling work involving 'space, shape and measures'. This is because there has been insufficient emphasis in lessons on those aspects of mathematics.
120. The quality of mathematics teaching is satisfactory overall. No lessons were unsatisfactory and some good teaching was seen in both Years 1 and 2. This represents a similar picture to the time of the last inspection. Effective teaching is characterised by the use of quick-fire questions at the start of lessons and teachers' delving questioning is well matched to pupils' prior attainment. Teachers' subject knowledge is sound, particularly in the teaching of number and calculation. The school has purchased a commercially-produced visual resource to support pupils' learning. It is used consistently well across Years 1 and 2 and is proving beneficial to all pupils and particularly those with SEN. However, numeracy skills are not planned sufficiently for use in most subjects. The exception is in ICT where good use is made of a range of programs to reinforce mathematical skills such as the identification of odd and even numbers. Occasionally, work in English links well with current work in mathematics. For example, work on 'sequencing' in mathematics was complemented by a good ICT program in literacy which consolidated pupils' understanding of how a story could be developed.
121. Where learning is particularly good, teachers set high expectations of what all pupils can do, lessons proceed at a brisk pace and the level of challenge is high for all pupils. Pupils made particular gains in their learning where they were encouraged to explain their methods and to talk about their work. For example, in a good lesson in Year 1, pupils were set a range of challenges to find out if there was an emerging pattern when two numbers were added. Higher attainers were fascinated by the combinations they found and how, when two odd numbers are added together, they result in an even number. However,

sometimes a pedestrian pace of work and tasks that were too easy resulted in higher attainers being insufficiently challenged and completing their work quickly.

122. Teachers plan their lessons satisfactorily within year groups, using the structures of the National Numeracy Strategy. The strategy of telling the pupils what they are going to learn works well. Such learning intentions are identified at the planning stage so that equality of provision is assured across the year groups. The use of ICT is also identified and planned for the benefit of pupils. This represents an improvement on a previous weakness. However, whilst tasks broadly match the needs of lower and middle attainers, there is insufficient attention given to the potential of higher attaining pupils. Assessment takes place inconsistently and is not always used to inform planning. Plenary sessions, taught at the end of sessions, are of variable quality and sometimes unsatisfactory because they are not planned sufficiently. Occasionally, this results in lessons not rounded off properly. The quality of teachers' marking varies between classes and is generally unsatisfactory. Whilst teachers mark work regularly, there are few comments that offer pupils a clear direction on how to improve further.
123. Interesting activities ensure pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good and this mirrors the response at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are motivated and enjoy their work. They settle quickly and show confidence as they carry out their calculations. They listen well to each other and to their teachers. They are able to work co-operatively and their behaviour is good. However, their learning is sometimes interrupted because pupils are occasionally withdrawn from mathematics lessons to take part in a range of activities.
124. Mathematics is managed satisfactorily overall and the co-ordinator has taken effective action to improve standards. She has monitored teaching and used this first-hand knowledge to support staff through the use of some commercially-produced resources. This strategic role is now in need of further development to make the best use of the co-ordinator's expertise in the subject. The co-ordinator has a clear idea of priorities to improve standards and sets a good example in her own teaching. She recognises that the present assessment system is unsatisfactory. To address this, she has drafted a new assessment system for use throughout the school, beginning next term.
125. Resources are satisfactory and generally well used. For example, miniature whiteboards allow pupils to practise their calculations and provide some assessment opportunities to teachers. Mathematics homework is given on a regular basis and is welcomed by parents. Whilst this supports the partnership between home and school, homework is rarely matched to pupils' range of prior attainment and consequently is limited in its impact.

SCIENCE

126. In the work seen, pupils' standards are average by the end of Year 2, which is the same as in the previous inspection. Most pupils, including those with SEN, achieve satisfactorily overall. However, the lack of challenge for higher attainers leads to their underachievement in the subject. There were no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls.
127. The weaknesses identified in the previous inspection have been satisfactorily addressed. Science is now taught as a specific subject throughout the school. This has had a positive impact in ensuring that planning covers each area of the subject as required by the National Curriculum. Pupils' achievements are now compared with the intended learning outcomes.
128. Pupils make sound gains in knowledge across the different aspects of the subject, although a shortage of teaching time limits pupils' opportunities to investigate and to follow their own lines of inquiry. In Years 1 and 2, pupils satisfactorily build on their prior learning

in the Foundation Stage. However, higher attaining pupils are not challenged regularly or sufficiently, particularly in the development of science skills. For some pupils, the lack of a wide vocabulary and hence, the appropriate speaking skills, hampers their ability to develop their understanding in science further. The learning rate of some pupils, particularly those with SEN, is also interrupted by their withdrawal from science lessons to attend other activities.

129. By Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the different aspects of science and are developing an awareness of the need for investigation and inquiry. Their notion of the need for a fair test in an investigation is sound. For example, pupils in Year 1 understand the reasons for using the same amount of water on different materials when testing for waterproofing. Pupils in Year 2 make predictions and then investigate which materials conduct electricity. They demonstrate a good understanding of the requirements for the construction of an electrical circuit. However, they have not had sufficient opportunity to initiate their own ideas, such as setting up their own controls. Pupils in Year 2 know that living things need to be cared for and that plants require water, air and light to thrive. They know how to classify different plants and animals, and can describe simple characteristics and how they are used.
130. No lessons were seen in Year 1 because of timetable restrictions. Teaching is good overall in Year 2. Characteristics of good teaching are consistent across the year group. For example, learning objectives are made clear at the start so that pupils know the purpose of each lesson. Subject knowledge is better than at the time of the last inspection and is now good. Lessons move at a brisk pace, and this ensures pupils stay interested and involved in their tasks. Teachers use questioning well to probe and enhance pupils' understanding. During discussions, they carefully rectify any misunderstandings that are based on pupils' limited vocabulary. This ensures that pupils develop a scientific vocabulary alongside a wider understanding of the nature of the world around them. It also results in pupils who show curiosity and an enthusiasm for science.
131. At the time of the previous inspection, too few lessons were seen to judge teaching. However, there were some criticisms related to unsatisfactory planning, record-keeping and teachers' expertise in the subject. These have all been addressed satisfactorily. The medium term planning (half-termly) now ensures the full coverage of the National Curriculum requirements and the current complement of teachers demonstrates good subject knowledge. Teachers know their pupils well and frequently make good use of day-to-day assessment. However, there are some inconsistencies in the school's formal procedures for assessment. Record-keeping, a former weakness, is now carried out regularly, but the current systems for recording pupils' achievements are not concise or easily manageable. Although regular assessments occur each term, mostly to evaluate the knowledge gained, there is insufficient attention to assessing the development of pupils' science skills. Tracking procedures to gauge pupils' progress are at an early stage of development in Years 1 and 2.
132. Good teaching ensures pupils' responses to the subject and their behaviour are consistently good. In discussions about their work they are polite and friendly. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use and practise their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in their work.
133. The co-ordinator is new to her post. She sets a good example in her teaching and is aware of what needs to be done to improve standards further and has the necessary expertise and knowledge to provide good leadership in the subject. For example, she recognises the need to improve assessment procedures and their use so that the systems are consistent and understood by all. However, she has had limited opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning or the effects on learning of the general lack of taught time and the constant withdrawal of some pupils from science lessons. Resources for the subject are

adequate. The school makes effective use of the nature area within the school grounds, using this to enhance pupils' understanding of the natural environment. The curriculum is further enriched by the organisation of a science and technology week, with its emphasis on science investigations.

ART AND DESIGN

134. Standards in art were well above average at the time of the last inspection. The subject has undergone alterations nationally since then and now includes aspects of design. Current standards are average because the school has been tardy in responding to the National Curriculum changes to the subject and the insufficient teaching of skills as pupils progress through Years 1 and 2.
135. Pupils, including those with SEN, achieve satisfactorily against their prior attainment. There were no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls. Pupils receive regular opportunities to draw and paint, to weave and print. Clay is used as the main medium for three-dimensional work and the school benefits from a kiln housed in the Nursery. In addition, pupils make satisfactory use of sketchbooks to try out their initial designs. They work from observation, personal experience and imagination. They study a range of artists from different periods and cultures such as Mondrian, Van Gogh and Monet. Sound links are made with ICT which support pupils in developing their artwork.
136. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers make sound use of the good quality resources such as the range of painting materials and tools. Pupils are encouraged to use different size brushes and to mix their own colours. However, the range of tools to aid the development of drawing is narrow. The lack of hard and soft pencils and other drawing tools, such as charcoal, impacts negatively on pupils' achievement and consequently their results are disappointing.
137. Interesting work results in pupils' good attitudes and behaviour and these have been maintained since the time of the previous inspection. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are confident in their own abilities and are able to evaluate their work. For example, pupils in Year 2 responded positively to a design task involving the later use of 'resist' techniques. Such opportunities also enabled them to make gains in their cultural development such as pupils in Year 2 using an Indian sari as a stimulus for their 'batik' work.
138. The content of art and design is planned well over the year and makes a sound contribution to work in other subjects. For example, the medium term planning (half-termly) links well with work in history and pupils have produced some imaginative paintings that illustrate scenes from 'The Great Fire of London'.
139. The co-ordinator currently works part-time and is based in the Nursery. Consequently, this limits the impact she is able to have on standards. However, in spite of these constraints, the co-ordinator is clear about what needs to be done to restore the subject to its former strengths. She has recently written a comprehensive policy and the school has adopted a scheme of work based upon the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's (QCA) national guidelines.
140. Classrooms are well organised for artwork. Effective use is made of the 'creative areas' outside of classrooms, the school grounds and the local area. Good links are made with the local community and events such as 'plant and craft week' increase pupils' experiences in the subject. Similarly, artists in residence have worked with pupils on ceramics and weaving and the school's environment is enhanced by displays resulting from such work. Tools and materials are well-organised and accessible to pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

141. Standards in design and technology (DT) are average in Year 2 and are similar to the time of the last inspection. Pupils, including those with SEN, achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. There were no significant differences between the relative attainment of girls and boys.
142. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 build satisfactorily upon their good experiences in the Foundation Stage. For example, pupils in Year 1 were challenged to make a suitable roof for the house of a fictional bear. Pupils were successful because they were able to draw on their previous knowledge of different types of materials. This helped them to make informed choices and they were then able to join successfully the different materials they had selected.
143. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. No judgements on teaching were made at the time of the last inspection so comparisons are not possible. Where learning is effective, teachers present tasks as problems to solve and challenge those with the most ambitious designs to review their ideas. Pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn. For example, they knew the process included designing, making and then evaluating how their product could be improved. From discussions, pupils in Year 2 were aware that finished work had to be evaluated against the original intention, as in their wheeled vehicles. Pupils are encouraged to use their imagination when developing their ideas. Lessons are planned well and ensure the use of simple mechanisms to allow for movement. Pupils are taught to choose and use a variety of materials, tools and equipment safely. Pupils' current good knowledge and understanding reflects the quality of learning and experience in place at the time of the last inspection.
144. The provision of interesting work results in pupils' good attitudes to their work. In Year 1 they collaborated well in pairs to develop a design. In discussions, pupils in Year 2 conveyed their enjoyment of the practical tasks involved in making their vehicles and higher attainers could explain how they had adapted their models when they encountered difficulties. With justifiable pride, they were all eager to show their good quality models.
145. The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of learning experiences, including the elements of the design, make and evaluation process, knowledge of materials and skills with tools. Satisfactory links are made with ICT. For example, pupils used a digital camera in the design and production of T-shirts. The use of a specific week dedicated to working on DT across the school also provides a good opportunity for pupils to work in more depth. However, on a daily basis, learning is interrupted because pupils leave DT lessons to attend a range of withdrawal groups. This sometimes results in key elements of the DT lessons being missed. Although teachers in Years 1 and 2 are generally aware of the overall achievement made by their pupils in DT, assessment systems for tracking progress are unsatisfactory. Consequently, teachers are not able to plan lessons that build on pupils' skills in DT.
146. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership. She has recently reviewed the DT policy and scheme of work so that teachers are now clearer about what they are expected to cover. The co-ordinator evaluates the results of pupils' work, but has not had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms. Portfolios of photographs of pupils' work provide a valuable reference collection for staff. Resources for DT have been built up to a good level that enables pupils to work with a suitable range of materials and tools. The shared areas linked to each class provide good accommodation for the practical activities.

GEOGRAPHY

147. In Year 2, standards in geography are average in terms of national expectations. This reflects the standards seen during the last inspection. The school has rectified the former weakness related to pupils' use of appropriate vocabulary. Although the former unsatisfactory teaching approach to geography has been successfully addressed, there is now insufficient teaching time for the subject. This results in limited opportunities for speaking and discussion and for written recordings of pupils' work. There were no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls.
148. Pupils, including those with SEN, achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. In Year 2, pupils have a sound knowledge of their own environment and are beginning to form opinions on what they like or dislike about it. Through learning about other places and countries they compare and contrast how the environment and climate have an effect on people's lives. For example, they talk confidently about life on the 'Island of Coll' and the life of people in India. They compare how houses are built, what work people do and how they dress.
149. Pupils understand the need for maps and their ability to plan simple routes is sound. This knowledge is begun in Year 1 where pupils plan their route around Newhaven and are built on in Year 2 where pupils enjoy identifying features on a map. In discussion, pupils show that they have an avid interest in what they have learned, and are keen to demonstrate their knowledge. They are aware of the need to use specific vocabulary, but are hesitant in its use. In discussions, they show a positive response to the subject and are eager and proud to talk about the knowledge they have gained.
150. No judgements could be made on the quality of teaching as no lessons were seen due to the arrangement of the timetable. However, from all other available evidence, pupils' learning is stronger in the content of the subject than in the use of skills. The quality of marking is variable and is generally unsatisfactory because it gives insufficient guidance on how pupils can improve their work. Much of pupils' recorded work is untidy and opportunities to write at length are missed. The potential for the use of numeracy is not planned sufficiently.
151. Geography makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' cultural development and pupils' social awareness. The study of their own area and those of people in other countries heightens their awareness of their own heritage and the culture of others. For example, pupils have looked at the lives of four children across the world, and studied life in a village in India.
152. The headteacher is currently care-taking the subject because of the changes in staffing. She is doing a satisfactory job in difficult circumstances. She has modelled lessons for teachers and is developing a policy and scheme of work to guide teachers' planning. The initial plan for the new scheme of work for Year 2 is comprehensive and allows for progression in knowledge and skills. The geography curriculum is further enhanced by the integration of a programme for 'Global Citizenship'. Good use is made of the school and local environment, particularly in the development of pupils' early mapping skills. In Year 2, teachers write down pupils' comments and thoughts, but there are no formal systems for the assessment of pupils' work in Years 1 and 2. This results in unsatisfactory tracking systems to gauge pupils' gains in the subject.

HISTORY

153. Standards are average in Year 2 and are similar to those at the time of the previous inspection. However, there is too little time for the subject and this limits pupils'

opportunities to discuss and to record their ideas. Pupils, including those with SEN, achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. However, more could be expected from higher attainers who are underachieving because they are insufficiently challenged. There were no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls.

154. Pupils in Year 1 satisfactorily build on their knowledge and understanding from the Foundation Stage by studying how modern toys are different to those in the past. In Year 2, pupils know about the importance of significant events and people from the past and excitedly recount the stories of the 'Great Fire of London' and the exploits of Florence Nightingale. They know many of the features of Victorian times and explain how the way that people lived at that time is different from today. They understand that the toys children played with then differ from modern items because of the materials and knowledge available at the time. They appreciate how seaside resorts and facilities have changed over the years. Pupils have a sound understanding of the passage of time. For example, most are secure with recognising whether events happened before or after they were born. Whilst pupils develop a satisfactory knowledge of historical facts, the development of their skills in history is insecure.
155. At the time of the last inspection, no judgements were made on the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2. Similarly, no overall judgement could be made on the quality of teaching during the current inspection, but in the one lesson seen, teaching was satisfactory. The good planning and the provision of a range of appropriate resources ensured that the pupils were interested and curious. The activities to support learning were carefully matched to pupils' abilities to enable all pupils to make gains in their learning during the lesson. However, opportunities were missed during the lesson to develop pupils' understanding further by the use of extended questions, explanations and worthwhile dialogue.
156. In discussions, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were enthusiastic about their previous work. Although many are hampered by the limitations of their skills for speaking and for articulating their knowledge, they enter wholeheartedly into discussions about what they know, many displaying a fascination in what they have learned. They were particularly amused at some of the differences in how holiday-makers dressed in Victorian times compared to now. However, there are very few samples of pupils' completed work. Work is often untidy and poorly presented.
157. There are few formal procedures for the assessment of pupils' learning. Consequently, teachers have difficulty in gauging the progress that pupils make in Years 1 and 2. The medium-term planning, which is half-termly, ensures that there is a good range of topics to be taught throughout the year. However, the insufficient amount of teaching time makes it difficult for teachers to ensure pupils are able to follow their own lines of inquiry or to write extensively. Little use is made literacy and numeracy to support work in history.
158. Due to the high turnover of staff, the headteacher has been the temporary co-ordinator of the subject. She has successfully developed a new policy and has a clear and knowledgeable understanding of what needs to be done to improve weaknesses, such as the placing of more emphasis on developing history skills. The headteacher, in collaboration with the future co-ordinator, is updating the current scheme of work.
159. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' cultural development, by supporting pupils' awareness of their own heritage. The subject is well supported by visits of interest, both locally and further afield. Teachers make effective use of pictures and photographs to develop pupils' learning. However, there are few displays in the subject to stimulate and extend pupils' curiosity and interest.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

160. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are average in Year 2. This represents a decline in standards since the previous inspection where attainment was judged to be above national expectations. This decline is due to the high turnover of teachers and a general lack of subject knowledge and expertise by some staff. However, this is being systematically addressed and many of the current staff has already benefited from the government-funded training in ICT. Pupils, including those with SEN, achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. There were no significant differences in the relative attainment of girls and boys.
161. By Year 2, pupils develop a sound understanding and knowledge of ICT. Pupils demonstrate satisfactory control skills and most are able to enter, save and retrieve their work. Skills in ICT are taught on a daily basis in discrete lessons. Discrete ICT lessons in Year 1 are successful because teachers demonstrate important skills to the class. These new skills are later put to good use in pupils' independent work in literacy and numeracy. For example, pupils in Year 1 learnt to use a reading program that linked well with their current work in literacy lessons. The sequencing aspect of a 'Goldilocks' story-board program enabled pupils to further their skills in 'clicking' and 'dragging', which they had learnt earlier in the Foundation Stage.
162. Samples of pupils' past work demonstrate that, by the end of Year 2, pupils experience a satisfactory range of ICT, including the use of floor turtles, electronic mail and the Internet. However, they have insufficient opportunities to review and modify their work and consequently this aspect of their ICT capability is underdeveloped.
163. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and, although it is not as good as it was, the previous weakness related to planning has been addressed. However, sometimes the content of lessons does not challenge higher attainers sufficiently. For example, the game of 'guess who', where pupils asked questions to find the identity of a classmate, impacted satisfactorily on aspects of their learning in English, but did little to extend their capabilities in ICT. In the best lessons, teachers used clear demonstrations, explanations and instructions. These enabled pupils to use a range of programs when it came for their turn on the class computers. Although pupils have planned opportunities to develop their word-processing skills, there is insufficient attention given to drafting and improving work directly onto the screen. As a result, the use of ICT to support the school's desire to raise standards in writing is unsatisfactory. In most, but not all subjects, ICT is planned on a regular basis to support pupils' learning. For example, in their past work in geography, pupils instructed a floor robot to find its way around the classroom. By contrast, little use is made of ICT in subjects such as science and music. The teaching of pupils with SEN is generally satisfactory. The use of ICT is seen as an important tool to support such pupils' progress, particularly in reading and spelling.
164. In the best lessons, pupils were well motivated and handled ICT equipment with care and respect. Pupils responded enthusiastically to the tasks set and worked well in pairs and groups. For example, in a mathematics lesson where pupils used ICT to investigate number patterns.
165. The school has satisfactory procedures for recording pupils' progress. However, overall use of this assessment information is unsatisfactory and, as a consequence, it is difficult for staff to gauge pupils' progress in ICT. This results in insufficient evaluation of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills and what they need to learn next.
166. The subject is satisfactorily led. The co-ordinator currently works part-time and is also the SENCO. Recent national changes to SEN have taken up much of the co-ordinator's time. Consequently, there have been very limited opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor

the impact of government-funded training on the quality of teaching and learning in ICT. However, despite the high turnover of staff, the training programme is on schedule. This is increasing staff capability in the subject and also the knowledge and skills of the co-ordinator. The school's investment in ICT is satisfactory. The recent appointment of an ICT technician ensures teachers do not waste valuable teaching time on repairs. Computers have been updated and there is a planned programme that will ensure an improved ratio of computers to pupils in classrooms. In addition, digital cameras are proving very beneficial and were used well by Year 2 pupils to report on a visit by the mayor.

MUSIC

167. Standards in music are average by Year 2 and similar to the time of the last inspection. However, standards in singing have improved further and are now above average. Pupils, including those with SEN, achieve satisfactorily, and build on their good start in the Foundation Stage. There were no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls.
168. Pupils sing tunefully and perform familiar songs with expression and a sense of rhythm. They are able to practise their skills at different times of the day. For example, they practise their singing skills spontaneously in lessons, at registration times, in dedicated music lessons and in assemblies.
169. Pupils perform rhythmic pieces with confidence and enjoyment. They experiment with different combinations of percussion instruments to represent specific sounds. For example, they work together to create short musical pieces such as 'a buffalo running over stones' or 'trees in a swamp'. Pupils respond well to musical instructions and use different dynamics in their playing as they compose sound effects for the story of 'The Awongalema Tree'. In lessons they listen attentively and enjoy their music making. Individual and group violin lessons, singing and recorder clubs enable pupils with particular talents to attain good standards and to perform confidently to an audience. Pupils know the correct names for instruments and musical terms and use them appropriately.
170. The quality of teaching is good and this represents an improvement since the last inspection where teaching was found to be broadly sound. Good progress in learning occurred where teachers had high expectations of what pupils could do and where lessons had a strong focus on improving pupils' skills in the subject. The focus on ensuring pupils' acquisition of skills is evident at the planning stage. Teachers' subject knowledge is often good and they use it well to split lessons into shorter, well timed activities that maintain pupils' interest and keep their active involvement high. Teachers use effective strategies such as explaining learning intentions to pupils in terms they can understand and modelling sounds and rhythms. Teachers show a confidence and enthusiasm for the subject and use a variety of resources. However, little use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning in the subject. Teachers include every pupil in the various class activities so that those with SEN have support to learn and to perform as well as others.
171. Good quality extra-curricular activities are provided for pupils after school. Over 40 girls and boys attend weekly recorder clubs and 20 pupils in Year 2 were observed attending an after-school, singing club. Such experiences enrich the musical experiences of the pupils who attend.
172. Good teaching results in pupils' good attitudes and behaviour which have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils enjoy making music. They listen carefully and sensitively to each other's efforts. Teachers value pupils' performances and ideas so they are then confident to explore sounds and rhythms.

173. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well. She is very enthusiastic and uses her subject expertise effectively. For example, she has ensured the high profile of the subject so that music is an important part of the whole curriculum. The co-ordinator models and demonstrates lessons, supports teachers' planning and leads the musical content of assemblies. The development of music has been an important ingredient in supporting the school's desire to raise pupils' self-esteem. However, there is a need to improve the use of assessment so that pupils' progress can be tracked effectively. The co-ordinator is aware of this shortcoming and is well on the way to completing a tailored scheme of work that will incorporate half-termly assessments of pupils' progress. The satisfactory range of musical instruments reflects a wide cultural diversity. The school hosts a county music festival and ensures a musical content to all of its celebrations.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

174. The above average standards in physical education (PE) have been maintained since the time of the previous inspection. Pupils, including those with SEN, achieve particularly well in the development of skills needed for team games, such as cricket. There were no significant differences between the attainment of girls and boys.

175. In Year 1, pupils build successfully on the good physical skills. They know the importance of warming up and cooling down and are reminded of the effects that exercise has on their heart rate. By Year 2, they can throw accurately and catch safely using beanbags and a range of balls. Most can throw a ball over some distance, and to a greater extent than is expected for pupils of these ages. Pupils show a good awareness of space when moving in the hall or in the outdoor play area. Pupils with SEN are fully involved in lessons and receive good quality, on-the-spot help from their teachers and support staff. Parents also help with PE lessons on a regular basis. Pupils with SEN also receive good quality additional support in the form of regular hall sessions to improve their self-confidence and physical co-ordination. Such experiences are well-organised and are particularly beneficial to pupils with statements of SEN and those pupils with fine motor and gross motor, physical difficulties. This ensures their good progress against some of the targets in their IEPs.

176. The quality of teaching was good overall and of a similar quality to the previous inspection. Very good gains in learning occurred where teachers had high expectations of pupils. In effective lessons, throwing skills practised indoors were repeated outdoors so that pupils had a further opportunity to try them out in organised team games. Planning is good quality and focuses on how skills are to be taught progressively as pupils move through Years 1 and 2. In the best lessons, teachers split the skills needed for throwing into small parts, yet kept the pace of the session brisk so that pupils remained active throughout. By contrast, in one lesson teaching was unsatisfactory because pupils were kept inactive, waiting their turn for prolonged periods. Adults are aware of the importance of promoting pupils' independence, particularly those with SEN. For example, at suitable moments during lessons, support staff unobtrusively distance themselves from targeted pupils, encouraging them successfully to develop greater autonomy.

177. Relationships between adults and pupils are very positive and this encourages pupils to work hard. They are well behaved and are supportive of each other when taking part in team games. Listening is regularly encouraged during the demonstration parts of lessons and pupils are very attentive. However, pupils receive limited opportunities to express their ideas and to critically evaluate their own performances. In part, this is due to the way some lessons are currently organised. For example, some lessons are so brief that pupils do not have time to change from their outdoor clothes. This is unsatisfactory and occasionally limits what staff can teach and what pupils could be expected to learn.

178. The co-ordinator provides a very good role model in how to teach the subject. He is very knowledgeable and has led staff meetings and demonstrated lessons. Also, he is currently leading the school in its pursuit of a nationally recognised 'Sports Award'. He has piloted a system of recording pupils' progress, but this has not been extended across Years 1 and 2. Consequently, teachers have difficulty in gauging and tracking pupils' learning. Resource levels are good and particularly good use is made of the hall at all times of the teaching day. Links with local schools and organisations enable the school to make suitable use of other facilities. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities such as tennis and cricket. These enhance the development of PE skills for the high number of pupils who take part.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

179. In Year 2, standards in religious education (RE) are broadly average and in line with the expectations of the LEA's Agreed Syllabus. This represents a similar picture to that found at the time of the last inspection. Pupils, including those with SEN, achieve satisfactorily against their prior attainment in Years 1 and 2. However, there is insufficient teaching time for the subject and this limits pupils' opportunities to write and record their work. There were no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls.

180. Pupils in Year 2 demonstrate a satisfactory knowledge of Christianity and Judaism. The study of these two religions has formed the main area of focus for the school. Pupils also have a satisfactory knowledge of stories from the Old and New Testaments. For example, they can recount some of the story of 'Joseph and his coloured coat' and the Christmas and Easter stories. They have visited a local church and can describe some of the religious artefacts they have seen there. They understand some of the religious significance of symbols such as the importance of the 'Cross' to Christians. Pupils know that celebrations of weddings, christenings and anniversaries are often held in churches and that Jewish people attend a synagogue and also have a name-giving ceremony. They know that special days can be religious or secular and can name some important world festivals. In considering the idea of 'belonging', pupils know that people belong to different kinds of groups and that those who are christened or baptised believe in God.

181. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and was sometimes good. Where learning was good, teachers made effective use of resources and artefacts. For example, as well as finding out about a Jewish skull-cap, teachers made good use of christening robes and shawls in a lesson about name-giving. In the sessions seen, pupils were attentive and eager to learn and the Year 2 pupils clearly enjoyed their lessons in RE.

182. The RE curriculum is made interesting and relevant and incorporates the requirements of the LEA's Agreed Syllabus. However, insufficient teaching time results in limited opportunities for pupils to consider and discuss what they were learning or to write down their ideas. Because of this, there were few examples of pupils' completed work in the subject.

183. The school has a well considered scheme of work and the themes for collective worship reinforce it, particularly through celebrations, caring and the idea of 'belonging'. Visits and visitors to the school enrich the curriculum for all pupils. In addition to pupils visiting the local church, people from different denominations and backgrounds come to school to talk to them. For example, representatives from Oxfam and the National Children's Homes talk to the children about their work and this enhances pupils' experiences beyond their own.

184. The RE co-ordinator works part-time and is new to her responsibility and consequently has not had time to impact on the subject. Current assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory and need review. At present, there is no whole-school approach and teachers make their own assessments of pupils' progress, guided by the good quality

policy document produced by the co-ordinator. Teachers do keep records of the gains pupils make in RE, but again there is no school format for this. The school is guided now by the LEA's Locally Agreed Syllabus and the QCA scheme of work and this has helped to address a former weakness. For example, pupils are now taught appropriately about the range of festivals, many of which are religious, and that different religions have separate festivals.