

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CROFTON INFANTS SCHOOL**

Orpington

LEA area: Bromley

Unique reference number: 101611

Headteacher: Mrs J Mitchell

Reporting inspector: Mr N Sherman  
16493

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> June 2003

Inspection number: 246136

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infants
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Town Court Lane Orpington Bromley
Postcode:	BR51EL
Telephone number:	01689 826320
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Robson
Date of previous inspection:	13 <sup>th</sup> October 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16493	Mr N Sherman	Registered inspector	English; physical education	The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well are pupils taught; What could the school do to improve further; How well is the school led and managed?
14066	Mrs G Hoggard	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22147	Mrs A Holland	Team inspector	Art and design; music; Foundation Stage	
23588	Mrs C Ajitsingh	Team inspector	English as an additional language; history; geography; religious education	
7871	Ms J Mackie	Team inspector	Science; information and communication technology	How well are pupils taught; How well does the school care for its pupils?
23805	Mrs M Lygoe	Team inspector	Mathematics; design and technology; special educational needs; educational inclusion	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?
28002	Mrs S Taylor	Team inspector	Provision in the Special Educational Needs Unit	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Crofton Infants School is situated in Orpington in the London Borough of Bromley. It is much larger in size than other infant schools and provides education for pupils aged 4 – 7. There are an even number of boys and girls. An average number of pupils have special educational needs. A distinctive feature of the school is the provision made in the form of a unit to provide education for pupils with a high learning need. 14 pupils at the school have a statement of special educational needs. The number of pupils claiming free school meals is below the average. The number of pupils with English as an additional language is around the average. Pupils enter the school with above average levels of attainment.

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

Crofton Infants School is a very good school and ensures that the pupils receive a very good start to their formal education. Pupils reach very high standards in English and they make good progress in many other subjects. They have excellent attitudes to their learning, and relationships at many levels in the school are very good. Pupils in the special needs unit are very well included in the full range of school activities planned. Teaching is very good and teachers are creative in how they plan to promote pupils' learning of literacy through other subjects. The curriculum is well planned, and equally effective is the manner in which the school makes use of National Curriculum assessment data to plan both the pupils' day-to-day learning and whole school developments. The school is very capably led and managed, with all those associated with the school fully committed to ensuring that the school's aims are successfully met. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils reach standards that are well above the national average in English.
- Pupils make good progress in many other subjects of the curriculum.
- Teaching is very good overall, and teachers make effective use of different subjects to support the pupils' literacy development.
- The pupils have excellent attitudes to their learning and work hard in lessons.
- The curriculum is well planned and enhanced by the very effective way in which teachers plan pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
- Very good use is made of assessment information to plan whole school developments.
- There are high levels of pastoral care demonstrated by all staff, who know the pupils well as individuals.
- The very effective links with parents have a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- The provision in the unit for pupils with high learning needs is very good.
- There is very effective management of this large and well-organised infants school.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher, who are highly regarded by all members of the school community, provide the school with sensitive, yet purposeful leadership.

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

- Standards in mathematics could be improved.

*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 October 1997. Good progress has been made since then. It has been highly successful in its drive to raise standards, and with the exception of mathematics, pupils leave the school reaching standards higher than expected in a large number of subjects. Rigorous action has been taken on the key issues from the last report, all of which have been effectively tackled. Teaching has improved, with a higher percentage of good and very good teaching now evident. The highly positive ethos of the school, where all pupils are valued for their individuality, has been well maintained. Given



the purposeful way the school is led and managed, it demonstrates very good capacity to move even further forward.

## 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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
reading	A	B	A	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
writing	A	A	A	B	
mathematics	B	C	C	D	

The table above indicates that in the most recent end of key stage National Curriculum tests (SATs) for 2002 pupils reached standards that were well above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. When compared with similar schools, based on the number of pupils claiming free school meals, standards were above average in writing, average in reading and below average in mathematics.

The findings of the inspection very much reflect the attainment of the pupils in the tests. By the time they leave the school, pupils reach standards that are well above the national average in English. Pupils make good progress in the development of their literacy skills, aided by the high expectations of teachers with regard to their written work. Standards in reading are above average. While pupils reach standards in mathematics in line with national expectations, progress, while clearly improving, could be greater; pupils have the capability to reach standards at the level of those seen in English. Standards in science are above national expectations and pupils make good progress.

Pupils make good progress in many other subjects of the curriculum. By the end of Year 2, standards are higher than expected in art and design, design and technology, history, geography, information and communication technology (ICT), and music. Standards in religious education are higher than the expectations outlined in the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in physical education are in line with expectations and pupils make satisfactory progress.

Although the children enter the school with above average levels of ability, they make continue to good progress in the Foundation Stage. By the time they enter Year 1, standards are higher than expected in all areas of their learning and many of the children are working at the early stages and levels outlined in the National Curriculum.

Different groups of pupils make equally good progress as they move through the school. Their needs are identified early and they are provided with good support, enabling them to achieve as well as their classmates. As a result, pupils with special educational needs, higher-attaining pupils and those who are at the early stages of learning English make good strides in developing their skills and ability to learn. The pupils in the special needs unit at the school make good progress towards the targets that are identified for them in their individual education plans.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils work very hard in lessons and produce a high standard of work for their age.
Behaviour, in and out of	Very good. Of note is the level of kindness and understanding

classrooms	demonstrated by the pupils to those pupils in the unit.
Personal development and relationships	There are high quality relationships at the school that serve to underpin the school's philosophy on inclusion. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to extend their personal development.
Attendance	In line with the national average.

Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to their learning and are highly enthusiastic learners. The positive school ethos helps to ensure that the quality of relationships at many levels in the school is very good.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very 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 quality of teaching is very good and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. In the Foundation Stage, teachers have a good understanding of the needs of young children and how best to support their learning. A good balance is achieved in ensuring that the children develop their basic skills and at the same time, learn through the use of structured play. In all classes, the basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught well and a key feature of the teaching of English is the opportunity provided for the pupils to develop their reading and writing skills through other subjects. Pupils develop a high level of confidence in reading and writing as a result. In some cases, an overuse of commercial worksheets restricts pupils' learning in mathematics, particularly that of higher-attaining pupils. There is much good teaching of other subjects, leading to pupils reaching high standards. Different groups of pupils are equally very effectively taught, ensuring that the pupils concerned make just as good as progress as their classmates.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for all pupils is well planned and ensures that statutory requirements are met. The pupils' learning is effectively enriched through a range of extra learning opportunities that include educational visits and extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and that for those with a high level of special educational needs is very good. Pupils in the unit are very much included in the full range of learning opportunities provided for all pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Those at the early stages of learning English are provided with well-targeted support, enabling them to make good strides in developing their confidence in using written and spoken English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Planned provision for the pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is very effective and characterised by the creative way in which teachers use different subjects to promote the pupils' understanding of the world in which they live.

How well the school cares for its pupils	All staff demonstrate a high level of care towards the pupils and despite this being a very large school, they have a good understanding of the pupils as individuals. Assessment and monitoring of the pupils' academic progress is very secure.
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The school has forged very positive links with the parents, who very much value the work of the staff in providing their children with a high quality learning environment where they are encouraged to achieve to the best of their ability. Parents' involvement in their children's learning at home adds to the pace of the pupils' learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and deputy headteacher are, quite rightly, highly regarded by all members of the school community. They provide astute leadership and have developed highly effective procedures to ensure that the school operates smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Other senior managers provide equally high quality leadership and management.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are effective in fulfilling their responsibilities and have a good understanding of the school. Their role as the school's 'critical friend' is well developed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very effective use is made of assessment data to plan development and to target individual pupils for additional support. The monitoring of teaching and learning is regular and the role of the co-ordinator is well developed in this respect.
The strategic use of resources	Very good use is made of the additional grants that are given to the school, which are well targeted to meet the needs of the pupils. The school has an effective understanding of the principles of 'best value' and regularly involves parents, for example, in discussions about the school's continued development.

The quality of accommodation and resources to support the pupils' learning is good and they are used well by teachers. There are a good number of teachers and support staff at the school all of whom are suitably qualified and experienced.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The impact of the work of the head and deputy headteacher on the school.</li> <li>The manner in which the school operates on a day-to-day basis.</li> <li>The high level of pastoral and academic support their children receive.</li> <li>The high standards their children reach.</li> <li>The school's ethos that is very much centred on encouraging the individuality of the children.</li> <li>The strong sense of inclusion for all pupils.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scope for the pupils to participate in competitive sports.</li> </ul>

Parents have very positive views of the school. Many parents testify to the strong, yet sensitive leadership and management of the head and deputy headteacher which in their view accounts for much of the school's success. Inspection findings would concur with the parents' perspectives of the school and inspection data indicates that the parents' positive views of the school are justified. Inspection findings indicate that the pupils are given some scope to take part in some competitive sports through the small games activities that are organised for them in physical education. Inspectors do not support parents on this issue.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

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

1. Children enter the Reception class with above average levels of attainment. They make good progress in their first year of full-time education. By the time that they transfer to Year 1 they reach standards above the expectations of the Early Learning Goals in all areas of their learning. The quality of teaching is very good and helps to ensure that the children are well prepared to undertake the National Curriculum by the time that they commence in Year 1.
2. The most recent end of key stage National Curriculum test results (SATs) indicated that pupils reached standards that were well above the national average in writing and above average in reading. In mathematics, pupils reached standards that were in line with the national average. When compared with similar schools, based on the numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals, pupils reached standards that were above average in writing and average in reading. In mathematics, standards were below average. The results of teacher assessments for science indicated that pupils reached standards that were above the national average. The results pupils reached in 2002 follow a similar pattern of attainment over three years. Historically, standards in writing have been the strongest feature of pupils' attainment and generally pupils' attainment in mathematics has not been as strong as that reached in writing and reading. This very much reflects the attention that the school gives to the development of the pupils' literacy skills and the creative manner in which teachers plan to enrich the pupils' literacy skills through other subjects.
3. The findings of the inspection are that pupils reach standards that are well above the national average in English, above average in science and in line with national expectations in mathematics. While the pupils make good progress in English and science, progress in mathematics could be better, particularly in relation to investigation work. The inspection findings reflect closely the findings of the National Curriculum tests. Early indications, based on the targets set by the school and teachers' assessments, are that pupils are on course to reach similar standards in the 2003 tests to those in 2002.
4. By the end of Year 2, pupils are very competent writers who have a good understanding of how writing can be used for different reasons and different audiences. Many write at length and have a good understanding of the need to check their work to ensure that it is demarcated with full stops and capital letters. Higher-attaining pupils are able to use speech marks when constructing dialogue. Pupils make good progress in their reading development and many pupils, as well as being able to read fluently and use their voices to read in role as the character that they are reading, have a good knowledge of authors such as Roald Dahl and Dick King-Smith. Pupils make equally good progress in the third element of their English development, speaking and listening. Pupils are given good opportunities to take part in small group and class discussions as well as to listen to stories and talks from visiting speakers.
5. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of number for their age and are able to solve a range of problems associated with simple fractions, addition and subtraction as well as time. Pupils have a secure understanding of the concept of measurement, and their ability to create and answer questions posed by exploring simple tables and charts is satisfactory. Overall, pupils' progress in mathematics, while improving, is too slow and not as significant as in English. While the school ensures that aspects of pupils' mathematical development are promoted both through the daily mathematics lesson and through some other subjects of the curriculum, the subject does not have the same amount of time allocated to it when compared with English. As a result, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to extend their mathematical skills. An over-use of commercial worksheets also limits the pupils' progress and higher-attaining pupils in particular get too few opportunities to use their secure knowledge and understanding of the language associated with mathematics in solving a range of open-ended problems.

6. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of scientific concepts for their age. They understand well the conditions that living creatures need to have in order to grow and thrive. Pupils are able to construct simple circuits and label these appropriately and they appreciate well the dangers of electricity if handled inappropriately. Pupils have a good awareness of different materials and of the notion of irreversibility. In addition, underpinning their learning is the good use by teachers of investigation work. As a result, pupils understand well for their age the principles of 'fair testing' and how, by changing a variable when undertaking such work, the results of the investigation could be altered.
7. Pupils make good progress in many other areas of the curriculum. The school has made good progress in developing ICT across the curriculum since the last inspection. Pupils now have regular opportunities to use the facilities in the school's computer suite and the learning that takes place there is suitably consolidated in classrooms on a daily basis. As a result, pupils reach standards that are above national expectations by the end of Year 2. Standards in religious education are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and as they move through the school pupils make good progress in their understanding of different religions and how different faith groups celebrate their beliefs. In art and design, design and technology, geography, history and music, pupils reach standards that are above expectations and progress is good. Standards in physical education are in line with expectations and pupils make satisfactory progress.
8. Different groups of pupils make equally good progress as they move through the school. This reflects the time and attention that the school gives to ensuring that the pupils concerned are fully included in all aspects of the curriculum and receive good quality support in lessons. Those with special educational needs have their needs identified early and they make good progress towards the targets identified for them in their individual education plans. Those pupils with a high level of special educational needs, (including pupils in the unit and those who attend the school part-time from local special schools) make good progress not only academically but in the way that they integrate socially with both their classmates and adults. With the exception of mathematics, where pupils could handle more challenging work, higher-attaining pupils are duly challenged to produce work that is of high quality. Pupils at the early stages of learning English make good progress, as do the few pupils at the school who are refugees.
9. Although the school is not legally bound to do so, it does set targets for improvement by pupils in the end of key stage National Curriculum tests. These are based on a good understanding of the pupils as individuals and what teachers feel the pupils are capable of achieving. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in raising standards. This reflects the high expectations teachers have of the pupils and of the school's philosophy that all pupils can achieve to the best of their ability if they are encouraged and supported effectively to do so.

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

10. The pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They are very keen to come in to school on time, to meet their friends and to take part in various activities, which they do with enormous enthusiasm, such as the French club, and extra-curricular football activities. Very effective and stimulating teaching generates tremendous interest by the pupils in what they are to learn. For example, Reception children working on position words quickly divided up into groups and enthusiastically undertook several different activities both inside and outside their classroom. Some positioned themselves in different places in the playground, some played in the 'bear school', some built a map of the bear hut from construction toys and some worked independently with number lines on the computer, but all showed concentration and perseverance. In all classes, pupils are more than keen to work on the tasks that they are set and produce a good volume of work in many subjects. They work with due care and are keen to produce work to the best of their ability. When pupils are tired they sometimes become a little restless or noisy, but their attitudes are never unsatisfactory.
11. Behaviour is very good in lessons, and as a further credit to the pupils given the size of the school, it is equally very good in and around the school at breaks and during lunch periods. Pupils play happily and creatively together, and those with special needs or of ethnic minority heritage are equally respected and fully integrated with their peers. When moving around the school, pupils are

sensible and disciplined despite the large numbers and long distances to walk. They understand the importance of lining up correctly, holding a partner's hand and waiting for a leader. They hold doors open for each other and respond politely to dinner ladies and visitors. School and personal property is safe, although some litter is dropped on the field at lunchtimes.

12. Personal development is very good and relationships in the school are very good at all levels. There are many opportunities for pupils to take the initiative or to learn independently. The pupils are happy to take on responsibility. Some pupils undertake small classroom jobs such as taking the register; older children can act as 'buddies' to younger pupils and take on monitor roles such as 'patrolling' the corridors at break, proudly wearing their sashes. Pupils have many opportunities to choose for themselves, whether it is the activities they will pursue in the playground or deciding how to spend money gained from recycling tinfoil.
13. Attendance is average and the figures for unauthorised absence are also in line with national figures. Pupils are punctual to school and to lessons ensuring a smooth and unobtrusive start to the day.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

14. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now very good overall, enabling all pupils to acquire new knowledge and develop their skills quickly. During the inspection, teaching was excellent in four per cent of the 70 lessons seen, very good in a further 34 per cent and good in 39 per cent. Teaching was largely satisfactory in the remainder of the lessons.
15. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good, with teachers providing a wide range of opportunities for the children to experience all of the expected areas of learning for children of this age. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of how the children learn and good use is made of play to deepen the knowledge and skills that the children acquire as they move through the key stage. Classrooms are well organised, ensuring that little time is wasted as the children move from one activity to another. Learning support assistants are well briefed on how best they can support the children in their learning, and the quality of relationships is such that the children develop the confidence to seek out an adult if they encounter a particular problem. Assessment of the children's progress is regular and the information from this is fed back into subsequent planning that helps to move the children on in their learning. As a result of the very good teaching that the children receive, they make good progress and are well prepared to explore the National Curriculum when they enter Year 1.
16. There is much good teaching in many subjects at Key Stage 1. The teaching of English is very good, ensuring that the pupils develop both their literacy skills and the confidence to apply these in everyday activities. The pupils are provided with good opportunities to take part in speaking and listening activities, with teachers valuing the importance that such activities have as a means of pupils developing their thinking before undertaking writing activities. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory with some good features. These include a good knowledge and understanding by teachers of the principles of the National Numeracy Strategy and the application of these in daily mathematics lessons; however, in some classes there is an overuse of commercial worksheets that are used too slavishly by some teachers. As a result, some pupils, particularly those who are higher-attaining, do not have the scope to develop their skills through exploring mathematics that is open-ended in structure. In addition, there is a tendency for the teachers to keep the pupils on the carpet for too long, leaving limited time for them to consolidate and practise their mathematical skills through independent tasks. The plenary sessions are not always as effective as they could be in summarising the learning that has taken place. As a result, the pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress overall. The teaching of ICT is good and much improved since the previous inspection. The use of computers to support learning in other areas of the curriculum is now much more evident in subjects such as English, art, science, mathematics, geography and history. The teaching of science, art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and religious education is good and the pupils acquire a good range of knowledge and skills in each of the subjects as a result.



17. Throughout the school, the teachers plan their lessons very carefully and share the learning objectives with the pupils so that they are aware of what they are expected to do. The teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to plan a wide range of activities which both stimulate and engage the pupils in their learning. The teachers employ a broad range of methods to enable the pupils to learn effectively, such as whole class interactive teaching, individual, paired and group work. In an excellent Year 2 literacy lesson seen during the inspection, the teacher challenged the pupils to construct their own simple rhyme following a lively introduction to the topic through the reading of a poem about houses, the current focus of their work. The pupils responded very enthusiastically and by the end of the lesson had produced rhyming poetry of their own which was of very high quality and successfully met the teacher's lesson objectives.
18. A key feature of the high quality teaching is the high expectations teachers have of the pupils. In a very good Year 2 numeracy lesson, for example, the teacher conducted a brisk introductory mental activity and, by using careful questioning, enabled all pupils to complete an addition of two numbers up to twenty. The teacher then gave a very clear presentation of the main activity, which enabled the pupils to undertake their own task of constructing bar charts with confidence. By the end of the session, all pupils had made good progress in their understanding of the purpose of a bar chart and had produced their own graphs successfully.
19. All classrooms have a purposeful atmosphere in which the pupils thrive. The teachers have established very clear routines, which the pupils know and understand. Relationships are very good, with mutual respect shown between the pupils and their teachers. This positive feature was particularly evident in an excellent Year 1 art lesson, where the pupils were being taught about colour mixing. The ethos created by the teacher, reinforced by a careful demonstration of the task to be undertaken, ensured that the pupils knew exactly what was expected of them and they did their very best to achieve it. As a result, they made excellent progress in their ability to mix paints and were able to produce different shades of the same colour with great success. Relationships between pupils and the adults are cemented further through the good use made of praise to encourage and commend the pupils' achievements in class. The pupils respond well to this and it entuses them further to produce a higher standard of work. Equally effective is the manner in which the teachers assess the pupils' progress. Regular use is made of the information gathered to set learning targets for the pupils and inform future planning.
20. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that all pupils are included fully in lessons. They achieve this through careful questioning, setting tasks with differing levels of challenge and through encouraging peer support. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Classroom assistants provide good support for pupils with special educational needs, both within the classroom and in the small withdrawal groups, enabling them to make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans (IEPs). Parent helpers are also deployed effectively in the classroom and make a valuable contribution to the pupils' learning.

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

21. The quality and range of the learning opportunities provided for the pupils are good, with a number of very good features. This represents good progress since the last inspection. Although aspects of the mathematics curriculum need to be strengthened, the school has significant strengths in English, in art and design and in the way in which subjects are linked together to make learning for the pupils a coherent and worthwhile experience. Provision for ICT has improved significantly, and access to the school's computers and other ICT equipment is a regular feature of the pupils' learning. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements as does the provision for religious education.
22. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good, and covers all the areas recommended for this age group. Teachers are particularly effective in planning work for all the

areas of learning through the curriculum for knowledge and understanding of the world. There is satisfactory provision for outdoor activities, while the children do have access to a play area in another part of the school which they use at different points of the week, they do not currently have free and ready access to an outside learning area adjacent to their classrooms. As a result, this limits the access to outside play to enhance their learning.

23. The school's strategy for teaching literacy is good and contributes to the good progress and attainment in many other subjects. Considerable time is devoted to various aspects of English, and there is good support for those pupils identified as underachieving. The strategy for teaching numeracy is satisfactory. Although skills are promoted in some other subjects, there is scope in science for higher-attaining pupils in particular to undertake more data handling in order to develop their skills. Numeracy periods are sometimes shorter than originally planned on the timetable, and time allowed for activities is curtailed as a result. Pupils complete numerous commercial worksheets that are not always well chosen. There is scope to challenge higher-attaining pupils further in mathematics and to increase the opportunities for pupils to use and apply their knowledge and strategies.
24. The school effectively enriches pupils' learning through other subjects. The curriculum planned for religious education, history, geography, design and technology and music is good and teachers are adept at making relevant links between subjects. The art and design curriculum is very good and enhances the whole life of the school. There is a good programme for personal, social and health education. Aspects of sex education and drugs awareness are covered in the science curriculum at a suitable level for the age group.
25. The school has a strong commitment to promoting equal opportunities and to ensuring that all pupils have access to the curriculum. Pupils from the special unit join some classes and take part in the daily assemblies. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, both in the unit and in the other classes. Individual education plans are detailed and activities are matched carefully to individual needs. These plans are reviewed termly following a careful assessment of each pupil's progress. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is also very good, and as a result the pupils make rapid progress.
26. Extra-curricular provision is good, and pupils have access to more activities than is usually seen for pupils at this stage. Year 2 pupils can join clubs as diverse as art, drama, country dancing, citizenship and football. The curriculum is further enhanced by many visits, within the local area and further afield. Links with the local community are good, as are the links with pre-school groups and the junior school. Arrangements for transfer to the junior school are carefully planned, and the two schools are careful to avoid repetition of topics in subjects such as history.
27. The school's provision for the pupils' personal development is a significant feature of the school. The very good provision for spiritual, moral and social development noted during the last inspection has been maintained. Provision for cultural development has improved and is now also very good. The school is a flourishing community in which pupils are safe, enabling them to grow and learn in an atmosphere of mutual respect.
28. The pupils' spiritual development is very well promoted through assemblies and religious education, as well as through other subjects. The very good art curriculum and planning which allows pupils to make connections between aspects of their learning is an example of how different subjects of the curriculum are planned to enrich the pupils' spiritual development. Pupils' work is attractively displayed and valued and the high quality of the displays makes the school a stimulating and exciting place in which to learn. Pupils are encouraged to pick up the artefacts that are on display and this helps to develop their sense of wonder in the world around them.
29. Moral development is very well promoted through a clear set of rules and a consistent approach to the strong promotion of a moral code from all the staff. Adults have a very good understanding of the needs and concerns of the pupils, and act as very good role models, promoting respect, fairness and regard for others. The 'Good Citizens' club allows pupils to explore values linked with the environment. In addition, pupils are given scope in subjects such as English to write their

opinions about issues of a moral nature. These include, for example, expressing their views about the moral implications of whale hunting or the impact of deforestation on different countries of the world.

30. The pupils' social development is actively encouraged through opportunities for taking responsibility within the school. Year 2 pupils, for example, are appointed as lunchtime monitors and are responsible for reminding others to move sensibly around the building. Teachers plan many activities in which pupils have to co-operate in pairs and groups. A wider understanding of social responsibility is promoted through collections for charities both in this country and overseas. Giving at harvest time is thoughtfully planned; gifts of food are delivered to local people and suitable gifts are sent to needy people in areas such as Kosovo.
31. Art and design features very strongly in promoting the pupils' cultural development the provision for which is very good. Pupils study art from other cultures as well as famous western artists. Visits to the National Portrait Gallery widen the pupils' experience. Cultural development is also promoted through a range of visitors to the school, including the local minister and an Indian dance and drumming group. Events such as the 'Commonwealth Day' celebrations offer further opportunities for pupils to experience the diversity of their own community.

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

32. This is a warm, caring school, where there are very good relationships and an appreciation of each child's importance that is very much valued by parents. When enrolling their children, some are initially worried about the size of the school, but confess their fears prove groundless once they see how well their children are treated.
33. There are good arrangements for child protection. The headteacher is the designated officer and concerns are treated on a 'need to know' basis. Staff work closely together and are alert to any difficulties, although not all are clear who the designated person is. Day-to-day routines are efficient and organised to ensure health and safety is well managed. There are enough staff who are first-aid trained and good records are kept. Internet safety is taken seriously. Despite its size, the building is kept in good condition and safety is paramount though unobtrusive.
34. The monitoring of attendance is good and the school has a good overview of its pupils, despite their numbers. Registrations are taken swiftly and efficiently. In the case of absence, parents are contacted by letter or phone and most are supportive in explaining absences and in communication with the school. Few parents take holidays in term time.
35. The management of behaviour is unobtrusive but uniform across all staff, with a corresponding degree of consistency in practice. Pupils understand well what is required and largely apply the rules. There are a series of rewards for good behaviour, culminating in regular celebration assemblies where pupils are given praise and certificates. Pupils are quite clear about the standards of behaviour required, and seldom deviate from them. Pupils from the special unit have a carefully planned programme of integration with their peers in mainstream classes, which works very well. Other pupils with special needs, some of whom attend from other schools on a part-time basis, are equally well integrated and supported.
36. With such young children, much of the monitoring of personal development takes place informally; there is a stable teaching staff who know well all the pupils in their care. Many opportunities are given for pupils to reflect on their learning and consider the beliefs and attitudes of other people. Circle time, when pupils sit in a circle for discussion, helps them considerably to develop maturity. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to make their own decisions and to take responsibility. For example, even young children can decide which playground to use at lunchtimes, depending on whether they want quiet or lively activities. The care offered to pupils in the special unit is very good. Staff are sympathetic and patient but maintain high expectations of behaviour, independence and learning. Parents are fully involved and a home-school book lets them know what their children have done each day.

37. Good progress has been made in this aspect of the school's work, which was identified as a key issue in the previous inspection. The assessment co-ordinator, who is also the deputy headteacher, has developed a clear policy, underpinned by a set of thorough procedures, which are discussed and shared regularly with members of staff. There is a comprehensive training programme to ensure that all teachers have an accurate awareness of the standards achieved by and expected of the pupils.
38. The school undertakes a thorough analysis of test data and has a clear picture of the pupils' attainment. Systems are in place to evaluate the relative performance of different groups according to gender, ethnicity and special educational need. The pupils' progress is tracked carefully as they move through the Foundation Stage and the main school, enabling the teachers to provide additional support and/or challenge where necessary. The identification of some boys who are reluctant writers, for example, has resulted in focused support on a weekly basis, which has enabled them to both gain in confidence and develop a greater enthusiasm for writing. The identification of and support for those pupils with special educational needs is good. The clear targets set for them allow both support staff and class teachers to plan appropriate activities, which enable them to make good progress.
39. The teachers use assessment information effectively to set learning targets for the pupils in literacy and numeracy which helps them to understand what they need to aim for next. The teachers ensure that the pupils are not only well aware of their targets but also make a point of celebrating when the pupils meet them successfully. The evaluation of the pupils' work is undertaken on a weekly basis across all areas of the curriculum and this information is used systematically to develop an overall picture of each pupil's attainment and to inform future planning.
40. Assessment practice is very secure in the core subjects. Steps have already been taken to eradicate the inconsistencies, identified through monitoring, in the assessment of the pupils in ICT and more needs to be done to embed procedures in religious education. This feature has been identified as an area for improvement by the school.

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

41. The school has worked very hard at involving its parents and carers, because it recognises the importance of a close and visible relationship with parents that impacts well on pupils' learning. The links with parents are very good and in turn parents and carers are very supportive. Their views are very favourable. Many consider that the school is very well led and managed and behaviour is generally good. They believe that high quality teaching is helping their children to become mature and responsible. An overwhelming majority say their children like school and are making good progress and many feel the school is very open and approachable. A much smaller number were concerned about homework and extra-curricular activities, but the inspection found no evidence of shortcomings in these areas.
42. The school is tremendously open and willing to involve itself with parents, and a very good range of written communications form part of this aspect. The prospectus, for example, is produced to a high professional standard and includes many samples of pupils' own writing. The governors' annual report to parents is also well produced. Both, however, lack information about how the school deals with special educational needs, and the annual report needs further details on the election of parent governors. There are very detailed and informative regular newsletters for each year group and notice boards around the school telling parents about events and trips, what their children are learning and other matters of interest. Parents and carers get special 'Maths at Home' booklets, including the opportunity for both parent and child to evaluate their usefulness. Annual reports to parents, however, are barely satisfactory because they do not contain references to National Curriculum levels or advice on how pupils can improve their performance, although they do have quite a lot of detail about what pupils have learnt. Reading records are used and home-school communication books are particularly helpful in the special unit, where pupils may not be

able to talk about what they have done at school. Homework is used satisfactorily to support learning.

43. Parents are very willing to support the school, and more than seventy regularly help in classrooms, for example with cooking, reading or number activities. They accompany the educational trips and visits and actively contribute through the Parent-Staff Association, which is very good at fundraising. Their efforts, for example, have helped to buy high-quality playground equipment. School events are very well supported, and many parents come into classrooms informally to see how their children are getting on. Relationships between staff and parents are characterised by openness and warmth. Almost without exception parents are glowing in their praise of the school, and in return they make an excellent contribution to their children's learning.

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

44. Crofton Infants School is very well led and managed, ensuring that the school's aims are very well met. A key feature is the leadership and management of the head and deputy headteacher. They are both highly regarded by the governors, staff and parents and all point to the effective guidance that they give and at the same time, the sensitive support they offer to all who work at the school. This helps to ensure that those who join the school quickly gain an understanding of the procedures to help in the day-to-day management of this large infants school. Both have a well-developed understanding of the school's strengths and of the areas that still need to be developed. They understand well, for example, that although the standards that pupils reach in English are at a high level, they are capable of aspiring to and indeed reaching equally high standards in mathematics.
45. Many of the strengths highlighted in the last report about how the school is led and managed are still very much evident and in some respects others have been further enhanced. To assist in moving the school forward, the head and deputy headteacher have created an effective management structure that also serves to ensure that communication between the school's senior managers and other staff is channelled in a clear, honest and effective manner. This consists of a leadership group comprising the senior managers of the school that is complemented further by a management group that comprises the leadership group plus the SENCO for each of the year groups. Many staff comment positively on the manner in which the senior managers keep them informed of developments as well as strongly encouraging their views and opinions before a course of action is finally determined. Such an approach helps to secure the commitment of staff to ensuring that initiatives are effectively implemented and, where appropriate, evaluated in terms of their success. Such evaluations feed back into the school development planning cycle that also involves other members of the school community. These include the governors and parents. Their views are obtained at annual 'open forum' meetings where parents of pupils in each year group are invited to the school to hear about proposed developments and to gain their views about proposed school initiatives. The quality of the school improvement plan is very good and provides a clear rationale for the school's continued growth and development.
46. The procedures that the school uses to monitor its progress and to gauge what needs to be developed are much improved since the previous inspection. The monitoring of teaching is regular and suitably aligned to the planned developments in the school's action plan. A monitoring programme is worked out for the year and is very closely followed. Both the head and the deputy headteacher oversees this and the co-ordinators' role in assisting in the process is well developed. Many, for example, have regular non-contact teaching time that is effectively managed and enables the co-ordinators to get a clear-cut picture of provision in their subjects of responsibility. Complementing this work is the evaluation of the pupils' performance in National Curriculum data and other assessments made of their progress. The additional support that some pupils receive to boost their performance comes directly as a result of the close evaluation of the pupils' performance in such assessment tests.

47. With the exception of some minor points of detail that are not provided for parents in the school's prospectus and the annual report, the governors are effective in fulfilling their responsibilities. They are highly committed to the school and have a close and visible relationship with the staff. They are kept fully up-to-date about school developments by the headteacher who values the input and guidance that they give. Many visit the school regularly to see for themselves at first hand how the school operates and this enables them to check on progress in terms of initiatives in relation to the school development plan. From these visits, reports are devised and shared with other governors, enabling them to be kept informed of the school's work. The governors regularly discuss aspects of the school's provision, including the standards that pupils reach and the targets that are set in relation to the end of key stage National Curriculum tests. The governing body has a strong commitment to ensuring that all pupils, including those in the special needs unit are included in all aspects of school life, and this helps to ensure that the school's aims in respect of inclusion are well met.
48. There is very secure financial management of the school's budget and the various grants that are given to it to support the pupils' learning. The headteacher, in close co-operation with the school's part-time bursar, keeps a careful overview of the budget and provides governors with clear and regular information about incurred expenditure. This allows the governors to monitor spending carefully and align this to the initiatives in the school development plan. The headteacher and governors have a good understanding of the principles of 'best value'. Not only do they ensure that financial estimates are obtained and rigorously discussed before committing themselves to expenditure, but their agreed approach of actively pursuing the views about certain aspects of school development with parents helps to ensure that these views are also taken into account before determining a particular course of action. Other grants given to the school are equally effectively managed. These include those for school improvement, for the management of pupils in the special educational needs unit and for the performance management of teachers. The arrangements for the latter have been well embedded into the school's culture of staff development that effectively blends with whole school development as well as meeting the needs of particular teachers.
49. The school has a well-developed set of school policies. These include one for the promotion of racial equality. They help those new to the school quickly to become aware of the school's philosophy that underpins how subjects are to be taught and how the school operates on a day-to-day basis. Many staff new to the school attest to the very good level of induction that they receive, particularly from the school's senior managers. Such support proves highly effective and ensures that the staff concerned are valued and quickly informed about the school's day-to-day routines.
50. The building is very large and accommodates the high number of pupils very well. Care is taken by the school's management to ensure that the generous space is used effectively to support the pupils' learning. When withdrawn for additional support, pupils with special educational needs are taught in a very bright and attractive classroom that is very well organised to meet their needs. In addition, further space has been creatively used to support the learning of pupils identified by the school as underachieving. This area is very well enhanced through stimulating displays of the pupils' own work which helps to raise their self-esteem. Many classrooms areas are well used for learning or for display. There are dedicated rooms for ICT and music as well as extensive outdoor areas with very good quality play equipment. All are used well to support pupils' learning; however, space to enable the children in the Foundation Stage to participate in regular outside play that complements their learning in classrooms is more limited. In addition, the school library that is sited in the school's entrance foyer is too small for pupils to be taught there as a class or to develop their research skills.
51. There is a good match of staff to the needs of the curriculum and a good number of support assistants, who are deployed effectively. New and newly qualified teachers are inducted very thoroughly into the life of the school and comment very favourably on the support that they receive, although there is as yet no staff handbook for administrative information. Resources for learning are good in all subjects.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

52. In order to improve the quality of pupils' learning further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

(1) **Improve the pace of pupils' learning in mathematics by ensuring that:**

- greater scope is given for the pupils to participate in open-ended mathematics work
- the use that is made of commercial worksheets to support learning is reduced
- greater use is made of the time in lessons

(paragraphs ⇒ 5, 16, 23, 44, 78 – 81)

**The following less important issues should be included in the school's action plan:**

- Ensure that the information provided for parents by the governors meets statutory requirements
- Ensure that all teachers have suitable expectations of how pupils present their English work.

(paragraphs ⇒ 47 and 76)

## PROVISION FOR PUPILS IN THE SPECIAL NEEDS UNIT

53. The Special Infant Unit (SIU) has places for 9 pupils with severe learning difficulties. Of these, 6 pupils have autism and 3 have general learning difficulties. Recently, there has been an increase in the number of pupils coming into the unit with autism.

54. Pupils in the unit are making very good progress in the development of their social and communication skills and self-help skills. They make good progress over time in relation to their targets for play, literacy, behaviour and number. Unit pupils show positive attitudes towards their learning; however, some of the targets on individual education plans (IEPs) are not sufficiently broken down to measure the smaller steps of progress that some pupils make.

55. The teaching in the unit is very good overall, because the staff know their pupils well and are very skilled and experienced in teaching pupils with a complex range of needs. Staff use a variety of methods and resources together with specific questioning, which are very well matched to individual pupil targets. They place strong emphasis on encouraging the development of communication skills, self-help skills and personal and social skills. A range of communication methods and devices are used to enable pupils to take part in lessons, which are very well structured with consistent routines. Praise is appropriately used to ensure that pupils know when they are making progress. Planning for individual lessons is very good and the role of the support assistants and other adults including volunteers is carefully thought out, so that there is excellent team working to manage learning and behaviour. Support assistants are very well trained and provide very good quality support. All staff manage pupils' behaviour very well through a combination of firmness, consistency and respect. Teachers in the mainstream school have a very good grasp of the unit pupils' needs and use language supported by sign to ensure that the pupils are fully included and there are high expectations for learning and behaviour. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are very well taught.

56. Unit pupils are provided with excellent opportunities to integrate into all aspects of school life and take part in all activities available including extra-curricular ones. They all go to the whole school assembly, have their playtime with other pupils, go into the dining room with their peers and have some time being taught as a member of a mainstream class each week. They follow the full range of the curriculum, which is adapted in terms of strategies and approaches to their individual needs.

57. The pupils have their statements reviewed regularly and appropriate provision is in place. There is very good liaison with the educational psychologist and speech and language therapist. Very good quality individual education plans are in place and are reviewed each term. The pupils' progress is assessed at least once each term in all subjects; however, although the pupils' progress in lessons is recognised, it is not consistently recorded. There are very good links with parents through very well used home-school diaries. All parents attend reviews of their child's progress.
58. The unit is very well staffed by a cohesive team of highly trained and experienced teachers and special support assistants, led by an able unit manager who is committed to inclusion. All members of the team willingly undertake further appropriate training whenever it is available, including school training days. Accommodation has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory, although this would improve further if a small, quiet room were provided for individual work with pupils. Resources are satisfactory, but need to be continually upgraded to ensure that the changing needs of pupils are catered for.
59. Overall, the provision offered by the unit is very good because of very good inclusion opportunities and the skilled teaching it offers.



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	70
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	3	24	27	15	1	-	-
Percentage	4	34	39	21	1	-	-

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. When the total number is substantially less than 100, 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)	520
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	26

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	14
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	90

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	23

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	27
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	72	101	173

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	69	69	67
	Girls	100	100	91
	Total	169	169	158
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	98 (94)	98 (97)	91 (94)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	69	67	69
	Girls	100	94	100
	Total	169	161	169
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	98 (95)	93 (92)	98 (97)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
308	-	-
1	-	-
7	-	-
1	-	-
1	-	-
6	-	-
4	-	-
3	-	-
1	-	-
-	-	-
3	-	-
1	-	-
5	-	-
-	-	-
4	-	-
3	-	-
2	-	-

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	23.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.7
Average class size	27.4

#### Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	266

### Financial information

Financial year	2002- 03
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	£
Total income	1 277 588
Total expenditure	1 264 574
Expenditure per pupil	2 432
Balance brought forward from previous year	63 829
Balance carried forward to next year	76 842

FTE means full-time equivalent.

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8.4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	520
Number of questionnaires returned	238

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	25	2	-	-
My child is making good progress in school.	66	34	-	-	-
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	42	-	-	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	43	12	1	2
The teaching is good.	71	29	-	-	-
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	42	11	-	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	21	1	-	-
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	29	-	-	1
The school works closely with parents.	61	34	3	-	1
The school is well led and managed.	87	12	-	-	-
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	29	1	-	-
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	44	11	2	5

### Other issues raised by parents

No other issues were raised by the parents.

## **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**

60. The school has made significant improvement in the quality of provision for children in the Foundation Stage since the last inspection and the issue identified then has been successfully remedied. The six Reception classes are housed in the main building. They have access to a secure, appropriately equipped outdoor area, which has been developed since the last inspection. Access to this area is limited as it is removed from the classrooms, however. The school timetables provision throughout the day to enable each class to use the equipment and to continue the indoor curriculum outdoors as much as is possible. The best possible use is made of this area and with the good deployment of support staff, it is used to support learning in all areas of the curriculum. The space is incorporated in all planning. There is another area in the school, which has direct access from five classrooms. Currently, the school is considering how this area can be adapted for use by the Foundation Stage classes. This would further enhance provision for the children and ensure that their curriculum meets fully the recommended curriculum for children of this age. All the Reception classes are equipped with a wide range of good quality resources.
61. The staff are sensitive to the needs of young children, and admission arrangements reflect this. Although there is no Nursery attached to the school, most children have received pre-school provision. The school has established strong links with the pre-school providers in the locality. Children entering the Reception classes are settled quickly and by the end of the Reception year, most have met the standards expected nationally in all areas of learning and many are already working at Level 1 in several areas of the National Curriculum.
62. Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and it is now very good. In all six classes, teachers have very clear expectations of both behaviour and achievement, and the children respond well. They have generally very good attitudes to school. Assessments of the children indicate that their general level of attainment on entry to the school is above that expected for children of this age. The quality of education that they receive ensures that all the children, including those with particular needs, continue to make good progress. In communication, language and literacy, their progress is very good. Teachers plan carefully in line with the recommended curriculum; very good provision is made for children with particular needs. Planning is carefully linked to the developing knowledge and understanding of the children and reflects the high expectations that the teachers have. Assessment procedures are secure and staff use the information gained from assessments to identify the children's future needs. This represents improvement since the last inspection. Support staff are used very well and they make a significant contribution to the progress that the children make.
63. The management of the Foundation Stage is good. The co-ordinator has successfully overseen the improvements in planning and general provision for the children. She works very closely with the headteacher and the senior management team. Staff plan together and effective guidance is given to new staff. Overall, provision in the Foundation Stage is good. The quality of the teaching and the curriculum offered to the children ensures that they are challenged, they achieve well and they have a good start to their school life. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection.

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

64. Considerable emphasis is placed on the personal and social development of the children. All children, including those with particular needs, make good progress in this aspect of their learning. Children from the Special Infant Unit are integrated on a regular basis in each class; this has a valuable impact on the children's understanding of the needs of others. By the end of the Reception year, the vast majority of the children have achieved the expected standards in

this area of learning. In all six Reception classes, children are very aware of routines; they take care of equipment and tidy up automatically at the end of sessions. They are able to sustain concentration, and work very well together in groups especially when the teacher is working with another group. They listen carefully to each other in whole class sessions and take turns sensibly. Staff are very good role models. Teachers and support staff are particularly good at involving themselves with children during activities; learning opportunities are enhanced by the quality of the questions asked by all staff. The children's spiritual and cultural development is fostered by a variety of activities. Assemblies, circle time, stories, the use of music and the general ethos of the classrooms all make a positive contribution to their spiritual, moral and cultural development.

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

65. Teaching is consistently good and often very good. All the children make good progress; most will reach the expected standard by the end of the Reception year and many are already working at Level 1 of the National Curriculum. This represents improvement since the last inspection. Most children have very good speaking and listening skills; all staff are very careful to develop these skills even further and children are encouraged to speak in front of their peers, which most do with confidence. Elements of the literacy hour are taught in all six classes. Phonics are introduced through a variety of activities. Appropriate big books such as *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*, are used to support activities. Strong cross-curricular links are already being developed, for example with knowledge and understanding. Children are encouraged to write about their observations of plants growing and about trips that they make. All children recognise their names and most can write their own name legibly and identify the letters they need to use independently. There are areas for writing in all classes and children are encouraged to record their work during group activities. Some higher-attaining pupils are able to write independently and are encouraged to do so. Early reading skills are very well developed in all six classes. Most children can already read a simple text; they take their reading book home to share with parents and the home record indicates that most parents support their children in this activity. Progress in reading is very good; it is supported by group reading sessions in classes as well as individual reading sessions with teachers and support staff. Most children can explain what the author, the illustrator, and the title mean and what a library is.

### **Mathematical development**

66. By the end of the Reception year, most pupils have achieved the nationally expected standards in this area of their learning. Many are already working at Level 1 of the National Curriculum. This represents improvement since the last inspection. Children are encouraged to count; they show a good understanding of numbers from one to twenty and most can identify missing numbers with ease. They are learning to use mathematical language with confidence and in two lessons observed, children showed a good understanding of positional language. They were able to describe how they found a hidden bear by the use of positional language. Children recognise and can name simple shapes, such as, square, circle and triangle. All teachers and support staff harness the natural enthusiasm of the children to move their learning forward. During the inspection week, the mathematical activities were linked to the general topic of going on a bear hunt. Learning was fun and the children responded with excitement. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and mostly good. In a very good lesson observed, the teacher's careful planning and her ability to match the activities to the needs of the children ensured that a brisk pace was sustained and learning was enhanced. All children, including those with particular needs, are making good progress.

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

67. The school has improved on the standards noted at the last inspection in this area of the children's learning. The staff base all their planning on increasing the children's knowledge and understanding in all of the six areas of learning and it is very effective. As a result, the children



make good progress. Most children have reached the expected standard in this aspect of their learning and many are already working at Level 1 of the National Curriculum especially in science, ICT, geography and history. Very good use of the school grounds and the Junior School woodland area is made to draw their attention to the world around them. During the inspection, a 'bear hunt' took place in the junior school area. Children are used to growing plants such as sunflowers and beans from seeds and they make observations about growth and development in their books. They are learning to predict what will happen and what effect water has on plants. Cooking is a regular activity; this is very well supported by parents; several of whom come in and take groups of children for cooking. Recipes are varied, for example, cheese pastries and bakewell tarts were observed during the inspection. Children have access to sand and water; more readily available access to the outdoor area would further enhance these activities. Children are being introduced to history by visits, for example to the London Transport Museum. They are learning to undertake simple mapping exercises and show a good understanding of the activity. Teachers and support staff extend the children's learning by skilful questioning. The children are encouraged to use computers. A computerised toy was used to support a mapping exercise. In this particular lesson, the teacher reinforced strong links with mathematics. Children use the computer to retell stories and they control the mouse with confidence. They know how to erase errors and how to return to the beginning of a program. They can change the screen, click, drag and move pictures.

### **Physical development**

68. Teaching is at least good and sometimes very good. This is reflected in the progress that the children make. Attainment is varied in the outdoor areas using large apparatus but most children have attained the levels expected nationally for their age. In an indoor physical education lesson observed, most children were achieving a higher standard. The teaching was very good and the children were encouraged to extend themselves. They showed a mature understanding of how exercise supports good health and why it is important to consider others and use space wisely. The lesson obviously built on previous lessons and the children showed an increasing knowledge of the skills required to achieve well. The introduction of an outdoor area for the more regular use of large apparatus is an improvement since the last inspection; however, easier access to these activities on a continual basis would further raise levels of attainment in this area of their learning. The children have been taught the required to cut carefully and to use glue sensibly. There is an emphasis on holding pencils correctly. All children, including those with particular needs, make at least satisfactory progress.

### **Creative development**

69. Most children will exceed the standards expected by the time they enter Year 1. The teaching that they receive, which is mostly very good, ensures that they make good progress. The activities provided for the children in all six classes, offer a wide range of experience, which supports the development of their creative skills. They handle paint and brushes confidently and they can explain how they mix colours in order to obtain other colours. For example, they know that blue and yellow make green. Role-play areas are provided in each classroom. Strong links are established with other areas of the curriculum. During the inspection, these were fitted out as schools for bears. Children use these areas very well. Bears were lined up, made to sit still and listen carefully to the 'teacher'. Children took turns sensibly in the leading role.
70. Music is used well to support the children's learning. Music is played in classrooms throughout the day as well as in music lessons. A whole Reception year singing session was observed in the dining hall. The children are very good at warming up exercises; they concentrate well and join in the singing with enthusiasm and expression. In some classes, teachers use singing to close sessions and the children respond well. Music makes a significant contribution to their social and cultural development.

## **ENGLISH**

71. The results of the 2002 National Curriculum tests (SATs) indicated that pupils reached standards that were well above the national average in writing and above average in reading. When compared with similar schools, based on the numbers of pupils claiming free school meals, standards were above average in writing and average in reading. Early indications, based on the teachers' assessments for 2003 indicate that standards are very likely to repeat those reached by the pupils in 2002. Historically, standards in writing have been the stronger feature of pupils' attainment and standards in English have been higher than those reached by the pupils in mathematics. The school's assessment data indicates that there is no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls.
72. Inspection findings indicate that pupils reach standards that are well above the national average. Although pupils enter the school with above average levels of attainment, they continue to make good progress as they move through each of the year groups. This marks very good progress since the last inspection in 1997 when standards were judged to be in line with national expectations. The school has placed heavy emphasis on the development of pupils' literacy skills and has successfully embraced the principles of the National Literacy Strategy, which is very well embedded into the day-to-day teaching of the school. In addition, the teaching of English occupies the bulk of curriculum time and this together with the very well developed procedures for ensuring that where possible pupils' literacy development is promoted through other subjects has impacted positively on the standards pupils reach. The school has also very much strengthened its arrangements for the assessment of pupils' progress. As a result, pupils are identified early if they are experiencing any difficulties. Support groups such as the 'Owlets' and the 'Busy Bees,' for example, help to ensure that pupils with special educational needs, English as an additional language, the small number of refugee pupils and those identified as underachieving make comparable progress with their classmates.
73. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards in their speaking and listening that are above average. Teachers are effective in providing pupils with good quality opportunities to practise and refine their speaking skills in many lessons. In the opening parts of literacy sessions, pupils are encouraged to explore how a story may develop or their opinions of one story compared to another. Pupils demonstrate due patience with their classmates who are less confident in speaking to a wider audience and this helps to ensure that many pupils get the chance to speak aloud to a wider audience and thus develop due confidence when doing so. By the end of Year 2, many pupils speak confidently and fluently and appreciate the need to listen carefully to the views of each other when taking part in small group or larger class discussions.
74. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading are above average and pupils make good progress in both their ability to read and to use books to support their learning in other subjects. Many pupils are confident and fluent readers who very much enjoy listening to stories and predicting how a text may unfold and develop. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their research skills in subjects such as history or geography and this has a positive impact on their understanding of terms such as 'index' or 'contents'. Many pupils are able to differentiate well between fiction and non-fiction materials. A further factor behind the good progress that the pupils make is the good support and encouragement that many pupils receive at home. Many parents hear their children read often as well as providing them with opportunities to visit the local library. This helps to impress on the pupils the importance of reading in their everyday lives and how reading is both an activity to support learning but also a rich source of enjoyment.
75. It is in the third element of pupils' literacy development, in writing however, where pupils make the greatest progress. Teachers pay good attention to the development of their basic writing skills and by the end of Year 2 many pupils, including those with special educational needs, reach standards that are well above average. Standards in spelling are above average. Many of the pupils have a good understanding of how writing is used for different purposes and are able to lay out their work according to the writing task set. For example, they understand well the importance of the conventions of letter writing. Many pupils are able to make notes from the books that they read to present information in different ways. Some pupils are able to construct a simple newspaper giving the basic facts about the sinking of the Titanic or write in role as a

member of the crew of the Golden Hind. Many of the pupils write at length and use vocabulary in a way that holds the interest and attention of the reader. One higher-attaining Year 1 pupil, for example, when asked to write in role as a soldier about to leave home to fight in the Second World War and pondering the impact that his decision would have on his wife concludes in his 'diary', *'How on earth is she to cope without me? She has to look after my daughter also. Will I survive without her? But I have no choice. I have to fight in the war.'*

76. While there is some variation in the quality of teaching between different classes, the overall quality is very good. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the importance of planning activities that help to develop pupils' speaking and listening, reading and writing skills. Many activities are planned with this in mind and teachers are effective in ensuring that pupils get good scope to develop their writing skills both through extended writing sessions and other subjects of the curriculum. Effective use is made of ICT in this regard. Many teachers use the guidance outlined in the National Literacy Strategy well to guide learning, and equally effective is the way in which teachers make use of assessment information to plan pupils' subsequent learning. Sensitive yet clear use is made of the data to ensure that pupils who need additional guidance, for example, the Extra Literacy Support programme for Year 1 pupils, are given this in order to boost their performance. Although teaching is very good, there is some inconsistency in terms of teachers' expectations of how pupils present their work and not all pupils are mindful of the importance of presentation as they could be.
77. There is very good leadership and management of the subject. The co-ordinator, while part-time, is very well supported by other colleagues in the designated team to oversee arrangements for the subject. She gives a clear lead to her colleagues and her own teaching of the subject is exemplary. Her work, which is actively supported by the senior managers of the school, has helped to ensure that literacy holds a high status in the school. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly and the information from this evaluated carefully with a view to strengthening other aspects of pupils' learning. Resources are good and many classrooms have a good stock of reading materials and commercial tapes to allow pupils good opportunities to develop positive attitudes to their learning. The size of the library in the entrance foyer to the school is too small, however, to be used effectively to support pupils' learning. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been good.

## **MATHEMATICS**

78. The results of the most recently reported National Curriculum tests in 2002 showed that pupils reached standards similar to those nationally. When compared with similar schools the standards were below average. Standards have risen since the last inspection at a rate in line with the national trend. In 2002 the proportion of pupils achieving above the expected Level 2 in the tests rose significantly. Inspection findings reflect these test results, and standards by the time pupils reach the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectations. The school has already identified the need to raise standards in mathematics, reflecting its wish to ensure that the pupils make the same progress as they do in English and science. Initiatives such as a homework scheme are beginning to raise the profile of the subject, but there remains work to be done to raise standards to match those seen in English and science. Evidence from National Curriculum tests indicates no significant difference between the boys and girls and inspection findings confirm this.
79. Most Year 2 pupils have a secure understanding of basic number operations; they begin to work with halves and quarters, and work quite confidently with money. The pupils record data by using pictograms and block graphs and many can use these to answer questions successfully. Most pupils understand and use correct subject vocabulary when they talk about their work. Problem-solving skills are less well advanced. Higher-attaining pupils have a good understanding of place value and use standard measurements such as grams and centimetres confidently; however, some activities do not always challenge them enough. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but varies from class to class. There is a little very good teaching which has a noticeable impact on attainment. A single Year 2 lesson illustrated this when pupils achieved

above average standards when working on graphs. The mental starter was very briskly paced and questions were accurately directed and varied in difficulty so that all pupils were included and suitably challenged. The pupils' response was excellent because of the teacher's very positive approach. The whole-class teaching session was very clear and the teacher had high expectations both in terms of behaviour and achievement. Skilful questioning ensured that the teacher was able to build on the pupils' ideas to demonstrate the work. Tasks were suitably varied according to ability and the pupils worked hard and completed their graphs successfully. Higher-attaining pupils showed a good understanding of how to use one block to represent 2s and 10s when recording large numbers. The teacher summarised learning most effectively during a short plenary session.

80. There are a number of strengths within the teaching that are common to most mathematics lessons, and some shortcomings which tend to restrict the pace of learning. All teachers manage behaviour very effectively, relationships are good, and the pupils are well behaved and ready to learn. Teachers ensure that pupils know and use the correct subject vocabulary and relevant words are displayed prominently. Those pupils learning English as an additional language benefit from this emphasis on mathematical vocabulary and their progress is good, at times very good. Resources are always thoroughly prepared and some activities are lively and motivating. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and they progress at a similar rate to their peers. The use of information technology to support learning is being developed, and in some classes computer programs and projectors are employed well.
81. The school has adopted the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy, but has chosen to timetable mathematics for the minimum time recommended for this age group. In practice, many of the forty-five minute lessons are somewhat shorter than planned and management of time within the lessons is not always fully effective. The pupils are frequently held for too long on the carpet and the time allowed for individual or group activities is then severely curtailed. Sometimes there is not enough time for the teacher to summarise learning at the end of the lesson. Teachers' expectations are not always high enough, particularly in terms of what higher-attaining pupils could do. A scrutiny of pupils' work reveals that teachers rely very heavily on a range of commercial worksheets. While some of these are valuable, others require a mechanical response and do not challenge pupils to think or to apply their knowledge. Higher-attaining pupils are often not stretched, and sometimes the worksheets are too hard for lower attainers. Occasionally, pupils encounter the same sheet twice within a few months, and generally there is much repetition of very similar activities. Recently, teachers have begun to provide a few opportunities for pupils to solve problems, and the school has correctly identified this as an aspect to develop.
82. While there has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection, management of the subject is now good and is beginning to have a positive impact. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of what needs to be developed in order to raise standards to the levels seen in English and science. Test results are carefully analysed and the data is used to identify aspects for improvement. Satisfactory revised assessment procedures have recently been introduced. The well-organised homework scheme is an exciting innovation, but it is too early to assess its impact on standards. The co-ordinator monitored aspects of teaching last year, but has not had time allocated this year. The school needs to focus rigorously on monitoring and developing planning, teaching and learning in order to raise standards.

## SCIENCE

83. In the 2002 teacher assessments in science, pupils achieved results at the expected Level 2 that were above the national average and in line with the average for similar schools. Results at the higher Level 3 were well above both the national and similar school averages. Inspection evidence shows pupils reach standards that are similar to those in 2002, being above national expectations. The teaching is good overall with some very good teaching, enabling all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to achieve well and make good progress. There is no significant difference in the achievements of boys and girls. The results are similar to those in English but better than those in mathematics.

84. The teachers' good subject knowledge underpins the wide range of opportunities provided for the pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the science curriculum. As a result, the vast majority of pupils in Year 2 know, for example, that plants need water and light to grow, that materials are used for different purposes according to their properties and that a complete circuit is needed to make a bulb light up.
85. The teachers place a good emphasis on practical and investigational work, which has enabled most pupils to develop a good understanding of the importance of a fair test. The pupils are also able to make careful observations, measure length and temperature and record their findings in simple tables. Higher-attaining pupils are able to link observations to their knowledge of scientific ideas whereas middle and lower attainers have more difficulty in doing this.
86. The teachers often employ stimulating activities to capture the interest of the pupils. In a very good Year 1 lesson on magnets, for example, the teacher used two pupils on either side of the board to simulate the notion of 'attraction' and 'repulsion' to introduce the main activity of testing the magnetic properties of different materials. The pupils responded very positively and engaged with the practical task enthusiastically. They all made very good progress in their observational skills and in their knowledge of the items that were attracted to the magnets. In all lessons observed, the teachers managed the pupils very well, securing their interest and motivation in the subject. Relationships are very good and the pupils work well collaboratively when undertaking practical tasks. In a good Year 2 lesson, for example, where pupils were studying the absorbency of different materials, the teacher challenged the pupils to discuss their plans for the investigation prior to undertaking the task itself. The pupils were actively engaged in sharing their ideas, listening carefully to each other's contributions and establishing a clear set of procedures before getting started. In all of the sessions observed, the teachers had planned the lesson carefully, with clear objectives so that the pupils knew what they were expected to do. Resources were well prepared and appropriate for the practical activities to be undertaken. Key words are often reinforced at the beginning of the lesson, but more regular reference during the sessions would help to ensure that all pupils are using them consistently.
87. The teachers use praise regularly to encourage the pupils and commend their achievements. They are careful to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have full access to the subject through focused questioning and peer support in group work. The teachers, with good support from the subject co-ordinator, assess the pupils' attainment regularly and have a good knowledge of what the pupils need to do next in order to progress further.
88. The teachers provide good opportunities for the pupils to develop their language skills through discussion and the recording of practical work. More could be done to encourage some pupils to present their work more clearly and to check the spelling of important scientific words such as 'wires' and 'liquid', which are often misspelt and not corrected. Appropriate opportunities are provided to consolidate number skills through measuring the distance travelled by cars on ramps and temperatures in different parts of the classroom, for example. Some higher-attaining pupils present quantitative measurements in bar charts, using the computer. More opportunities for this type of work will challenge all pupils even further. There is increasing use of ICT to support learning in science. Pupils are using the Internet to search for information, on animals for example, as well as for recording results. This is an improvement on the position in the last inspection.
89. The few shortcomings noted in the teaching of science related to pace, which was modest rather than brisk and some inappropriate worksheets, which served little purpose in promoting the pupils' learning.
90. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator has a very clear picture of the strengths and areas for development within the subject. Monitoring and evaluation of both the pupils' attainment and the quality of teaching are very thorough and have informed the next steps for further improvement. Curriculum guidance is extensive, assessment

procedures are well embedded and actions taken to increase the use of ICT are beginning to have a positive impact on the pupils' learning. Strengthening the monitoring and evaluation even further should help to ensure that all teachers have consistently high expectations, given some variations in the quality and quantity of work produced by the pupils, most notably in Year 2. There is also scope for further development by challenging the pupils to be more independent in their investigational work. The school has sustained successfully the standards in science and the quality of teaching and learning. Since the last inspection, assessment procedures and the use of ICT have improved. Overall improvement since the last inspection is, therefore, good.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

91. The last inspection reported that pupils reached standards in art and design that were above national expectations by the end of Year 2. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and standards are now well above those expected by the time pupils reach the age of seven. The week prior to the inspection, the school was awarded the national 'Artsmark'. Pupils of all abilities, including those with particular needs, make very good progress.
92. Four lessons were observed during the inspection. In two, the teaching was good, in one it was very good and in the other, it was excellent. In all the lessons observed, teachers had high expectations of both behaviour and achievement and the pupils enjoyed the activities planned for them. In the excellent lesson, the pupils were learning how to shade colours gradually. The teacher had very good subject knowledge, there was a clear learning ethos in the classroom, the teacher modelled the activity, learning objectives were clearly explained and pupils were effectively encouraged to build on previously learned skills. The teacher moved around the class assessing progress and used examples of pupil's work to demonstrate good practice. No time was wasted and pupils sustained concentration throughout the lesson.
93. An examination of work throughout the school including pupils' sketchbooks, indicates that they are making very good progress. The work seen demonstrates a growing awareness of the knowledge, skills and understanding required to progress in the subject. Displays in the classrooms and around the school are of a very high quality and show that the subject is valued throughout the school. There is clear evidence of a variety of media being used: three-dimensional models using modroc, textile printing, collage, clay, painting and charcoal drawings are all in evidence. Pupils are encouraged to look at the work of artists such as Monet and Turner. There were some excellent pictures on display painted by Year 2 in the style of Turner. Paintings in the style of Monet by pupils in the Special Infant Unit, were also on display. Pupils visit galleries, for example the National Portrait Gallery. Artists visit the school, several of whom will be attending during an Arts week to be held at the end of the summer term.
94. In each year group there is evidence that art is used to support other areas of the curriculum such as history, geography and music. ICT is used to support learning in the subject. The ICT suite is used to research into the different designs of artists, for example Mondrian. The subject makes a significant contribution to the social and cultural development of the pupils.
95. Management of the subject is good and the co-ordinator has had a significant impact on the quality of provision. He is well supported by the headteacher who values the subject highly. A national scheme has been adapted to give guidance to teachers. Assessment procedures have been introduced recently and the effectiveness of these will be evaluated during the next academic year. Resources for the subject are very good.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

96. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Standards of attainment are above national expectations and pupils achieve well. The design element of the subject is now developed well, and teaching is good. Samples of work show clear evidence of good progress

as the pupils become increasingly competent in designing, making and evaluating products. Pupils with special educational needs and those who learn English as an additional language also progress well.

97. By the end of Year 2, pupils work confidently with tools and materials. In the one lesson observed at this stage, the pupils co-operated well with partners to make simple winding mechanisms, which would raise a spider' from the floor. Solutions showed some originality of thought, and the pupils were able to identify what worked well and what had to be improved. Progress during the lesson was good because the teacher's skilful questioning helped pupils to pinpoint their problems exactly and encouraged them to work towards a solution. Examples of Year 2 work from last year are of a high standard. These illustrate the way in which winding mechanisms will be employed in model castles. Design drawings and the finished quality of the models are above the standards usually seen at this age. Pupils evaluate their finished products and there is clear evidence of progress during the year.
98. Teachers are thorough in teaching skills and techniques. Pupils in Year 1 worked well as they learned about hinges. In one very good lesson, the teacher extended the pupils' understanding very effectively through questioning them about their work. At the end of the lesson, learning was summarised competently when the success and value of different hinges were evaluated. Lessons are well managed, behaviour is good and time is used well. Teachers plan activities thoroughly and pupils benefit from working with good quality resources.
99. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The curriculum is good following national guidance and covering all the expected aspects. Pupils also have the advantage of additional opportunities to cook and are able to use their skills during the 'theme week' each year. Links with other subjects are promoted very effectively. The co-ordinator has a bank of useful additional guidance for teachers on specific skills and techniques. Satisfactory assessment procedures have just been introduced.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

100. No teaching of the subject was seen in Year 2 during the inspection. Evidence was gathered by making an analysis of the documents and pupils' ample written work and through discussions with staff and pupils.
101. Standards are above average for seven-year-old boys and girls, an improvement since the last inspection, and achievement by all pupils, including those with a particular learning need and special educational needs is good.
102. Pupils in Year 2 know well how to analyse and record findings on a graph about different kinds of environment such as the countryside, town and seaside. They accurately identify human and physical features in the village on the Isle of Struay such as the bridge, river, mountain, the fields, the church and other buildings. They make comparisons of living on the island with their own locality, thereby increasing the breadth of their understanding. They know the differences in weather in different parts of the world. Most pupils take 'Barnaby Bear' to different holiday locations in England and around the world and keep a good record in their holiday diaries of places visited, activities undertaken and the form of travel used. In a lesson observed in Year 1, pupils achieved very good understanding of the locality around their school, because of very effective teaching and the use of different sized maps, including aerial maps, pictures of the main buildings and other resources. They understand by drawing their own maps of main roads near the school and adding the location of key features that the wine shop and the railway bridge are near the school and the library is far away from school, the furthest away being the public house. They are intrigued by the aerial map of their school and ask questions of the teacher about the location of their classroom and why one aerial map looks different from the other. Pupils with special needs and those at the early stages of learning English, draw their own maps with keys for the symbols used for buildings with additional help.

103. The learning in geography effectively supports the learning of English, mathematics, history and art. It also makes a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by exploring how people live in different places and how they can contribute to improving their own environment.
104. Discussions with pupils indicate that they are very interested in geography. They are keen to answer and ask questions. The teaching of geography rotates with that for history and in the main, geography work takes places on a half-termly basis. The overall quality is good and strengthened further by the very good links made with other subjects. As a result, pupils retain learning well. Well-organised visits such as four local walks in Year 1, theme weeks and involvement in environmental projects and theatre group presentations related to the Isle of Struay enrich the curriculum and enhance pupils' learning. The school has also won a number of environmental awards such as 'Pride of Place.'
105. The management of geography is good and there is tremendous enthusiasm for the development of the subject as it is in the school development cycle for next year. The school has adopted a national scheme and monitoring is done through examples of levels achieved in a portfolio of pupils' work. 'Best fit' assessment tools are being implemented to ensure the consistency of assessment. Books, software, maps, atlases and packs for use by pupils and teachers are good, and the school makes good use of its pupils' holidays to know the areas of the world, where their families go and the languages and cultures they experience.

## HISTORY

106. Standards are above average for seven-year-olds and have improved since the last inspection. There is no marked difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well with support or those who learn English as an additional language and who are refugees demonstrate good achievement, with additional support for English.
107. By the age of seven, the pupils are developing a good understanding of the past by learning about the events leading to the Battle of Hastings and what happened as a result. By means of role play, they know what it feels like to be engaged in a war and how things can change when the local ruler is hurt and killed by a foreign power. All pupils, including the less able, accurately sequence the story of the battle in their writing. They know special medieval castle words like portcullis, palisade, motte and bailey. They also know how Florence Nightingale travelled to Scutari and what she did to improve the care of wounded soldiers. They make good comparisons of seaside holidays in the past with those of today. Year 1 pupils are developing empathetic understanding of how family life was affected by the Second World War by writing about and illustrating how a soldier felt leaving his wife and daughter behind to go and fight. They know that war memorials remind people of the war. They understand the passage of time relating it to their own lives, and are developing an understanding of key historical facts. Strengths at Key Stage 1 include the pupils' increasing sense of chronology and factual understanding of events as shown through their ability to sequence them, the use of relevant historical terms such as technical language to describe a castle, understanding of the passage of time in relation to their own lives and the difference between past and present.
108. History makes a good contribution to the pupils' literacy skills by extending the range of speaking and listening, reading and writing which the pupils tackle when they cover areas such as fact, opinion and empathy. The subject also makes a good contribution to numeracy, art and design and technology. Information and communication technology makes a positive contribution to the learning of history.
109. Pupils are keenly interested in history. They concentrate very well and are mostly keen to express themselves in different ways: orally through role-play and discussions, in writing using different genres and in drawing and painting.
110. The quality of teaching is generally good, with some very good lessons seen. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use resources effectively. A good variety of teaching methods and



the appropriate deployment of resources to assist learning – books, posters, pictures, artefacts, visits and visitors – ensure that the pupils do well. Lessons are varied and challenge most groups of pupils. There are good displays of posters, pictures and pupils' writing, toys and books, around the school, particularly about the sinking of the Titanic and the Fire of London. The breadth of the study of history is enhanced through visits to places of historical interest such as the Tudor ship, The Golden Hinde, Tunbridge Castle, Down House and Bromley Museum and inviting theatre groups and workshops on Tudor and Victorian life into the school.

111. The quality of leadership and management is good, though the history co-ordinator has been appointed only recently. A more rigorous system of assessment is being adopted and the teachers' pack being assembled. Though there is insufficient time devoted to history teaching and the timetable is organised in blocks, the links with other areas of the curriculum are well established and they do not inhibit continuous step-by-step progress and achievement, particularly in developing research skills. Resources such as posters, videos, tapes, books, maps and artefacts are adequate.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

112. The teaching of ICT is good overall and enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, to make good progress and reach standards that are above the national expectations by Year 2. There are no significant differences in the achievements of boys and girls.
113. The overall provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection. The teachers are now more confident with the subject and provide a wide variety of activities, which enables the pupils to develop good range of ICT skills. As a result, by Year 2, the vast majority of pupils are able to word process with confidence using fonts of different size and style. They can also underline headings and use both the caps 'lock' and 'shift' keys. The pupils have been taught how to design posters and import pictures from the Internet into a piece of writing and have been given the opportunity to use a 'roamer' to map out routes around the school.
114. The teachers plan lessons well with interesting activities which engage and motivate the pupils, who always listen carefully and tackle their tasks with enthusiasm. Good use is made of the computer suite, which is well-equipped with sixteen machines and an interactive whiteboard. In a Year 1 lesson on binary databases, for example, the pupils were challenged to write a set of questions, which would enable them to distinguish between four different fruit and vegetables. The teacher used the whiteboard effectively, with the help of one of the pupils, to recap the programme to be used. The pupils were enthusiastic and worked well in their pairs on the task set. Many were able to construct successfully an appropriate set of discriminating questions. Lower attainers were able to make a good attempt although they needed more help to design their second set of questions. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, made good progress in their knowledge and understanding of how a simple database works.
115. The teachers ensure that the pupils are familiar with technical vocabulary. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, the pupils were secure in their knowledge of terms such as 'scroll bar' and 'folders' and responded positively when asked to move around the various layers within the folder in order to load, save and retrieve their work. Year 2 pupils are also being introduced to e-mails and some higher-attainers are able to send messages to more than one recipient.
116. The subject is making a good contribution to the development of the pupils' language skills by underpinning a range of writing activities during English sessions. There is also a developing emphasis on supporting number skills through the use of the roamer, for example and the production of bar charts. Opportunities here could usefully be extended. The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects of the curriculum has improved since the last inspection. For example, the pupils have used the Internet to research Turner's art and various animals for their science work.

117. The subject is well led and managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. The comprehensive scheme of work, based on national guidance, includes more challenging work to meet the needs of the pupils in the school. The co-ordinator has a good overview of the subject and is aware of strengths and areas for development. For example, recent monitoring has revealed that the extensive assessment procedures established are yet to be used consistently. The co-ordinator recognises the importance of effective assessment to ensure that pupils in Year 2 are progressing systematically from work covered in Year 1. The development of ICT was a key issue in the previous inspection, and the school has taken appropriate action resulting in good improvement since that time.

## **MUSIC**

118. At the time of the last inspection, standards in music were above those expected nationally for pupils at the end of Year 2. The school has sustained those high standards judged to be evident at the time of the last inspection. Teaching is very good overall. All pupils, including those with particular needs and English as an additional language, make good progress and sometimes, very good progress is seen.
119. Three lessons were observed, one in Year 1, where the teaching was very good, and two in Year 2, where one was satisfactory and the other was very good. In the very good lessons observed, the teachers had a secure knowledge of the subject, lessons were planned very carefully and pupils were given opportunities to apply skills they had previously learned and to assess and evaluate each other's work. Pupils show respect for their peers: they listen carefully to each other and make perceptive comments on how music can be improved or why it is good. Pupils can compose simple tunes using tuned and untuned instruments. They can select appropriate instruments to support their singing. They understand musical terms such as dynamics, pitch and tempo. Pupils enjoy music.
120. Music pervades the school. The use of music in assemblies adds to the overall quality of these and pupils sing tunefully and with enthusiasm. All staff participate in singing and this has a beneficial effect on the progress the pupils make. Music is used to support lessons, for example pupils have been listening to medieval music, which links with their current topic work. Music has made a significant contribution to the 'Artsmark' award recently achieved by the school. The Arts week at the end of the summer term will ensure that the profile of the subject remains high. The status given to the subject is reflected in the progress that the children make.
121. Pupils take part in Christmas concerts, carol services, and Harvest Festival and they sing at Christmas in the local area to raise money for the local hospice. Year 2 perform a musical production for their parents at the end of their last summer term in the school. Peripatetic teachers visit the school to teach the violin and cello and there is a recorder club. There is a recorder club. Visits from musicians are encouraged, for example, a visit from a local secondary school band and from the Trinity Gospel Choir of Chicago have taken place in the last twelve months.
122. Management of the subject is very effective. The co-ordinator supports newly qualified teachers by giving demonstration music lessons. A national scheme has been adapted to support teachers' planning. ICT and art are used to support learning in the subject. Assessment procedures are in place and will be reviewed at the end of this academic year. The co-ordinator has clear aims to sustain, and where possible, improve current levels of attainment. Resources for teaching the subject are very good. The subject contributes effectively to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

123. Pupils reach standards that are in line with national expectations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in the development of their physical education skills as they move through the school. The school has maintained standards in the subject found at the time of the last inspection. Pupils have full access to physical education and pupils in the special educational needs unit further benefit from the weekly swimming session they have in the swimming pool at the adjacent junior school.
124. By the end of Year 2, pupils have developed a satisfactory range of skills in a number of areas of the physical education curriculum. The pupils are given sufficient opportunities to develop their understanding of dance and they are able to produce a simple sequence of movement in response to a particular piece of music. They listen carefully to the instructions and guidance that their teachers give them and this ensures pupils respond enthusiastically to the music, and interpret it very appropriately by twisting and twirling to represent the mood of the music. Pupils' sense of balance is satisfactory and most have satisfactory control of their bodies. They run, jump and turn with energy and purpose, and make good use of the available space in the hall. When taking part in small games activities, the pupils are able to use equipment such as a uni-hoc stick correctly to pass a ball to a partner. At present, not all pupils understand the importance of exercise or know that their heart rate increases as they move at a faster rate. This aspect of learning is not always sufficiently promoted by teachers in lessons.
125. The quality of teaching is satisfactory with some good features. Teachers plan interesting activities for the pupils and in some instances are effective in ensuring that pupils' learning in physical education can support learning in other areas. For example, as part of a theme of 'Castles and Giants', pupils have scope to devise a simple medieval dance movement. Teachers provide the pupils with good opportunities to develop their understanding of the language often associated with physical education and this has a positive impact on the pupils' understanding of movement. Lessons are well organised and pupils are provided with good scope during sessions to work co-operatively and effectively with a partner or in small groups. This has a positive impact on their social development as they learn the importance of working effectively with others. The impact of teaching is sometimes lessened, however, by the lack of time in lessons that pupils have to develop their skills. Once pupils have changed, there is often too little time for them to develop the skills they are acquiring before the session has to finish. This can slow down the pace of learning generally.
126. There is satisfactory leadership and management of the subject and there has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator provides a good lead in the subject and has had opportunities to view the quality of teaching and learning. From this came suggestions for teachers on how, for example, greater use could be made of the space in the hall once all the apparatus is laid out for the pupils. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to ensure that the newly devised arrangements for the assessment of pupils' progress are implemented. Once this has been achieved, they should provide additional information for teachers on how well the pupils are progressing with a view to improving their learning further. Resources are good both in terms of quality and sufficiency. This enables many pupils to use the equipment in daily lessons.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

127. Attainment in religious education is above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress in relation to their prior learning and boys and girls attain equally well as observed during inspection.
128. Year 2 pupils understand that religions have special books. They know the importance of handling these books with care and respect. They know that the Qur'an is a special book for Muslims, which is usually kept high to show respect and it is written in Arabic. In the lessons seen, they learn that Arabic is written from right to left, that the decorations and illuminations

are done with symmetrical patterns and there are no pictures of humans and animals because only God is worthy of worship. They see their teacher respectfully unwrapping the Qur'an from its special fabric cover and showing it to them. They see a boy from their class washing his hands before he lifts the holy Qur'an from the special stand on which it was placed. They discuss how to show care and respect, because of the way the teachers help them to think about what is special for them in their own lives and create a moment of spiritual reflection. One pupil remarked, 'We will work quietly to show respect.' Pupils work in pairs to produce symmetrical patterns of their choice using mirrors as helpful aids for making a Qur'an stand. They also understand the similarities and differences between the celebration of Christmas and Diwali. Year 1 retell many Bible stories such as the story of David and Goliath and that of the Three Wise Men by sequencing them, and the more able ones write in their own words. In a lesson observed, the teacher reminded pupils of their recent work on a bird's nest, which they tried to make, copying a real bird's nest. They were enabled to understand that many animals have particular attributes lacking in humans. As a result of this work, pupils of different abilities, including a girl who is new to English, wrote about their special creature. Some of the examples included: *'My special creature is a fish because it can go under water without armbands,'* and, *'My special creature is a lion because he can roar and I can't'* thereby showing an increasing understanding and respect for the natural world.'

129. Pupils respond to religious education generally with interest. They work well together, concentrate on tasks and learn from each other when such opportunities are provided, by sharing experiences from their own religious perspective.
130. The quality of teaching is mainly good, with some examples of very good teaching seen, enabling pupils to develop reflection, empathy and thinking skills. In most classes, teachers question effectively to help recall facts from the current or previous lesson. Sometimes teachers are insecure in their knowledge of the subject and do not draw out the religious significance of pictures, artefacts and stories, particularly in teaching different world religions. Teachers also provide good learning experiences to deepen pupils' understanding about Christianity by organising visits to the local church, but there have been no recent visits to other places of worship to deepen pupils' understanding of other religions and cultures. The school does, however, celebrate religious festivals such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter and Diwali and other aspects such as Hindu food and dance and as part of school assembly.
131. The religious education curriculum meets statutory requirements. The school follows the Bromley Agreed Syllabus with more emphasis on Christianity within the allocated time for specific religious education. There are no withdrawals from religious education. Religious education is also reinforced in school assemblies by celebrations of festivals and it also makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and citizenship.
132. The leadership of the subject is good and has helped improve standards in learning from and learning about religion. The subject policy is regularly updated and the monitoring and assessment systems are in place. Resources for the subject such as books, artefacts and pictures are good.