

INSPECTION REPORT

RYECROFT INFANT SCHOOL

Rawmarsh

LEA area: Rotherham

Unique reference number: 106876

Headteacher: Mrs Linda Etchell

Reporting inspector: Mrs RJ Andrew
21460

Dates of inspection: 14th – 16th October 2002

Inspection number: 246633

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	South Street Rawmarsh Rotherham South Yorks
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Bramall
Date of previous inspection:	May 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Rachael Andrew 21460	Registered inspector	Mathematics Art and design Music Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements. Pupils attitudes, values and personal development How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Christopher Farris 19426	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
John Evans 20404	Team inspector	English Geography History Religious education Special educational needs Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Michael Whermeyer 15015	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Information and communication technology Foundation Stage curriculum	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ryecroft Infant School is a small urban community school, which draws its pupils from a stable, local population. There are few ethnic minority families in the area and this is reflected in the school's intake. The first language of all the pupils is English. There are currently 108 boys and girls on roll. This will rise to about 145 when a further intake joins the reception class in January. At present there are only 13 children at the Foundation Stage in the reception class. When children enter the reception class their attainment overall is below average, particularly in language and literacy skills. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds and the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is, at 20 per cent, about average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (16 per cent) including statements is below average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties but a few have emotional and behavioural difficulties. A new headteacher took up her post at the beginning of this term.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is currently providing a reasonable standard of education for its pupils, teaching is good and standards are satisfactory. Pupils of all abilities do well in English, mathematics and science although handwriting and spelling could be better. Improvements in management have taken place since the last inspection and this is now sound. The new headteacher shows good leadership and she has set a clear agenda for the future. With senior colleagues she is building a strong platform for success. The curriculum needs further enrichment to ensure that subjects other than English, mathematics and science inspire pupils, allow sufficient time for depth and quality in learning and promote better progress. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of the provision and strengths in teaching in the current reception class ensure that children build strong foundations for future learning.
- Skilful teaching in Year 2 inspires pupils and results in good levels of achievement.
- Pupils are keen to learn and apply themselves well to their work.
- The way the school provides for pupils' moral and social development leads to very good behaviour and constructive relationships.
- Parents hold the school in high regard.
- The potential for further improvements in the future is strong and the headteacher and key staff have the expertise to bring them about.

What could be improved

- Standards of handwriting, spelling and pupils' presentation of their work could be better.
- The quality of pupils' learning in subjects other than English, mathematics and science needs improving, and further enrichment through visits, visitors and additional resources is required, especially to develop pupils' cultural understanding.
- Computers are not used often enough to consolidate pupils' skills or to support work in most subjects.
- The withdrawal of pupils for extra support is hindering their participation in important parts of classroom lessons.
- Teachers' marking is not giving pupils enough information about how they can improve.

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 May 2000. Since that time there have been good improvements that have been effective in largely eradicating the widespread underachievement seen at that time. The most significant improvement is the rise in quality of teaching and its benefits for pupils' learning. Pupils of all abilities now make good progress during their time in the school. Standards of behaviour and pupils' attitudes to work have been

improved further. Standards rose significantly in 2001 but the school was not able to sustain that improvement in 2002, largely because of the numbers of pupils with special educational needs in that year group. There have been many changes in the school since then, including the appointment of a new headteacher. Planning for different subjects now ensures that all the pupils are taught what is required but further work needs to be done to improve depth and quality in pupils' learning. The improvements in leadership and management, including the involvement of governors, are continuing and the prospect for the future is bright.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
Reading	C	B	E	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	D	A	E	D	
Mathematics	C	A	E	D	

The table above shows that results improved substantially in 2001, following a steady upward trend. The improvements made following the last inspection contributed strongly to this. For the first time in many years they were well above the national average and compared very favourably with similar schools. In 2002, largely as a result of the high proportion of pupils with special needs in the year group but also because of disruption following the long-term absence of a Year 2 teacher, results fell sharply. Pupils now in Year 2 are on course to achieve broadly average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the time they leave, but spelling, handwriting and the presentation of work could be better. Pupils of all abilities achieve well, many from low starting points, as a result of improvements in teaching. They make good gains in most aspects of literacy and in numeracy skills but spelling and handwriting could be better. The school sets realistic but challenging targets based on detailed knowledge of the pupils. Pupils are making good progress towards them. In physical education, pupils achieve above average standards in games skills. In the work seen in other subjects, standards are broadly in line with expectations. Pupils with special educational needs, including more able pupils, make good progress because of the support of teachers and teaching assistants in the classroom and also as a result of the intensive support given to withdrawn groups. This, however, causes them to miss vital parts of classroom learning. Although when children start school their achievements are generally below average, many children already in school are catching up because of the high quality of the teaching. By the end of the reception year, children in the Foundation Stage reach the standards expected in most areas although a significant minority still have poor language skills.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils like school, concentrate and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils respond quickly to teachers' advice and instructions. They move about the school quietly. They know the school rules and keep to them.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils play and work sensibly together. They are beginning to think about how well they are doing and how they could improve their work. Given the opportunity, older pupils could take more responsibility to help the school run smoothly.
Attendance	Satisfactory, although marginally below the national average. Unauthorised

absence is above that found in most schools.
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The slightly below average attendance is caused largely because parents take their children on holiday in term time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The very good teaching in the current reception class is helping the children to make good gains in all areas of learning, especially in language, literacy, numeracy and personal and social development. The teaching of literacy and numeracy in Years 1 and 2 is good overall. It is particularly strong in Year 2, where teachers have a very good grasp of subjects and use a wide range of strategies to enable the pupils to make good gains in basic skills and develop their thinking. The games aspect of physical education is taught well in both years. Teachers do not make the best use of computers to support learning and their marking does not give pupils enough information about how they can improve. Relationships are very good so that most pupils want to do well and work hard but teachers in Year 1 do not always draw pupils in quickly enough when they lose concentration and they sometimes allow pupils to interrupt the flow of lessons. Teaching has improved substantially since the last inspection and now provides sufficiently challenging work for pupils of different abilities, including higher attaining pupils, most of the time. There are a few occasions when pupils go over work they already know or have insufficient time to go into enough depth in subjects that are taught in separate units or blocks, such as art and design, history and geography. Teachers and teaching assistants make sure that pupils with special educational needs understand the work and have enough time to practise new literacy and numeracy skills thoroughly. Most, but not all, pupils are gaining confidence in asking and answering questions and in explaining their work. The oldest pupils are beginning to check how well they are doing and think how to improve. Higher attaining pupils make particularly good gains when they are expected to work out their own ways of tackling work, for example when they solve problems in mathematics.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. There is an imbalance in the amount of time given to different subjects. Some, such as history, geography and art, do not get enough time to develop depth of understanding. Where the work is taught in short blocks of time, pupils tend to lose the skills they have learnt and have difficulty in recalling facts.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good, both within and outside lessons. The withdrawal of pupils makes it difficult for them to join in profitably, when they return to their classes.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Satisfactory overall. There are strengths in the way the school develops pupils' sense of right and wrong and helps them to get on with others. Pupils do not learn enough about their own area or backgrounds or other cultures represented in Britain and in the wider world.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school makes sure that it provides a good level of personal support and guidance and keeps a careful check on how individual pupils are getting on.

There is good provision for pupils' personal and social education through a planned programme of work and opportunities for discussion. The school has satisfactory links with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The new headteacher is firmly established in the school. She is well informed about the school's strengths and has already formed a clear view of what needs to be done to improve further. Together with effective key staff she has established a strong platform for future developments.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They carry out their statutory duties conscientiously. When governors evaluate school improvement, the evidence presented to them is not always clear enough to ensure their judgements are reliable.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The way in which the school checks how well it is doing has improved substantially. It does not check the quality of pupils' learning well enough in subjects other than English and mathematics.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school uses its resources carefully to benefit the pupils and to support the most important areas of its work.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are adequate for the demands of the curriculum. The school applies the principles of best value to a satisfactory extent when judging how effective it is.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school, behave well and are expected to work hard. • The teaching is good and children make good progress. • Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school. • The school helps pupils to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very small number of parents felt the school could consult them more widely.

Inspectors agree with parents' views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The children start the reception class at below the expected level in key areas. Only about a third of the total intake has already started in reception this term and these children are making very good progress. By the end of the Foundation Stage most are likely to achieve the expected levels for their age and many will exceed them
2. Results for seven year olds have risen steadily, more or less in line with the national trend, until 2001 when there was a sharp rise. For the first time for many years results were above average in reading and well above average in writing and mathematics. They compared very favourably with results in similar schools. The effective action the school took, in response to the judgement in the last inspection report that the school was underachieving, contributed strongly to this. Another factor was the overall ability of the year group. In 2002 results fell sharply, were well below average and below the average for similar schools. There were several contributing factors:
 - there was an unusually high proportion (about a quarter) of pupils with special educational needs in this year group;
 - there were far more boys than girls in the group and nationally boys do less well;
 - one of the Year 2 classes was affected by the long-term absence of the teacher and the disruption to their education caused by the arrangements made to cover for her absence, although the school reacted as promptly and effectively as it could.
3. The school is disappointed not to have been able to sustain the improvements in results. Using information from their knowledge of the intake to make predictions and set targets, teachers knew that results were likely to be poor. The school's information about progress, based on the assessments made when pupils start the school, indicates that the vast majority of these pupils made at least satisfactory progress and many made good progress. This is supported by local education authority information. The targets set were realistic and provided sufficient challenge.
4. The current Year 2 group is more typical and evidence from the inspection indicates that pupils are achieving well and are likely to reach broadly average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school.
5. Pupils listen carefully to teachers and to each other. Many are developing confidence when answering questions and explaining their work but use a narrow range of vocabulary. This is a weakness identified when pupils first start school and teachers have responded by making good opportunities for them to speak in lessons in many subjects. However, they do not always include the quietest, least confident pupils and this inhibits their progress. The narrow range of vocabulary also affects the quality of pupils' writing.
6. Standards in literacy are satisfactory. Most pupils read accurately and with enjoyment. They understand what they read and make use of information in reference books. Lower attaining pupils find it difficult to sound out all but the simplest words and this also affects their spelling which is a weakness, as it is for many pupils.
7. The work in handwriting lessons shows that pupils are learning effective handwriting skills. When they write stories, they express their ideas clearly. They are given opportunities to plan and discuss their ideas before they begin and this results in good progress in describing characters, the setting and the action that takes place. Pupils do not always take

as much care as they should when they write. This applies, in particular, to their work in other subjects. Handwriting, spelling and presentation should be better.

8. Standards in numeracy are satisfactory. Pupils are developing useful skills in mental agility work, an understanding of the number system and the patterns it presents. As a result, higher attaining pupils in particular make good progress in handling two and three-digit numbers and understanding their value. Work in groups shows that pupils respond positively to the good levels of challenge in lessons and are achieving well. Pupils in Year 2 count in twos and tens, and add and subtract. They know about halves and can double numbers. Higher attaining pupils know about the pattern of odds and evens and, for example, explain what happens when even and odd numbers are added. The best progress is made where there is a substantial amount of whole-class teaching. This is seen at its best in Year 2. Throughout the school, the work done in drawing lessons together at the end contributes well to the good progress pupils make. Pupils' achievements are better in number work than in other areas of mathematics. Although standards are broadly average, the amount of work done in data handling, measures, shape and space is not enough to promote the good progress seen in number work. There is less evidence of challenging tasks for higher attaining pupils and their achievements in number work indicate that they could do better in other areas of mathematics.
9. Standards in science have improved since the last inspection. The school has responded well to the issues identified in the report. It has developed a more effective teaching programme including more investigative work and this has improved pupils' understanding of different areas of the subject. Their achievements are now good. Pupils are better at learning from observation than they are at predicating what might happen. There are still a few occasions when the learning of the most able pupils could be stretched, for example by involving them more in predicting likely outcomes.
10. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills are taught to small groups as part of lessons, for example in science. These are directly relevant to pupils' needs and enable satisfactory learning to take place and in the work seen standards were broadly average. Teachers' plans indicate that all the necessary skills are taught over the two years. However, it is a slow process to get through all the pupils in the class and in general there are too few opportunities for pupils to put their skills into practice to support work in other lessons.
11. In religious education, pupils are achieving what is expected by the locally agreed teaching programme. Improved planning now ensures that pupils study different faiths although this is still a relatively weak area. There is insufficient support and enrichment for the subject from learning resources, visits and visitors, to bring the subject alive and enable pupils to make the best possible progress, for example, to help them to understand and remember better the work on different faiths.
12. Standards in music are satisfactory. Lessons are timetabled every week so that pupils remember what they learned and can build on it. Pupils know a range of songs and sing in tune. They have growing sense of rhythm. They know which instruments to choose to make the sounds they want to accompany songs and talk about how they can improve their work. There are good levels of enjoyment and pupils' achievements in these areas are sound.
13. Pupils' games skills are above average in Year 2 as a result of effective and enthusiastic teaching, regular lessons throughout the year and the time allocated to physical education. Pupils move about, throw, catch and aim confidently. They co-operate well in games they devise themselves and are beginning to evaluate their own work. Good opportunities are made for high and low achievers to do their best.
14. There was no opportunity to observe teaching and learning in art and design, design and technology, geography and history. The amount of recorded work at this stage of the term is

very small so it is not possible to make reliable judgements about standards in all aspects of these subjects. Discussions with pupils and analysing teachers' planning helped to fill out the picture somewhat. On the evidence available, pupils' achievements are satisfactory and standards broadly in line with what is expected of pupils of this age. There is evidence to suggest, however, that the small amount of time allocated to these subjects and the way they are taught in small isolated blocks make it difficult for pupils to recall what they have learnt and to build up skills over time. Some aspects of the work, for example visits in the local area to improve skills in geography and history, are not given enough emphasis.

15. In general, teachers use their knowledge of what pupils know, understand and can do effectively to ensure the work is well matched to pupils of different ability, especially in English, mathematics and science. As a result the underachievement seen, especially of higher attaining pupils, at the time of the last inspection has been largely eradicated. Nevertheless, as indicated above, there is still further to go to ensure that these pupils and others make the best possible progress in all subjects.
16. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and learn well. This results from the good quality of teaching and support they receive in lessons and the effective interventions of the specialist teacher.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. Pupils behave very well. They know the school rules and the reasons for them and adhere to them most of the time. They are aware of the school's system of sanctions and rewards and think they are fair. Relationships with teachers are warm and friendly but respectful. Throughout the week of the inspection, in spite of difficult weather and wet playtimes, there was little sign of children quarrelling. There have been no exclusions.
18. Pupils are keen to come to school, take an interest in their work and talk about it willingly. They concentrate and work hard in lessons and want to do well. When they need to share equipment or co-operate with others, they do so sensibly. They are developing an understanding of the importance of listening carefully to others and respecting their views and ideas. This is in response to the school's values and aims, which are upheld consistently by teachers. Personal and social education lessons are particularly influential in this respect. Pupils are beginning to evaluate their own work and think about how to improve it. There were good examples of this in a physical education lesson when pupils considered how to improve a ball game they had invented. Occasionally, pupils are expected to think about how to tackle a piece of work and they respond well to the challenge. More often they follow instructions and advice. This they do promptly.
19. When they are given the opportunity, pupils help in the classroom or take registers to the office. Many older pupils are ready to do more to contribute to the school community beyond their own classrooms. At the moment opportunities are few.
20. Attendance is satisfactory although marginally below the national average, largely as a result of parents taking their children on holiday during term time. Unauthorised absence is higher than average.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. Since the previous inspection the quality of the teaching in the Foundation Stage has improved, to very good. This judgement is made on the basis of observations in one of the two reception classes. The second reception class is not formed until January when a further 35 children will be admitted to the school. The particular strength in the teaching is the challenge to extend the children's understanding, to encourage their concentration and develop their thinking response in those activities that they themselves choose.

22. The quality of teaching overall in Years 1 and 2 is good. It has also improved substantially. There is now a much higher proportion of good or better teaching and the amount of unsatisfactory teaching is much less. There are particular strengths in Year 2 where teaching was good or better in almost all lessons observed and, in one in three lessons, teaching was very good. The teachers in Year 2 have a wide range of skills and a very good knowledge of the curriculum. They teach basic skills very well so that pupils work at a good rate. They interest and inspire the pupils so that they work hard and make good progress. As the lesson progresses, they check how effective their methods are in helping pupils to learn and use what they find to improve their teaching. Teachers respond well to the needs of different pupils in the class by helping them to overcome problems, setting individual challenges and moving the learning on. They ask searching questions that develop pupils' understanding and give pupils opportunities to explain their thinking and discuss their ideas. In an English lesson in Year 2, for example, pupils discussed their story planning with a partner. Before they started to write, they talked about characters, setting and the action so that they had a good idea of that they wanted to communicate in their stories.
23. Teachers value what pupils have to say and praise them for their efforts. They take care to include pupils of different ability in discussions. However, teachers do not always encourage quieter pupils sufficiently to help them towards confidence in talking to the whole class. Teachers in Year 1 tolerate too many interruptions from pupils who call out instead of putting up their hands. They do not always draw pupils in when their concentration begins to waver. As a result the pace of lessons drops and pupils' progress falters.
24. English and mathematics are all taught well. The distinct parts of each lesson are given good attention. For example, in mathematics there is a good emphasis in all classes on developing numeracy skills and pupils' mental agility. In the group activities the work is matched well to the ability of different groups within the class so that there is sufficient challenge. For example, when they write stories, greater demands are placed on more able pupils in terms of the length and construction of sentences. At the end of the lesson teachers draw together effectively what pupils have learned, present new challenges and prepare pupils for the next steps. Literacy skills are taught well. Pupils learn letter sounds systematically, although lower attaining pupils need more practice in combining these so that they can build words more effectively in reading and spelling. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop confidence and enjoyment in reading and story writing. From the start, pupils are taught handwriting skills, learning how to shape their letters and practising skills to enable them to write neatly. Their handwriting books show that they can do this but teachers' expectations of accuracy and neatness in other work are not high enough and they do not point out clearly how pupils could improve their presentation or indicate where pupils need to improve their spelling. Teachers' marking rarely shows pupils how they could improve. As a result, pupils' recorded work in all subjects does not do justice to the quality of their learning in the classroom. As a record of their progress it is unhelpful and unreliable. It is not always dated, it is not clear what pupils are learning and it does not give them a sense of pride in their achievements.
25. Teaching assistants provide valuable support in lessons, in particular for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. They explain group tasks clearly, deal with any misconceptions from whole-class teaching and help pupils to overcome problems. When pupils record their work, teaching assistants encourage them to take care and check frequently what they are doing to keep up the pace of learning. As a result these pupils make good progress and often record their work more carefully than others in the class.
26. Teachers provide well for pupils with special educational needs. They plan carefully and work closely with colleagues to ensure a consistent approach to pupils' learning and personal needs. They nurture pupils' self-esteem by timely encouragement and praise. They build pupils' independence through relevant, carefully matched tasks that enable pupils to succeed. Excellent relationships motivate pupils and give them pleasure in learning. The

learning mentor and learning support assistant also teach small groups of pupils who are withdrawn from lessons. Sometimes these groups are composed of pupils who are the most able and, at other times, groups are made up of pupils who have learning difficulties. The work undertaken is sharply focused on areas of difficulty, for example letter sounds, or on particular extension work with dictionaries in English. Skilful teaching takes place; pupils are highly motivated, enjoy the sessions, gain confidence and make particularly good progress. However, the work carried out in withdrawal sessions is not linked closely enough with pupils' classroom learning to make it easy for pupils to make the best of their time when they return to their classes. This reduces the impact of these otherwise high quality sessions.

27. The teaching of science is good. It has improved substantially from its weak position at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are now more actively involved in investigative work and the planning of the subject gives sufficient weight to each area of learning. The way the work builds on pupils' earlier learning contributes to good progress. Improvements have also been made to the teaching of religious education, also identified as a weakness. One very good lesson was observed where the teacher skilfully linked the story of Moses and the Ten Commandments with pupils' own experiences of rules and their value. The overall quality remains too variable, however, and not all teachers have a good enough grasp of the complexities of the agreed programme of study.
28. The games aspects of physical education are taught well across the school and pupils achieve above average standards. For example, in a lesson in Year 2 there was a good emphasis on teaching throwing and aiming skills and pupils were encouraged to evaluate their work and make improvements. There is effective teaching of music and ICT. In music lessons, all pupils are involved in singing and playing instruments and their levels of interest are high. Aspects of ICT, useful both to particular lessons and more widely, are taught to small groups within the class during group activities. While good progress is made when this takes place, the teaching is not frequent enough to guarantee that pupils will make the progress needed in all the aspects of the work. The sample of pupils' completed work shows that they do not use computers often enough in any subject to help them to learn.
29. Because of the way the timetable is organised into short, concentrated blocks of work, it is not possible to make overall judgements about the quality of teaching in art and design, geography, history and design and technology. These were not being taught during the inspection week and little completed work had been retained from the previous year. Teachers' planning for these subjects is satisfactory.
30. The use of learning resources is good. It adds variety and interest to lessons and is often influential in improving the quality of pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Year 1 use flip books so that they can all respond to questions in the mental mathematics session.

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

31. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good. It provides a rich and varied programme of play and experiences to support the children's learning of basic skills. After a settling in period, children who may have special educational needs are identified. They begin an effective programme of early intervention, involving a range of special support services.
32. In Years 1 and 2, the school teaches all the subjects that it should and provides a satisfactory curriculum for pupils of all abilities. The provision for pupils' personal and social education is good. This is achieved through a well-organised programme and through teachers' skilled, sensitive management of pupils. Teachers value pupils as individuals and set strong examples of consideration for others and effective, collaborative working. The outcomes of this are reflected in, for example, pupils' enthusiasm for school, their very good

attitudes to learning and the high quality of relationships. These help to promote a constructive climate for learning that results in good achievement. There is satisfactory provision for health education, including attention to drug misuse and personal safety.

33. The school has responded effectively to many of the curriculum issues raised by the previous inspection but some weaknesses remain. Planning arrangements now show clearly what teachers intend pupils of differing abilities to learn in each lesson. This has helped to make teaching more effective and the results are seen, for example, in pupils' good achievement in English and mathematics. The school's strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy are working well.
34. Drawing on national guidance, teachers have devised sound planning arrangements for each subject. These show the ground pupils will cover, how pupils are to progress and, in many cases, how subjects are to be linked in order to strengthen and enrich pupils' learning. For example, geographical studies of a seaside locality are informatively linked with historical work about seaside holidays in the past. These arrangements are detailed and carefully devised but produce some disadvantages. When combining elements of several subjects in a single study unit, teachers do not always ensure that the knowledge and skills of the different subjects are studied in enough depth. As a result, pupils do not make the best possible progress in each subject. These arrangements also result in some lack of balance across the curriculum as a whole. For example, Year 1 pupils have done little or no art or ICT so far this term. Gaps of many weeks interrupt pupils' learning in, for example, history. This slows progress because pupils forget much of what they have learned and do not build skills in a smooth, secure way. Teachers' assessments of pupils' learning are reduced in value because they become out of date and cannot be used effectively as a basis for future planning.
35. A disproportionate amount of time is given to English. This makes it harder to do justice to other subjects. As a result, while achievement in English is good, achievement in, for example, history, geography and ICT, is less secure. Teachers are imaginative in promoting pupils' language skills in some lessons other than English. For example, in a very good religious education lesson, the teacher gave valuable opportunities for pupils to improve their speaking, listening and writing. A few good opportunities to write are provided in, for example, science and history. As a result of the small amount of time given to subjects such as art, geography and history, there is little evidence that pupils' reading, writing and numeracy skills are developed systematically through them. The curriculum is not balanced well and does not allow enough depth of study in subjects other than English and mathematics.
36. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and some valuable extension work for higher ability pupils. The grouping of pupils by ability in English, mathematics and science, the careful match of work to each group and the teacher and teaching assistant support ensure that good progress is made. Individual education plans are of satisfactory quality. They characterise each pupil's needs soundly and provide helpful, relevant advice to teachers on how they are to be met but targets are too broadly expressed to give teachers and teaching assistants concise, practical guidance.
37. The school provides satisfactory equality of opportunity for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds. Teachers provide carefully matched work that enables all pupils to share in all activities. Classroom assistants work effectively with less able pupils to ensure that they learn well and take a full part in lessons. However, the arrangements for withdrawing pupils for individual and group teaching often result in pupils missing important parts of lessons, for example, in English and science. The quality of teaching in withdrawal groups is very good but the work followed in them is not linked closely enough with the work pupils do in class. This detracts from the school's otherwise effective arrangements for ensuring that all pupils are fully included in all activities. It does not make the best use of the special educational needs teacher's very good skills.

38. There are good relationships with partner institutions, including the nearby nursery and junior schools, and sound links with the local community. There are some visits to the school by neighbourhood representatives, for example, the local vicar and police officer, but these are few. Similarly, pupils do not have enough opportunities to go out and explore their immediate locality and the wider community of which it is part. For example, there have been no recent visits to museums or other places of interest. This reduces the quality and impact of learning, for example, in history and geography. The range of extra-curricular activities is unsatisfactory. At present, no such opportunities are provided. This reduces the scope for pupils to improve their skills in, for example, music and physical education, and to develop initiative and personal responsibility in contexts outside the classroom.
39. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' personal development although there are significant strengths and weaknesses. The school is very clear about teaching pupils about right and wrong. The school rules are simple, understood by the pupils and consistently upheld by teachers and other adults in the school. Rules are displayed in classrooms, and referred to by teachers who encourage the pupils to consider how their actions affect others. From the start pupils are helped to co-operate with others by sharing, taking turns, listening to what others have to say and taking their ideas seriously. The way teachers appreciate and value each of the children, irrespective of background, gender or ability, provides a clear example for pupils to follow. The school's continuously developing personal and social education programme firmly underpins the work. The provision for moral and social development contributes well to very good behaviour and relationships and positive attitudes.
40. The way that the school provides for pupils' spiritual development, whilst satisfactory overall, is not as strongly embedded in the school's work. The daily assembly provides opportunities for pupils to think about how other people make their lives better and gives a short time for reflection. Religious education contributes further when pupils study religious leaders and teachings. However, there are other areas of the curriculum where possibilities exist to deepen pupils' understanding that are not fully exploited, for example to wonder at the beauty of the natural world and the complexities of nature in science lessons or to consider how music and art enrich people's lives.
41. Insufficient attention is given to those areas of the curriculum that develop pupils' understanding of their own cultural heritage and provide an insight into the wider world. This is unsatisfactory. Little work is undertaken in the local area to teach pupils about what made it known across the world, how their ancestors earned their living or how industry has changed. Whilst pupils learn about some famous art and artists from Europe, there is little provision for learning about other world figures, cultures or multicultural aspects of British society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. Overall, the school cares for the pupils well and there are appropriate procedures in place to ensure their safety and well-being. The advice and support provided are good. The school is a warm and friendly place in which pupils are happy and secure, and they enjoy their school life. They learn without fear within a caring environment. Staff provide a high level of affectionate support and the very good relationships that exist make it easy for pupils to talk to them about any worries they may have. Personal development of the pupils is well promoted through lessons, assemblies and individual attention they receive. Additionally, pupils' self-confidence is enhanced by a satisfactory range of responsibilities, mostly within the classroom. Pupils receive appropriate support to prepare them for their move to the junior school. Although there is no formal monitoring of personal development, teachers know the children well and any concerns are shared between staff and acted upon.

43. Child protection procedures are satisfactory. The designated person has had relevant training. Staff are aware of their responsibilities. Class teachers are very aware of pupils' needs and give good support to them all in class, particularly those with special educational needs.
44. The school promotes and monitors attendance well, involving the education welfare service where necessary. All absence is followed up on the first day and it is made clear to parents that reasons are required for all absences. Holidays in term time are closely monitored and permission has to be sought before they are authorised. Registers are properly maintained and monitored.
45. The school's management of behaviour is very good and ensures that school life is calm and orderly. There is an effective policy for behaviour and this, together with the good example and the high expectations of all staff, promotes high standards of behaviour. Staff deal with any potentially disruptive behaviour during lessons quickly and effectively and keep a close eye on pupils with known behavioural problems. This leads to an environment that is generally conducive to effective learning. Midday supervisory staff manage playtime behaviour sympathetically but firmly and this has a positive effect on playground behaviour and safety.
46. There is a good policy for health and safety and the management of this on a day-to-day basis is also good. Governors carry out regular safety inspections and risk assessment is well established. Fire drills take place each term but weekly testing of the fire alarm does not take place and this routine needs to be re-established as a matter of urgency. First aid procedures are good and many staff have first aid qualifications.
47. The detailed system of recording the children's attainment in the Foundation Stage gives teachers an effective measure of the children's starting points. It enables the teachers to track the children's progress closely through the areas of learning, to give a picture of the value added by the teaching at the end of the reception year.
48. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. Arrangements are now much more thorough, accurate and secure than at the time of the previous inspection. This enables teachers to plan work that more effectively meets pupils' differing needs. As a result, lower ability pupils, pupils with special educational needs and those of higher ability achieve well, particularly in English and mathematics. Assessment procedures for these subjects are very thorough. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and sampled. This gives teachers a clear idea of what each pupil has achieved and enables teachers to draw well-informed conclusions about trends in attainment within year groups and through the school.
49. Despite these significant improvements, some weaknesses remain. Teachers sample pupils' writing very systematically and judge it against the National Curriculum levels of attainment. Speaking, listening and reading are also carefully tracked, and this provides useful information, but teachers do not judge pupils' attainment in these areas rigorously enough against the National Curriculum levels. As a result, while the teaching of speaking, listening and reading is purposeful, it is not geared to achieving the best possible progress and results in relation to national standards.
50. There is no systematic tracking of progress in science and this is hindering the way teachers plan for the most able pupils. In religious education, teachers do not gather enough information about how well pupils are doing in different aspects to enable them to remedy weaknesses in pupils' understanding. There are satisfactory arrangements for assessing other subjects, for example, history, geography and design and technology. After each study unit, teachers record what pupils have covered and determine whether they have exceeded or fallen short of the learning targets. The arrangements are detailed and thorough. However, because of the time that elapses between study units, the information from these

assessments is not as effective as it might be in informing future planning. Again, in most subjects other than writing and mathematics, teachers do not refer systematically enough to National Curriculum levels. This reduces the accuracy and usefulness of their assessments.

51. The school makes satisfactory use of information from national tests to identify overall strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning, for example in spelling. Teachers and subject managers make sound use of this information to guide teaching priorities. Supported by teachers' very good knowledge of their pupils, this is helpful in planning group work and identifying pupils who would benefit from extra support.
52. The identification of pupils with special educational needs is very secure. Day-to-day co-operation between class teachers, the specialist teacher and classroom assistants ensures that the progress of pupils with special educational needs is very closely followed. It is carefully assessed and recorded. However, the targets on pupils' individual education plans are often too vague to allow sharp, systematic assessment. This limits the usefulness of the plans as a basis for purposeful teaching and learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. The school has a satisfactory relationship with the parents and seeks to involve them in the education of their children. Where this is achieved, it has a beneficial impact on their education. Parents who made their views known are all strongly supportive of the school. Very few parents attended the pre-inspection meeting or responded to the questionnaire and additional discussions were held with parents on the playground in order to confirm these opinions. Parents see the school as very approachable, with good teaching and promoting a positive work ethic. They see their children liking school, making good progress and being well supported as they grow up. The inspection findings entirely support these positive views. A few parents felt that although they have had the opportunity to give their views about whole-school issues such as uniform, they are not always consulted about changes that affect particular classes or groups of pupils. Inspectors agree that, in some instances, advance information and the opportunity for discussion would have been helpful.
54. The school provides parents with an overall satisfactory level of information about their child's progress and about general matters. There is a half-termly newsletter and in addition the headteacher writes to parents giving details of special events and other information. Good information on the curriculum is posted outside the classrooms, enabling parents to see what is to be learnt each week. The prospectus and governors' annual report both meet statutory requirements. The prospectus is not a very welcoming document and the headteacher has it as a high priority to improve it. Pupils' annual reports are unsatisfactory. They give reasonable information on pupils' attainment and progress for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science but for the remaining subjects the reports tend to say what the pupil has done rather than providing information about their achievements. Reports do not contain targets to help the pupil improve. Each term there is a parents' consultation evening and, in addition, parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to be involved in the review of their child's progress.
55. Parents make a generally satisfactory contribution to the learning of their children and to the life of the school. A number of parents help in the classroom and on outside visits and provide valuable support. The school is trying to increase this area of parental involvement. Many parents provide help to pupils at home with their reading and other homework but the use of reading diaries is patchy. The school's homework policy provides a structure for homework that is satisfactory. Parents have been provided with information on the curriculum, for example on literacy, in meetings that were combined with other events for parents. A parents' group raises funds that are used to purchase resources to benefit the pupils' learning – for example, outdoor play equipment and interactive white boards.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. All aspects of the leadership and management of the school are now satisfactory. Where important weaknesses were identified at the time of the last inspection, these have been improved with strong support from the local education authority. The school is now in a better position to judge how well it is doing in all areas of its work, including teaching. This has made a good contribution to the improvements in teaching that have taken place. The widespread underachievement observed during the last inspection, especially amongst higher attaining pupils, has been largely eradicated.
57. A newly appointed but experienced headteacher took up her post just six weeks before the inspection. Together with the deputy and other key staff, she has already established a new platform for school improvement. She has proposed a tightening up of existing procedures, especially those designed to check how well the school is doing, including the monitoring of teaching and learning and the tracking of pupils' progress. Clear draft policies for these and the development of an annual cycle, which draws all the processes together into a more effective system, are awaiting discussion and approval of staff and governors. She intends to consult interested parties, including teachers and parents, more widely and develop a stronger role for the governing body. The potential for future development is good and the senior management team is strongly placed to make substantial steps in school improvement with a clear focus on raising standards further.
58. The deputy headteacher and subject leaders have been effective in leading developments in the curriculum. Particularly in English and mathematics and also in science, they have responded well to inspection issues and school concerns. They have made important changes to the way these subjects are taught that have played a substantial part in improving teaching, learning and pupils' achievements. Other subject leaders have made improvements to the planning of their subjects and made sure that plans cover the work that needs to be taught to each class. They have had few opportunities, however, to be involved in checking the impact of this on teaching and assessing the quality of pupils' work. As a result, some of the shortcomings, for example in religious education, history, geography and art, have not been picked up. The management of the Foundation Stage is very good. The co-ordinator has put in place, with determination, the recommendations of the previous report. She has developed high quality provision for effective learning and strong teamwork with parents, surrounding nurseries and other staff in the school.
59. The management of special educational needs is good. The recently appointed headteacher has taken on this role. She has already made a clear analysis of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's arrangements for the teaching of pupils with special educational needs and has well-informed plans for review and improvement. The school's documentation and practice reflect the requirements of the Code of Practice, and statutory requirements are met.
60. The school's improvement planning identifies clear and appropriate priorities for future attention. It identifies those who are responsible for taking action and checking progress. It has helped the school to make an effective response to the last inspection. It is not always clearly linked, however, to expected improvements in standards and likely costs. This makes it difficult, especially for governors, to evaluate the success of each area and to ensure that the school achieves the best value it can. Results are analysed in detail to enable teachers to compare the progress of different groups, and to identify pupils who do particularly well and specific areas requiring improvement. The analysis enables governors to compare the progress with other schools both nationally and in similar circumstances. It provides enough information for governors to challenge and explain variations between different year groups and subjects and they do this effectively.
61. The governors fulfil their statutory duties adequately, including taking responsibility for the performance management of teachers. This annual cycle is now firmly established and

contributes effectively to identifying strengths and where the school needs to improve. Specific grants are used for their intended purpose and good use is made of outside agencies, particularly the local education authority, where necessary, to support the school's work.

62. The governors have been able to maintain single-aged classes and favourable adult to pupil numbers by employing a teaching assistant for each class. This results in good support for individuals and groups within the class, especially for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. A skilled learning mentor and highly effective learning support assistant complete the team. These two key staff carry out planned programmes on a withdrawal basis for pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties and specific extension activities for more able pupils. While there are clear benefits that accrue from this approach, withdrawal from classes is causing pupils to miss vital parts of lessons in classrooms. The school carried a surplus of around four per cent into the current financial year and expects to use all of this during the current year in order to maintain these staffing levels. The school improvement plan is for the current academic year only. There is no written longer-term outline plan to enable governors to consider likely future expenditure other than on maintaining the premises.
63. The governors meet at least termly to discuss financial matters and they maintain a close watch on the school's overall expenditure. The administrative officer provides vital, skilled support. A careful check is kept on spending patterns, and finances are monitored using a computer system. The administrative officer has to undertake separate monitoring activities using her own spreadsheet systems in order to manage the finances of the school effectively. The school, through the local education authority, is in the process of upgrading computer systems to make this more efficient. There is good day-to-day management to ensure that the school runs smoothly.
64. The school buys its supplies and services competitively and, in this respect, makes good use of the principles of best value. The weaknesses in the school improvement planning process, mentioned above, mean that the school cannot be sure that best value is obtained in term of spending on educational priorities. The few recommendations following the most recent audit have been put into place.
65. The accommodation is adequate for the demands of the curriculum but far from ideal. A mobile unit serves as two linked classrooms. These have no toilet facilities and pupils need to cross the playground in all weathers for this purpose and to use the hall, library, special needs room and to eat lunch. The unit is old and in a poor state of repair, and along with on-going subsidence problems is a constant drain, on governors' time and resources. The school is cleaned to a high standard.
66. The pupils have occasional access to a playing field at the junior school but this entails a long walk and crossing a busy road. The playground has been marked to provide opportunities for pupils to play a range of games but no equipment was in use during the inspection to liven up play times and pupils' play, although amicable, was rather lacking in purpose. Learning resources are generally adequate for the needs of the curriculum, but lack variety and the potential to enrich the curriculum and stimulate pupils' interests in many subjects, for example in art.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. In order to consolidate earlier gains and to raise standards further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- (1) Improve the standard of pupils' handwriting, spelling and presentation of work. (Paragraphs 6, 7, 24, 87, 99)
 - (2) Improve the quality of the curriculum and pupils' progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science by:
 - reviewing the time given to subjects so that the work can be taught in sufficient depth, and the organisation of timetables so that pupils' learning builds more effectively on what they already know;
 - checking teaching and learning more effectively;
 - extending the range and use of resources, including visits and visitors, to enrich pupils' learning and improve their cultural development;
 - providing more activities outside normal lesson times.(Paragraphs 11, 14, 34, 35, 38, 41, 50, 58, 108, 116, 134)
 - (3) Ensure that computers are used more effectively to support work in subjects where their use is appropriate and benefits pupils' learning. (Paragraphs 10, 28, 82, 98, 116, 120)
 - (3) Review the arrangements for the withdrawal of pupils with special educational needs and the more able so that they do not miss important parts of lessons. (Paragraphs 26, 37, 83)
 - (5) Improve the marking of work so that it shows more clearly how pupils can improve. (Paragraphs 24, 89, 99)

The following less important weakness should be considered when governors draw up their action plan:

- Reports do not contain enough information about how pupils could improve their work. (Paragraph 54)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

27

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

23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	6	12	7	1	0	0
Percentage	4	22	44	26	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	108
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	22
Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	27
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	31	22	53

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	21	24
	Girls	21	21	20
	Total	39	42	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (92)	79 (98)	83 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	25	25
	Girls	21	20	20
	Total	40	45	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (95)	85 (98)	85 (98)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	106	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Average class size	22

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	151.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
	£
Total income	388090
Total expenditure	389527
Expenditure per pupil	2513
Balance brought forward from previous year	16709
Balance carried forward to next year	15272

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	108
Number of questionnaires returned	12

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	33	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	75	25	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	67	25	8	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	58	0	0	8
The teaching is good.	67	33	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	42	0	0	8
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	25	8	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	33	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	50	42	0	0	8
The school is well led and managed.	33	42	8	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	75	25	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	0	33	8	0	58

Other issues raised by parents

A few parents felt that the school does not consult parents well enough about their views.

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

68. Children are admitted to one reception class in September. A further reception class is formed for the children who start in January. The arrangements for children's learning in the Foundation Stage are a strength of the school. Since the previous inspection the quality of the teaching and of the curriculum has improved, and is now very good. This promotes a good level of progress in the current reception class. The management of the Foundation Stage is strong and the recommendations of the previous report have been put in place effectively. The long-term planning is now securely linked to the national strategy for early learning goals. The staff continue to provide a wide range of interesting and appropriate activities. The particular strength is the challenge to extend the children, to encourage their concentration and to develop their thinking response in activities which they themselves choose. There is now a more detailed system to record the children's attainment when they enter the reception class. This shows that overall the children's attainment is below the average expected for their age. The ongoing records track the children's progress closely. They show that the children make good progress and most are ready to start on the National Curriculum programme of study by the end of the reception year.
69. A sensitively planned induction programme allows the children to visit the class before they start officially, easing their start into school life and increasing their confidence. After a settling in period, children who may have special educational needs are identified. The lively teaching becomes gradually more formal as the children grow older, to prepare them well for the start of the National Curriculum in Year 1. The good teamwork between the class teacher and the teaching assistant creates a purposeful learning environment. The children flourish in the brightly decorated and stimulating classroom. The teaching is particularly effective in gaining the children's attention, extending their interest and concentration, and allowing them to explore their own ideas.

Personal, social and emotional development

70. The children start the reception class with personal, social and emotional development at a level appropriate to their age. They socialise well, mix appropriately with older pupils and have a confident sense of belonging to the school community. Well-planned routines train the children in polite behaviour. The staff encourage independence, and require the children to tidy up after activities. They make good progress, and are soon able to line up to go to the hall as sensibly as the older pupils. In assemblies they sit quietly and pay attention. The staff promote confidence during outdoor play sessions using adventurous equipment, but facilities for this are somewhat limited. The planning for the other learning areas includes numerous opportunities for the children to select their own activities. They often form into pairs or small groups, which enables them to share ideas and experiences. They are given jobs to do in and around the classroom, such as taking the register to the secretary, that prepare them for greater responsibility later. The staff keep a detailed record of social development. Last year's records indicate that the children reached an above average level of personal and social development.

Communication, language and literacy

71. The children start the reception class with below average skills of communication, language and literacy. Children are at first reluctant writers. The teaching is very good and the children are already making good progress in language work. The strength in the teaching lies in the way all the elements of speaking, listening, reading and writing are fused together, each one reinforcing the others. The lessons are delivered in a lively way so that the children want to listen and learn. The teacher encourages all the children to have a turn at answering the

questions. This means all are practising and extending their speaking skills. The teacher uses the 'big books' well. As the children look at these they are developing their reading. The teacher tries to include a real experience in every language activity; for example, the book *Handa's Surprise* was accompanied by the children handling and studying a real pomegranate.

72. This very effectively built up the children's ideas and vocabulary, so when the teacher asked who would like to write a story, all the hands went up enthusiastically. The children can choose from a wide range of follow-up activities. These are set out to cater for different levels. The more able group picked up the challenging skills the teacher has laid out in the lesson introduction. With the teacher's support they used their 'alphabet mats' to sequence words into sentences. The middle group elected to work with the teaching assistant to recognise letters and spellings of words. Another group explored a 'small world' play situation that encouraged an exchange of ideas linked to the story. In the plenary session at the end of the lesson, two boys surprised their classmates by the sentences they had thought up about "the monkey pinching the bananas from the trees." The strong focus on children speaking is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.
73. The teacher uses frequent opportunities to practise the basic skills of sounds and letter shapes. This is leading to very good progress. The success seen in the records from last year suggest that this class will achieve the final stepping stones and many are likely to be working within Level 1 of the National Curriculum.

Mathematical development

74. Children start the reception class with underdeveloped mathematical skills. In the longer lessons the teacher builds in good practical activities to give the children the hands-on experience that is at the heart of the early learning goals. This experience supports children's mathematical development particularly effectively when the children use apparatus for sorting, ordering, making patterns and counting. They also practise using numbers in their heads and are making very good progress in this. The teacher employs an effective mixture of learning styles. For some children the attraction lies in memorable rhyming songs and number jingles, for others the key is counting physical objects. The challenge is always there to go further and higher. All the children share in celebrating each new success, for instance a child who counted to 26. Consequently the children enjoy mathematical activities, especially because they can select the activities they want to pursue. Adult support is then available to guide them to extract important basic skills from the resources. This is very good teaching and promotes good progress. Occasionally the lesson introductions extend too long and do not give the children quite enough time to benefit fully from the learning in their own activities. Most children are likely to reach the final stepping stones in number and awareness of space and shape to achieve the national average level, with some children going into Level 1 of the National Curriculum.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

75. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world are at a lower level than expected at the start of the reception class. The children make very good progress in a stimulating learning environment filled with objects to engage their curiosity and interest. The key teaching strategy is to encourage the children to rely on their senses as they explore the real objects and situations provided for them. They learn about the world in and around the school by looking at, and discussing, the different areas and classrooms. They gain a reasonable idea about the passage of time by comparing earlier and later, morning and afternoon. Their play on the computers is good practice in acquiring mouse and keyboard skills, recognising letters and making shapes. They learn to operate a remote control robot to give them the feel of direction and distance.

76. They extend their scientific knowledge of living things by looking closely at a range of unusual fruit, predicting what might lie beneath the skin, and checking with a large magnifier. They are encouraged to experiment with technical things by designing a windmill. Enlarging their horizons in this way is very good teaching. The staff track the children through the stepping stones to learning, to ensure they are making good progress. By the end of reception most are likely to reach the expected level for their age, and some may exceed this.

Physical development

77. The children's physical development is at the expected level when they enter the reception class. Most children play confidently with the larger apparatus; a few do not yet have well-developed skills which require fine finger control, for instance handling scissors. The reception teacher has a strong programme for developing the children's precision in handling small objects and tools and the teaching is good. Activities such as handling paintbrushes, handling pencils and other small equipment, and using the computer keyboard and construction equipment, all contribute to the children's growing dexterity. By the end of the reception year they are likely to progress beyond the expected level of early learning goals.
78. The programme for expanding the children's experience with larger play apparatus, particularly outdoors, is satisfactory. The space allocated for this, however, has not been completed with soft areas or fixed equipment. It cannot contribute as effectively as the staff would wish. The co-ordinator's action plan lays out the timetable for completion of this project during this year. The teaching is satisfactory and sound progress observed means that most children are likely to reach the average expected level of final stepping stones by the end of the reception year.

Creative development

79. Most children's creative sense is well developed by nursery experience so they have a good start to their reception year. Through the well-structured reception curriculum, good teaching and with the encouragement of the staff, the children develop enthusiasm and confidence to explore their own ideas. A few children remain hesitant and need the support of the teachers' suggestions, but many more are willing to explore different media and try out their own ideas. The children's awareness of culture is carefully structured. In art, for example, they learn to use basic skills of colour mixing and extend this to collaborative painting in pairs. They soon get the feel for this and their work takes on the style of a Turner. In music they learn words of new songs, or create new words to songs they already know. They are given good opportunities to explore the playing of instruments, and interpret music in dance. They are becoming more confident in role-play, using the home corner (which they have designed themselves) and the small world 'black spot' to play, talk and extend their imagination. Overall the good progress made raises the children's attainment over the year to the expected levels and beyond.

ENGLISH

80. Attainment in Year 2 is in line with the national average. This is similar to the findings of the previous report. When pupils start school, their attainment in English is below average. As they move through the school, pupils achieve well. They make particularly strong progress in the Year 2 classes, where the quality of teaching is high. Since the previous inspection, attainment in reading and writing has broadly kept pace with the national upward trend, though there have been some significant variations from year to year. The attainment of the present group of Year 2 pupils restores the pattern of gradual overall improvement. This is confirmed by observations of lessons, analysis of pupils' past and recent work and

- discussion with pupils. Pupils' achievements, including those of higher attaining pupils, have improved. Their achievement is good.
81. The quality of teaching is good overall and of a high standard in both Year 2 classes. Teachers communicate effectively, engaging and securing pupils' attention. They plan in detail and modify work carefully so that pupils of differing abilities can succeed and progress. Teachers encourage pupils to develop some responsibility for the quality of their own learning by setting concise, personal targets that pupils keep by them and refer to frequently. This strengthens learning and promotes real involvement. Relationships are excellent. The ethos for learning is good-humoured and purposeful. As a result, pupils of all abilities concentrate very well and enjoy learning. Their attitudes to learning are good overall and very good in both Year 2 classes.
82. Teachers are careful to build pupils' self-esteem alongside their knowledge and understanding. They achieve this by means of praise and recognition and by openly valuing pupils' contributions. This gives pupils the security to develop and express their own ideas and encourages them to do their best. A very good example of this was seen during the final discussion in an effective Year 2 lesson. Pupils shared their writing with the class and gained in confidence by having their work acknowledged and commended. The teacher drew examples from the pupils' writing to illustrate ways in which all pupils could improve their work, for example, by using connecting words to develop longer or more complex sentences. In this lesson, the teacher gave balanced attention to improving pupils' speaking, listening and writing. Pupils discussed their story plan with a partner before committing their ideas to paper and, in some cases, reading to the class. This strengthened learning. In a minority of lessons pupils gain experience of using word-processing programs to improve and vary the presentation of their writing but this aspect of pupils' work is underdeveloped in most classes.
83. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in English. This is because teachers have a close knowledge of their pupils and plan work that challenges them at the right level. Classroom assistants give effective support, enabling pupils to progress, succeed and gain in independence. The individual and group work in English that some pupils follow outside the classroom is of very good quality. However, it is not linked closely enough to pupils' classroom learning and consequently does not have as much impact on pupils' attainment as it should. Current withdrawal arrangements result in some pupils missing parts of their English lessons. This interrupts their learning.
84. Standards in speaking and listening for the current group of Year 2 pupils are average. Most pupils listen confidently and accurately. They listen carefully to one another, take turns in conversation and are very attentive. They show satisfactory understanding of questions during discussions and give apt replies. Most pupils are beginning to develop confidence in speaking, for example, in explaining their work or talking about the books they read. However, a significant minority of pupils listen carefully during class discussions but do not offer answers. Teachers do not sufficiently encourage these pupils to become active participants and so extend their skills.
85. Standards in reading are average. Pupils of all abilities gain delight and satisfaction from reading. Most pupils read books that are suitable for them fluently and accurately. Older pupils read well enough to use reference books to gain information, for example in science lessons. The most able readers inject some apt expression. However, while all pupils have a secure knowledge of individual letter sounds, less able pupils and some average pupils find it difficult to assemble sounds and to read groups of letters. Pupils' understanding of what they have read is satisfactory. All but the least able pupils can talk about key events and characters in stories, begin to discuss how a story unfolds and explain which aspects of it they enjoy.
86. The teaching of reading is systematic and well organised. It successfully inspires enjoyment and encourages progress. However, there are some weaknesses in the school's

arrangements. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress in reading are detailed and thorough but do not link closely enough with National Curriculum levels of attainment. As a result, pupils' progress is not tracked in the most constructive way. This leads to some inaccuracy in the way books are matched to pupils' abilities. During the inspection, most books given to the average and lower ability pupils were soundly matched but some books given to the better readers were too undemanding. This slows progress for these pupils. They could do better.

87. Standards in writing are average. Average and brighter pupils convey meaning clearly and are beginning to sequence ideas in sentences marked by capitals and full stops. Most pupils use a satisfactory range of words for their age but few use a wide vocabulary or express themselves imaginatively. Above average pupils and some average pupils spell simple, commonly occurring words correctly but too many pupils make errors with words that they should know or be able to build up. This mirrors the weakness found in reading, in which many pupils found it difficult to work with groups of letters and to link the shapes of letter groups with their sounds. Pupils' handwriting practice books show that their handwriting is developing soundly but pupils do not take sufficient care with day-to-day work.
88. Teachers increasingly plan useful opportunities for pupils to develop their writing by using it for different purposes in lessons other than English. For example, there is a good emphasis on accuracy in factual writing when pupils describe stages in the growth of a plant and on sequencing a narrative in pupils' descriptions of the Fire of London. This improves pupils' versatility as writers.
89. Pupils' writing is assessed accurately against the National Curriculum levels. This good practice does not extend to the assessment of speaking, listening and reading. At present, assessments in these aspects, though thorough and detailed, do not give teachers clear enough information on how to plan for improvement. The quality of marking in pupils' books is satisfactory overall. However, it is often too brief and uninformative and does not do enough to show pupils what they should do to improve.
90. The management of English is very good. The subject co-ordinator is expert and well informed. She sets high standards in the quality of her own teaching. The monitoring of lessons has identified areas for improvement and has led to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and to better achievement. Teachers have carefully analysed recent results and the outcomes of the school's own assessments to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning. These have enabled the subject co-ordinator to develop concise, practical plans for further improvement in the future.

MATHEMATICS

91. Pupils in Year 2 are on course to achieve standards that are broadly in line with the national average.
92. The quality of teaching is good overall, with significant strengths in Year 2. This enables pupils to achieve well in number work and make good progress in the below average skills they bring with them when they start school. Achievement is better than at the time of the last inspection.
93. Teachers use the different parts of the numeracy strategy to good effect. Pupils' mental skills are developed well at the start of each lesson. Teachers ask questions that get pupils thinking, requiring their concentration and recall of facts to find answers. When teachers question more able pupils they ensure that they challenge them to work with bigger numbers or to use more complex thinking. Pupils who find the work difficult are encouraged with easier questions and the concentration of different groups is maintained well. Teachers in all classes use resources well, such as flip books, to ensure that all pupils can respond in this part of the lesson.

94. The most successful lessons are those where there is a substantial proportion of direct teaching to the whole class. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, the teachers used an overhead projector and 100 square very effectively to:

- explain the number system;
- show pupils the patterns in each row and column; and,
- develop an understanding of place value in two-digit numbers.

As a result the pupils used the visual patterns to count backwards and forwards in twos and tens starting at different numbers, to add 10 and 20 to a given number, and to work out which numbers were obscured. In this and other lessons observed, the group activities were pitched well to ensure that pupils were working to capacity and could put into practice new learning. Higher attaining pupils who had to work out their own strategies for completing the tasks made particularly good progress.

95. At the end of lessons teachers draw together well what has been learnt, sort out problems and in the best lessons move the learning on a step further or set challenges for the next lesson. Opportunities are missed to translate these into short homework tasks.

96. Teaching assistants give pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils effective help by encouraging them to check their work, questioning them to assess their understanding and by dealing with misconceptions. Individual education plans do not contain specific mathematical targets for pupils with special educational needs that might help them further. Teachers also keep a close eye on groups as they work, providing focused teaching for one or two groups and occasional help for others.

97. Lessons are interesting; pupils enjoy the work and are keen to get on. Teachers maintain a good pace and praise pupils appropriately, encouraging them to persevere.

98. Not enough time is given to aspects other than numbers. Work in shape and space, measures and data handling is not strongly represented and usually at a lower level than number work. Pupils are not developing these skills as well as they could in mathematics lessons or in other subjects. Little use is made of computers to support the work, other than in constructing graphs. There are a few examples of too much practice of clearly understood work that slows progress.

99. Pupils do not take sufficient care when they record their work. Much of it is untidy and key words are spelt incorrectly. Loose, undated pieces of paper make it difficult for the pupils and the teachers to see the progress made. Teachers do not provide enough guidance through marking to help pupils know how to improve their work.

100. The subject is led well. Teaching and learning has been monitored effectively and important changes made as a result. This has led to good improvements in the mental part of the lesson, particularly in the quality of teachers' questions. The procedures for checking how well pupils are doing and analysing test results have also improved substantially since the last inspection and this has resulted in more challenging work, especially for higher attaining pupils.

SCIENCE

101. Standards are at the expected level in Year 2. By the end of the school year, standards are likely to be average overall. Pupils are good at responding to suggestions and exploring information. They are developing the skills of close observation. They are not as good at making their own suggestions about what to study, or predicting a likely outcome from their

observations. Their standard of work represents good achievement, taking into account their starting points.

102. Provision for science and pupils' achievements have improved since the last inspection. The school has put in place a new scheme of work, which ensures appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum requirements. The whole-school curriculum plan has become a useful tool for ensuring that there is no unnecessary repetition, which was a weakness in the previous report. It also helps teachers to set work at a higher level for the older and the more able pupils. The teachers now divide the classes into groups on the basis of ability and plan work to match the levels of ability appropriately. This is also effective for the pupils of lower ability and those with special educational needs because they can tackle work at their level and achieve success. With the good level of adult support often available in science lessons, they are helped to make good progress.
103. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection, and is now good overall. The teachers are more confident in science after a programme of in-service training. They now emphasise a more practical, investigative approach within their lessons. They encourage the groups to find information and discuss it amongst themselves. This helps pupils to share and compare ideas and make sense of their learning. For instance, in a Year 2 lesson about healthy foods, pupils discussed their own experiences at home, and made sensible suggestions about how to record their findings. Some leaned to literacy skills and thought writing their answers would be suitable. Others drew on their mathematics learning, wanting to show their work in some form of table or diagram. This contributes to increasing pupils' independence. It explains their positive attitude to science, because they are so closely involved in the work.
104. Teachers use resources well. In a lesson in Year 2, for example, as well as a supply of fruit and vegetables, they made sure there were plenty of reference sources for the pupils to look at. They teach pupils important skills that they can later use to record their science work. For instance, a lower ability Year 2 group learned a new computer skill during a science lesson. This not only extended their range of skills, but also made their science recording easier, more fun and more meaningful. Teachers use question and answer sessions well at the beginning of lessons to introduce the topic and draw out pupils' ideas. Occasionally some teachers focus on quite a small group for replies, for example in the Year 1 lesson on sounds. This deprives a larger group from practising their speaking skills.
105. The leadership of the subject is good. It has improved since the previous inspection, as the role of the co-ordinator has become much more clearly defined. The monitoring of lessons has helped teaching to become more consistent. The monitoring of planning has contributed to the better match of work to ability. The development of assessment enables the teachers to track how the different ability levels are progressing across the two classes in a year group. It has not yet precisely fitted the work to the highest ability children. Teachers are aware of this. They know they have bright pupils who want to know more about proteins, and are likely to ask awkward questions like "what happens if a human becomes waterlogged?" The level of work for the more able pupils is under constant review. The co-ordinator plans to analyse the assessment answers to identify areas of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. She is upgrading the science resources in the light of the greater challenge to be offered.

ART AND DESIGN

106. It was not possible to make judgements about the overall standard of pupils' work or the quality of teaching and learning because no art lessons were observed during the inspection and very little completed work had been retained.
107. At the beginning of the term, pupils in Year 1 had undertaken a short block of work on self-portraits. The work in their folders indicates that they have experimented with different grades of pencil and tried oil pastels and water colours. They have used these to draw and

paint themselves, using each for a different effect, for example using a soft pencil to depict eye-brows. The pupils have used a computer graphics program to draw themselves and compared the results. The clay work on the same theme shows good attention to detail, careful observation of different textures and experimentation with a range of techniques, for example to represent hair. Overall, the standard of this work is in line with what is expected of pupils of this age.

108. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The subject leader has ensured that planning has improved since the last inspection. Teachers' plans show that the full range of work is taught over two years but the organisation of these plans causes problems, which affect pupils' progress. There are long gaps between the blocks or units of work. This makes it difficult to keep up the development of art and design skills, for example mixing paints and exploring the possibilities of a variety of materials, and provide continuous opportunities for pupils to be creative. It also inhibits potentially fruitful links between art and other subjects. There is an over-reliance on felt tip pens to illustrate work in geography, for example. There are few opportunities for enrichment through visits or visiting artists. Examples of work by famous artists are confined to European culture and not much in evidence. Opportunities are missed, for example, to display a range of portraits by famous artists and from different cultures and times, alongside pupils' work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

109. At this time of the year there is very little evidence relating to pupils' work in design and technology. No lessons were observed. The teachers' planning indicates that the work meets the National Curriculum requirements and is planned appropriately over the year. The curriculum has a suitable balance given to designing and making, in the four main areas of technology. The standard of work on display in Year 2 is in line with expectations for pupils of this age.
110. The Year 2 teachers have taken care to display the pupils' puppet project in an attractive way. This care represents the way they value the pupils' efforts, which is an important step in developing their own pride in their work and self-esteem. This is particularly valuable for pupils who have special educational needs. They get a lot out of these practical activities where they can achieve the success that eludes them in some other subjects. Their displayed work is of as good a quality as that of their classmates. The displays also include examples of well-known glove puppets. This indicates that the teachers have given thought to the culture that lies behind puppet making. The standard of the work and the approach taken suggest that teaching is at least satisfactory and that the pupils are likely to achieve the standards expected for their age by the end of the year.
111. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The staff have worked hard to effect a number of improvements since the previous inspection. The subject now has an action plan through which the lead teacher can ensure that resources are kept up to date. The simple records in use in 2000 have developed into a more careful record of the pupils' attainment, showing the levels they achieve. A whole-school curriculum plan has been constructed. This eradicates repetition in any of the years. It also suggests where mathematics and English aspects fit into technology. As a result a greater focus is given to teaching pupils how to evaluate their finished work and also as it progresses, a weakness identified in the previous report. The computer is used more to help pupils to draw up their designs, or to decorate their work. The teachers still use the term topic to describe the projects undertaken, but now the subject rigour has a greater emphasis, and pupils learn real skills. The lesson organisation using a 'carousel' changeover of groups doing different activities has been altered to a stronger whole-class approach.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

112. Because of the school's timetabling arrangements, no history or geography lessons could be observed. There was a very limited amount of work to be seen because the inspection took place at the beginning of the school year and the school had retained very little past work. As a result, only limited judgements can be made. These are based on discussions with pupils and teachers, a review of teachers' planning and analysis of a small sample of pupils' work. These suggest that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, follow a suitably wide curriculum in both subjects and that standards are satisfactory and pupils' achievement is sound. This is in keeping with the findings of the previous report.
113. Pupils recall and can identify the countries of Great Britain on a map. They show some knowledge of their own locality, draw simple maps showing its key features and express views about it, commenting, for example, on the amount of traffic and whether it is a good place to live. Pupils learn about localities different from their own, including Tocuaro and the island of Struay. They compare the features of these real and imaginary places, identifying, for example, differences in climate, landscape, types of transport and food eaten. Studies of the features of a seaside locality are constructively linked with pupils' work in history. Here, pupils learn about seaside holidays in the past. They draw on the first-hand accounts of older family members to gain factual knowledge of seaside holidays in the recent past and some understanding of people's experience of them. By this means pupils begin to develop an understanding of the passage of time and the changes it brings. In their work on the Great Fire of London, pupils begin to investigate cause and effect and to understand some of the types of evidence on which historical knowledge rests. They learn about some key historical figures, such as Florence Nightingale, and important events such as the Great War and begin to understand why it is important to remember them.
114. In conversation, pupils showed good attitudes to learning and were eager to explain their work. They showed some experience of answering geographical and historical questions and were enthused by the work they had done. They listened with respect to each other's contributions and took turns. They were polite and sensible and behaved very well.
115. Teachers have decided to teach geography and history in study units with gaps of many weeks separating each unit. Teachers assess each pupil's learning at the end of each unit. These arrangements are carefully planned and carried out. However, they result in some insecurity in pupils' learning and in planning for future progress. Learning is interrupted by the gaps between units. As a result, teachers cannot build smooth progress because pupils have time to forget previous learning. The value of the assessments following each unit is also reduced because they cannot be used effectively to plan future lessons in response to pupils' achievements. This results in some lack of depth in pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils' knowledge of the local environment was poor.
116. Subject leadership is satisfactory. The subject manager is enthusiastic and well informed. She systematically samples pupils' work following each study unit. This provides some useful information about the work pupils have covered, the standards attained and the overall strengths and weaknesses in planning and pupils' learning. However, teachers do not take account of National Curriculum levels and pupils' progress in relation to them so that they do not always move pupils on to the next steps quickly enough. At present, very few visits are arranged for pupils to places of geographical and historical interest. ICT is not yet used effectively in either subject. These shortcomings limit pupils' experience, their opportunities for investigation and the quality of their learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

117. There is only limited evidence to indicate where standards are likely to be by the end of Year 2. Wall displays, and the work in the pupils' folders indicate that word processing is the more secure component in ICT. The pupils are likely to achieve the standard expected for

their age in this strand by the end of Year 2. This is similar to the standard seen at the time of the last inspection.

118. The staff have made improvements since the previous inspection. Through a programme of in-service training, the teachers' skills have widened and there is greater confidence and expertise behind the teaching. The number of computers has been increased to provide a satisfactory ratio. Extra equipment, such as scanners, digital cameras and projectors, has been purchased. Parents' groups have provided interactive whiteboards for the school. Not all this hardware is directly useful, as teachers need training to use it. Some of it does not fit into the school's software systems. The simple 'tick lists' that were used to track when the pupils went to the computer have developed into a more robust assessment system. Teachers are beginning to record what pupils understand and what level they reach.
119. The school's planning system has developed into a stronger model. The ICT planning is linked to the other subjects of the curriculum, so that skills are taught which would be useful in those subjects. The whole-school curriculum plan tracks the overall coverage, so that National Curriculum programmes of study can be met. The teaching strategy was seen working in a Year 2 science lesson. A group of four pupils received good instruction from the teaching assistant in a new skill. The pupils learned how to fill with colour the diagrams of fruit and vegetables they had drawn on screen. Learning conditions were good, since the pupils had one computer each. They were able to concentrate and practise until they were confident with the skill. As a result they could record the science chart of healthy foods effectively. The activity was particularly valuable because the group consisted of lower attaining pupils. They were pleased with their results, because their drawings were recognisable.
120. During the inspection, however, computers were rarely used in lessons to support the work in different subjects. The school does not have the software available to support some subjects, like science and mathematics. The monitoring of teaching has been quite strong, and effective in directing and improving teachers' own skills. It has not, however, focused sufficiently on pupils' completed work. The co-ordinator is aware of this, and the action plan for ICT includes looking again at strategies to speed up the pace of progress, for instance the use of whole-class teaching. There is a strong determination amongst the staff to solve these issues. Recent improvements in the planning of the curriculum and teachers' knowledge have not yet had a significant impact on standards and progress.

MUSIC

121. Music is taught on a weekly basis so that the pupils have regular opportunities to sing and play simple percussion instruments. As a result, pupils have a good recall of the previous lesson and teachers are able to build on this systematically. Standards in Year 2 are broadly in line with expectations for pupils of this age. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
122. During the week of the inspection, teaching and learning was satisfactory. Teachers encourage pupils to control their voices when they sing so that the tone is sweet. From the beginning of Year 1, pupils learn to listen carefully to the sounds they make and to distinguish between loud and soft singing, short and extended notes. Pupils are taught the names of the instruments and how to handle them properly, in order to get the best sounds. Listening skills are also developed well. Pupils think about which instruments are suitable for accompanying their songs and choose accordingly. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils chose castanets to represent the sound of ticking when they sang *My grandfather's clock*. The teachers use a range of singing games to ensure that each pupil has a turn and that groups of pupils can play at the same time. Although the pupils sing well, there were times when teachers missed opportunities to improve pitch, to emphasise the louder and quieter passages of the music and to introduce changes of tempo. Frequent use of an imaginative

range of body percussion, including clapping, finger clicking and knee slapping, has developed a strong sense of rhythm amongst the pupils and lively participation and enjoyment. Lessons proceed at brisk pace with high levels of concentration, co-operation and effort.

123. Teachers' planning shows that the full range of the music curriculum is covered adequately and systematically, building on what the pupils have learnt already. This is an improvement since the last inspection and inequalities in provision have been resolved. This was evident when a supply teacher took over a Year 1 class at short notice and was able to use the class teacher's existing plans and advice to good effect. There are a few opportunities for pupils to broaden their musical experiences further, for example through their whole-school performance at festivals and when the local education authority music teachers' group provides a short concert. This is an area for further development.
124. The subject co-ordinator has concentrated on improving planning and ensuring that, although there is no one in school with expertise in music, teachers have the knowledge and skills necessary to teach the subject effectively. This has been successful.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

125. The teaching programme for this term concentrated on games skills. A good deal of time is given to physical education. Pupils have three lessons each week. The teaching observed in both year groups was good and pupils in Year 2 achieve standards that are high for their age. They throw and catch well, aim with reasonable accuracy and control their movements. They co-operate effectively in pairs and groups and help each other to improve.
126. Each lesson is carefully structured so that pupils warm up thoroughly, are taught specific skills, have time to practise those skills, use the skills in a small-sided game and finally cool down. This generally works very well, but not all lessons are long enough to give each part, especially the skills development, sufficient time.
127. Pupils know the importance of warm-up routines and what happens to the body during exercise. Teachers give good attention to both muscle stretching and aerobic activity. Games skills are taught well. Teachers show pupils how to improve their stance, arm-swing and hand to eye co-ordination when throwing a ball. When pupils practise new and existing skills, they try hard and use the teachers' guidance well to improve. The teacher provides further help for individuals, including those with poor co-ordination, and as a result, pupils of different abilities make good progress in lessons. Teachers make use of pupils to demonstrate good work but this is not as helpful as it might be because they do not point out the good points clearly enough.
128. Teachers manage classes well so that pupils concentrate and work hard. There is good attention to safety and pupils wear appropriate clothing. Pupils in Year 2 have good opportunities to make up their own small-sided games to incorporate new skills. They think carefully about how they can improve them but teachers and pupils, in the lesson observed, paid more attention to rules than to tactics. This hampered the way pupils used the space.
129. A few indoor lessons are cut short when the hall has to be prepared for dinner. This is a timetabling problem requiring attention. Pupils are taught dance skills and gymnastics at other times of the year. It was not possible to observe these or to make judgements about standards.
130. The subject is led well. There is currently a focus on improving teachers' expertise in teaching dance so that pupils can make the good progress that they already achieve in games.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

131. Pupils' attainment in religious education is in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus as it was at the time of the last inspection. This is confirmed by discussions with pupils, work seen in lessons and the analysis of the small amount of recent work available. Too few lessons were seen for an overall judgement on the quality of teaching to be made.
132. Teachers' planning reflects a suitably wide curriculum. This covers, for example, Christian beliefs, practices and festivals and those of some other faiths, including Islam and Judaism. It includes opportunities for pupils to think about the different ways in which people live, and the special importance of people who are close to them and of the family. In a lesson in Year 2, pupils studied the meaning and value of rules. They recalled the story of the Ten Commandments, discussed why we need rules in school and the wider world and, drawing on these activities, developed some rules of their own. Pupils showed a good understanding of the nature of rules and were imaginative in devising rules that highlighted personal safety and consideration for others. Pupils of all abilities and those with special educational needs were fully included in the activities because the teacher modified work to match their needs and classroom assistants provided effective support. In this lesson, the teacher questioned pupils skilfully to improve their understanding of why rules are needed and planned opportunities for them to discuss their ideas in pairs and within the class as a whole. Pupils shared and learned from each other's contributions and this enhanced the effectiveness of learning. Pupils' attitudes to learning were good. They discussed their work sensibly, taking turns and listening carefully to one another. They settled quickly and concentrated well. Excellent relationships and a lively interchange of ideas made learning enjoyable, motivated pupils and gave them the confidence to contribute.
133. In conversation, average and more able pupils in Year 2 recalled their recent work well. They told the story of Moses accurately and in satisfactory detail and understood that the Ten Commandments were intended to guide his people in their lives and daily conduct. Pupils remembered some details of the Old Testament creation story and of current Christian festivals. They explained that Jesus taught us, above all, to treat one another with kindness and consideration. Pupils knew that there were different faiths, and that these were especially important to their followers and should be treated with respect. However, they recalled very little detail of the other faiths they had studied.
134. Planning has improved since the last inspection and satisfactory emphasis is now given to the subject. However, the co-ordination of the subject is being undertaken on a temporary basis and has not received the emphasis it should. There are no arrangements for monitoring teaching or assessing pupils' learning. As a result, some weaknesses remain. In particular, although planning is in place, not enough has been done to ensure that pupils' learning is effective. There are not enough artefacts characteristic of different faiths for pupils to study and there are too few visits, for example to places of worship within the local community and by representatives of different faiths to the school. This limits the effectiveness of pupils' learning.