

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **POTTON LOWER SCHOOL**

Potton, Sandy

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109475

Headteacher: Mrs Lynne Taylor

Reporting inspector: Mike Carter  
20714

Dates of inspection: 13 – 16 January 2003

Inspection number: 246912

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 9

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Potton Lower School  
Everton Road  
Potton  
Sandy  
Bedfordshire

Postcode: SG19 2PB

Telephone number: 01767 260239

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs P Dowsett

Date of previous inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> February 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20714	Mike Carter	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music Religious education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11437	Tony Anderson	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
1193	Gillian Wiles	Team inspector	Foundation stage English Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs English as an additional language Educational inclusion	
30717	Gordon Tompsett	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated near one edge of the town of Potton next to the middle school to which the pupils progress at the end of Year 4. It accepts children at the beginning of the year in which they will be five years old. However, the youngest pupils start on a part-time basis. Nearly all the children attend one or other of the local pre-school settings prior to starting school. Their attainment on entry is a little below average and there are few pupils with high attainment. However, socio-economic indicators for the area are above average and there is a growing proportion of children from professional backgrounds. A very few of the pupils come from Caribbean or Bangladeshi backgrounds and there are four from traveller backgrounds. However, none speaks English as an additional language. There are currently 241 pupils, but ten of these attend the reception class on a part-time basis. Eleven receive free school meals, a below average number. There are 35 pupils identified as having special educational needs, which is fewer than the national average. Four of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs. These pupils' difficulties range from autism to learning and behavioural problems.

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

The school is now well placed to make improvements. Its present performance is satisfactory overall and most pupils achieve expected standards. The leadership and management of the new headteacher are effectively enabling improvements but the more able pupils do not yet achieve highly enough. The quality of teaching is good overall and similar to the national picture. Together with the pupils' good attitudes, this good teaching helps them to make good progress in lessons, particularly in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. The governors have helped the school to plan for and overcome several staffing changes and difficulties. They are keen to provide funding that supports improvements. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- The pupils' personal development and the quality of relationships are very good.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The range of extra-curricular activities is excellent.
- The headteacher is effective through reflective and sensitive leadership.
- The partnership with parents is very good and has improved well.
- Provision for the pupils' moral development is very good.

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

- There are too few pupils achieving high standards in writing and science.
- The management of classes and the use of assessments are not consistent enough.
- Subject co-ordinators are not effective enough in promoting high standards.
- The provision made for the pupils' cultural development is limited.

*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 February 1998 and has improved satisfactorily since then. The inspection identified two main issues. One was to raise attainment in mathematics particularly for the more able pupils. This has been achieved well and strategies now include teaching groups in Years 3 and 4 according to their ability. The other issue was to develop the role of subject co-ordinators. They are now much more active in checking planning and assessments and supporting teaching. However, they still have too few ways of gaining a full over-view of standards of attainment and teaching in their subject throughout the school. A number of changes have been made to effect improvements, such as single-age classes, more staff development, more communication with parents and more involvement in decision making, for example through the new school council.

Since the last inspection, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards has risen but in English and science there are currently less achieving above average standards in Years 2 and 4. By the

end of Year 4, the standards in most subjects have been maintained overall and in mathematics alone, the proportion of high attainment has risen. However, standards are lower in science and in art and design; subjects which were both judged to have above average standards in the last inspection. They are still above average in geography, history and physical education. The progress pupils make from their attainment on entry to their results at Year 2, is good and the school won an achievement award for this in 2002.

## 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	A	D	E	well above average    A above average        B average                    C below average          D well below average     E
writing	C	A	C	E	
mathematics	B	C	C	D	

Pupils make good progress to Year 2, and most reach the nationally expected levels. The progress of a small number of more able pupils is slower and they do not achieve the higher standards of which they are capable. However, 2001 was a good year. Standards in writing were not as good in 2002 but the test results were still similar to the national average overall. Reading standards were below average partly because over a quarter of the pupils had learning difficulties. Standards have improved this year. Results in the 2002 tests were much lower than those of similar schools because too few pupils reached the higher levels in reading, writing and science. This continues to be the case in writing and science. In the inspection, the standards observed of pupils in Year 2, were average overall in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

Inspection evidence showed that standards at the end of Year 4 are also currently average in English, mathematics and science. Although a typical proportion of pupils achieves above the expected standards in mathematics, fewer do so in writing and science. Teaching for these pupils is not challenging enough. Over the last three years, standards have fluctuated but have risen largely in line with the national trend. Overall, the pupils start the school with attainment that is slightly below average, and achieve well, attaining average standards by the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 4 they also have average attainment for their age. Achievement is satisfactory. The school's uses individual targets to help pupils know how to improve, but several of the overall targets set for year groups of pupils were not met in 2002. Those for 2003 are more challenging.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The pupils like school, enjoy their learning and are keen to succeed. They are generally motivated well by the interesting lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. The school is calm and purposeful and behaviour is orderly and polite. Working noise in a few lessons is sometimes high. A very few pupils can be disruptive but this behaviour is usually managed well by staff.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The pupils take initiatives well and are responsible in carrying out the many school tasks they are offered. They build trusting relationships with peers and adults and gain confidence well.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Statistics for the last year are very similar to the national

	average and there is little lateness.
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## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	good	good	satisfactory

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

Teaching is good overall and similar to the national picture, although in writing and science more challenge is needed for the higher attainers. Teaching is slightly better than at the time of the last inspection. There has been a high turnover of teachers, many of whom are relatively inexperienced. However, in many lessons the majority of pupils learn well because of clear planning and good explanations. The systems introduced by the new headteacher are helping to overcome any lack of teaching experience. English and science are taught satisfactorily overall and mathematics is taught well. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well and the pupils learn them progressively. The expectations that teachers have of the pupils' work, understanding and speed of completion are sometimes too low, especially for the higher attainers in Years 3 and 4. This is not so in mathematics. In Year 4, the management of pupils is sometimes less secure though still satisfactory. Most lessons use good methods to interest the pupils and often link learning in one subject to another. Teachers use good methods to check and record what the pupils have learnt but sometimes fail to use this information sufficiently well to plan challenging work for the higher attainers. Teaching in information and communication technology is good throughout and supported well by the co-ordinator. The targets set for individual pupils are helpful but not used enough in some cases. The learning of those pupils with special educational needs is generally good because of the support they are given by teachers and assistants.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. All subjects meet requirements and most are enriched well by extra activities such as outings or visitors. Good connections are made between subjects. The overall time available is below average for Years 3 and 4 but the provision of extra-curricular activities is excellent and they are well-supported and valued by the pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good throughout the school. Pupils are well supported in lessons and their progress is regularly checked through their individual education plans.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for moral education is very good. The school council makes a significant contribution to the pupils' community awareness and is treated seriously by pupils and adults. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory but lacks breadth and range.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. There are good procedures for all aspects of the school's responsibility to care for the pupils and their development, both personally and academically. The pupils are happy and feel valued. However, what is learned from the teachers' check-ups is sometimes not used enough to plan challenging work for the higher-attainers.

The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is very good and has improved since the last inspection. Parents have strongly positive views about the school and feel it is open to their views and comments. The school provides good information, and the partnership with parents is very helpful in supporting the children in their learning. Parents make a significant contribution to the school and its work.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher's sensitive leadership and strong desire for improvement are helping the school to move forward well. Subject co-ordinators have a growing role and are more effective than at the time of the last inspection.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are supportive of the school and its development and each have areas of responsibility. They have a clear view of the school's main strengths and weaknesses. Challenge and evaluation of decisions are satisfactory.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. A good number of systems are in place and are beginning to be used more fully. Performance management and induction for new staff are good but lesson observation is not yet fully used as a way to guide improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school seeks the best value for money in its major spending, but past decisions have yet to be evaluated for their effectiveness in raising standards. There is enough staff for the number of pupils and the accommodation is good. Learning resources are satisfactory overall and the computer suite is a good new provision.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The children like the school.</li> <li>• Staff are easy to talk with.</li> <li>• The headteacher leads well and the school is well managed.</li> <li>• The school helps the children to grow up well.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents feel the amount of homework is not right.</li> <li>• A few feel there are inconsistencies about discipline between classes.</li> </ul>

The parents' views are very positive, and the inspection team agrees with most of the positive points they make. Although a very few parents wanted to see more extra-curricular activities, the team found that the present range of activities is excellent. The amount of homework is typical and supports the pupils' learning soundly. However, there is a little inconsistency in how much is given. There is also a little inconsistency in how well the pupils are managed by teachers.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The standards reached by pupils presently in Years 2 and 4 are broadly average and the work seen was typical for their age. Overall, pupils enter the school with attainment that is slightly below average. By the end of Year 2, they have made good progress and have average standards. In the reception year and through Years 1 and 2 they achieve well and attainment in national tests is largely average. By the end of Year 4, achievement has been satisfactory and attainment is average in English, mathematics and science. Overall, the achievement through the school is satisfactory although significantly better in the reception, Year 1 and 2 classes, where it is above average and resulted in a national achievement award in 2002. This is because the quality of teaching is better in these years. While the National Curriculum gains made in the lower part of the school are better than the local education authority average, they are slightly worse than the equivalent average in the upper part of the school.
2. Results of the Year 2 national tests in 2002 showed that the number of pupils reaching the expected level in reading and writing was average and in mathematics it was above average. There are no national tests in science, but teachers judged the pupils' attainment to be typical for their age. However, in comparison to similar schools the overall results, which take into account the proportions of low, average and high attainment were well below average. The proportion of pupils with high attainment fell in 2002 in reading and was low in science. In writing and in mathematics there was a typical number of pupils with high attainment. Although lower in English in 2002, these results are reasonable taking into account the pupils' attainment on entry.
3. The tests carried out at the end of Year 4 in 2002 showed that standards were close to average in reading, spelling and mathematics, but below in writing. No tests were carried out in science. The most common reason for these results was that few pupils achieved a high level. A satisfactory number of pupils achieve the higher level in mathematics but the low number who do so in English and science is a weakness. Higher attaining pupils' rate of progress in writing and science is too slow and by the end of Year 4 they do not reach the standards of which they are capable. This is largely because not enough challenging work is provided.
4. Over several years, the Year 2 results have been slightly above average in reading, writing and mathematics and only fell slightly in reading in 2002. The school has kept up with the national trend but overall the current Year 2 standards show that there is less high attainment in English and science than there was at the time of the last inspection. This is not the case in mathematics where there is more. Improvement has therefore been satisfactory at this age for all except the more able pupils.
5. There are no national comparisons available for standards at the end of Year 4. Inspection evidence indicates that current standards in Year 4 are in line with expectations in English, mathematics and science. However, this means that standards in science are lower than at the last inspection when they were above average. This is because too few pupils achieve high standards. The school has made a detailed analysis of the difference in achievement between girls and boys, finding that the girls' performance is consistently better. This is similar to the national trend although there are no obvious reasons. There are strategies in place to overcome this, for example, through the purchase of appropriate books that appeal more to boys' interests.
6. There are some good and detailed tracking systems to chart the progress of each pupil, but the school has not yet identified the relative progress of groups of pupils of high attainment, those with learning difficulties or other groups such as traveller

children. Nevertheless, pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because their particular needs are identified well and progress on their specific targets is checked regularly. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Individual education plans contain targets and satisfactory activities are provided to enable these pupils to learn. Occasionally, the identified targets are not specific enough to enable a good match to be made between the target and activity.

7. Targets are used extensively but are not yet effective enough in raising the attainment of the more able pupils. There are targets for the overall performance of year groups as well as individual targets, both personal and related to the key learning objectives of the National Curriculum programmes of study. The overall targets set are very challenging and few were met last year. The targets set for 2003 are additionally challenging and some are unlikely to be met. Personal targets are shared with pupils and parents and help to point out the improvements needed, although they are not used consistently by teachers and pupils.
8. By the end of the reception year, the large majority of pupils are likely to achieve the nationally agreed early learning goals in all the areas of learning. Attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world and in personal and social development is good. By the end of Year 2 attainment is satisfactory in English, mathematics, science, art and design, geography, history and religious education. In design and technology and physical education it is good. By the end of Year 4, standards are satisfactory in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, music and religious education. In geography, history and physical education standards are good. In information and communication technology standards are satisfactory throughout but there are some good examples of confident and quick learning. While there are several examples of the basic skills being used in other subjects, not enough writing and information and communication technology is used to promote these skills and to enhance learning throughout the subjects.

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

9. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and their personal development is very good. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory. The overall attitudes of pupils observed during the inspection were good. There were several examples observed in the classroom and around the school where the pupils displayed very good attitudes to their work, to fellow pupils and to teachers. There is a small amount of evidence representing a tiny minority of pupils who show occasional challenging attitudes and behaviour in the classroom and in the playground. However, there have been no recent exclusions from the school. The school was observed to be exceptionally active in employing a range of strategies to manage such incidents. Where the teaching element of a lesson was good or very good, the pupils were usually quick to respond to the challenges set. In the vast majority of lessons, they demonstrated a positive attitude to their work in the classroom.
10. During the inspection there were many examples of pupils behaving in a positive manner. For example, in one personal, social and health education lesson linked to a religious education topic, the very good teaching was matched by very good attitudes and behaviour. Every pupil in the class helped to create an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity by sitting in silent contemplation for several minutes. Good behaviour was particularly evident in assemblies, and during one whole school assembly the pupils responded with significant enthusiasm to a Zulu marching song.
11. The day-to-day relationships between pupils and teachers and pupils and pupils are very good. There are many examples of children taking various responsibilities around the school such as setting out forms for assembly, helping to tidy up classrooms, and taking attendance registers to the office. Pupils are also able to work in collaboration. For example, they were invited during a personal, social and health education lesson to take part in role play designed to make them think about the choices they might make

when placed in a moral dilemma. The school also provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills through speaking and listening. For example, two pupils from each class take part in the regular school council meetings. Pupils who are not members of the school council do not miss out on this opportunity because council business is included on the agenda of regular personal, social and health education lesson so that all pupils can all contribute. This very effective provision has a significant impact on the pupils' personal development. The pupils' attitudes, behaviour, personal development and relationships are strengths of the school.

12. The overall attendance at the school is satisfactory and is currently slightly above the national average. The incidence of unauthorised absence is a little high and is above the national average. Although there is some evidence of pupil lateness, the majority of pupils come to school and lessons on time. School registers are correctly marked at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions.
13. Pupils with special educational needs form very good relationships with their peers and with teachers. The majority are interested and involved in activities, listen carefully, and respond to teachers and support staff positively. Pupils with severe difficulties respond well to a secure and stable teaching environment.

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

14. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and similar to the national picture. Of the 56 lessons observed, one eighth was very good, nearly half were good, and three eighths were satisfactory. Teaching was unsatisfactory in only one lesson seen. This was unusual and because of weak class management. Teaching is best in the Foundation Stage and for Years 1 and 2. It is satisfactory for Years 3 and 4. The large majority of parents agree that teaching is good. The profile of lesson quality has improved slightly since the last inspection despite considerable changes in the teaching staff and the current number of relatively inexperienced teachers. The work of the new headteacher is having a positive influence on the quality of teaching and the induction of new staff.
15. The pupils are usually well managed and only in the top part of the school is discipline less secure. The few pupils with behavioural difficulties are usually sensitively dealt with by teachers and support staff. An approach of non-confrontation is helping to establish trusting relationships. While some lessons are noisy, this is usually because pupils are talking about their work. Such discussion helps the pupils to collaborate and does not usually interfere with thinking. Most lessons are planned to include a range of well-organised activities that help the pupils to maintain concentration and learning. Resources are often provided that further help the pupils to maintain their interest. Most lessons have adequate pace and support staff have a reasonable degree of direction that aids their work.
16. Teachers' expectations of what the pupils can learn are generally satisfactory but too often there is insufficient challenge provided for the higher attainers. Teachers plan more tasks for these pupils in many lessons, but such tasks often do little more than widen the range of examples rather than challenging them to learn at a higher level. The expectations of the speed of the work are often not shared with the pupils and consequently the amount of work completed is frequently too little.
17. While most subjects have systems to record the pupils' achievements, the teachers' use of ways to check up on their learning is inconsistent and infrequently leads to well-matched learning for each of the ability groups in the next lesson. The use of sets for literacy and numeracy lessons, in which groups of pupils of similar attainment are taught together in Years 3 and 4, helps to provide more closely matched learning. However, even in these groups, the ability range is enough to require different work for the most able. While planning is generally good and very good in the Foundation Stage, more could be done to provide learning from higher levels of the National Curriculum for

the most able. Subject co-ordinators do not do enough to encourage teaching and the planning of tasks at higher levels when they check teachers' planning.

18. The teaching of pupils with learning difficulties is good. The success in teaching lies in the way new work is introduced, and concepts are discussed and reinforced through practice. Their individual plans give clear guidance to the teaching assistants who work with them. As a result, the assistants support their learning very well both in the class or in group sessions. Teachers ensure that they take part in whole class discussions by asking questions that are well targeted to their level of development. Grouping by attainment in literacy and numeracy in Years 3 and 4 works well with these pupils. Teachers and support staff manage all children well and pupils with special educational needs work effectively within a safe and structured environment.
19. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 in reading, mathematics, information and communication technology, design and technology and physical education. Teaching in Years 3 and 4 is good in mathematics, information and communication technology, geography and physical education. Teaching is satisfactory in all other subjects. The teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is good although there are missed opportunities to use these skills in other subjects.

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

20. The overall quality and range of learning opportunities are good. This is because of the planning and thought that has gone into how and when the content of the subjects will be taught. Closer links between subjects increasingly help to direct the pupils' learning. Subject planning has been carefully interwoven with opportunities to enhance the pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development in many subjects. The impact of this planning can be seen in the good behaviour and attitudes of the pupils. Although the curriculum is taught in full, the amount of teaching time over the school week for Years 3 and 4 is below average.
21. The curriculum covers a wide range of learning and is made of interest to the pupils. The whole curriculum is satisfactory, and enhanced well by the excellent provision of extra-curricular activities. It is also enriched by a number of activities such as "theme days", visitors and trips. All subjects meet statutory requirements. The national strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy are having a positive effect on the teaching and learning throughout the school.
22. Yearly and termly plans are made for all subjects and give a clear indication of what is to be taught. The skills taught in literacy and numeracy are sometimes used effectively in other areas of the curriculum such as geography, history, design and technology and science, but more could be done to provide opportunities for extended writing and the use of information and communication technology in other subjects.
23. Provision for personal, social, and health education is very good. Teachers emphasise the importance of this provision. It is taught through specific lessons and across the wider curriculum. For example, issues about friendship were discussed in a good lesson for Year 4 pupils. In groups, the pupils collaborated to form opinions about trusting relationships with friends. The school council also provides many opportunities for pupils' views to be heard and for them to develop a sense of being valued and taking responsibility. The school has a satisfactorily planned programme for drug awareness. Currently, a governors' decision places the teaching of sex education within the science curriculum.
24. There is a very wide range of extra-curricular activities available for pupils. These include many sporting activities as well as sewing, dance, flower craft, chess, computers, guitar, recorder and singing. The activities, which are well supported by both boys and girls, have a positive effect on the pupils' learning. The school has had

recent successes in sporting competitions. Provision has been improved since the last inspection. There are plans for a professional orchestra and an opera company to visit the school in the near future. The annual residential trip for Year 4 pupils to Norfolk has a positive impact socially as well as providing good learning experiences in physical education and information and communication technology. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning and the relationship with partner schools are good, for example, local adults talk about World War II with pupils and religious ministers visit with the pupils visiting local churches. Other visits from members of the local community provide further links, such as those concerned with fire, the police a national society for bird protection and charity fund-raising. There are very good links with the local schools and colleges, for example, with a local group of schools and a nearby university in providing professional development for teachers.

25. Pupils with learning difficulties take full part in all activities. The literacy and numeracy programmes that they follow are well managed so that they make good progress. Learning support assistants give good educational support to make sure that all pupils have access to the full curriculum.
26. The school makes a good commitment to equal access for all pupils to the curriculum and works effectively with other agencies to improve it where necessary. It is alert to the different groups within the school, although not all groups, for example, the more able and traveller pupils, are yet considered fully by charting their progress as groups. Working parties have been formed, for example, to consider why girls perform better than boys and this has resulted in the purchase of a wider range of books to raise boys' interest in reading. Although the progress of all individual pupils is tracked well, that of some groups is not clearly identified.
27. The number of travellers' children has diminished but the very small number currently at the school are integrated well and good relationships have been made with parents, resulting in better attendance by individuals. Where additional support is needed, the help of external agencies is used. For example, a Traveller Pupil Support Worker currently supports one child. The school readily accepts advice and is supportive of its pupils. These pupils enjoy school and have good relationships with their peers and with the staff. Few steps have been taken to promote a positive image of travellers such as the purchase of books and resources that reflect their backgrounds.
28. The few pupils of Asian, black Caribbean or black African descent are integrated well and attain standards that match their abilities. The school believes strongly that all pupils should benefit equally from all that it offers. There is no formal policy to guide this belief in practice, though the school intends to draft one.
29. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is good overall. The spiritual development of pupils is satisfactory. All pupils of statutory school age are invited to attend a daily act of collective worship and this is usually delivered through themed assemblies. One observed assembly taken by a visitor to the school included a story with a moral theme, singing by pupils and a short prayer. Spirituality is also evident through the school's ethos and occasionally by way of the curriculum in subjects such as religious education, art, history and geography. Many of the observed religious education lessons during inspection week were linked to the pupils' personal, social and health education and were planned to show connections between these subjects.
30. Provision for the moral development of pupils is very good. Teachers act as good role models for pupils in the way they present themselves in the classroom and around the school. The caring ethos of the school is used very well to promote pupils' learning of the difference between right and wrong. Children in the Foundation Stage are taught from the outset to take turns and to share toys and games with their fellow pupils. The school's behaviour code is quietly but efficiently promoted, particularly through

personal, social and health education lessons, which are consistently used by the school to underpin and enhance pupils' moral development.

31. Provision for the pupils' social development is good. For example, they are able to practice their social skills in the school dining room and in the playground. There are also many other opportunities presented for social development in the classroom through speaking and listening and also in group working. A good example of this was seen in a music lesson in which small groups of pupils had to work out the notation of a tune by listening carefully to the tape and then collaborating to work out the correct notes. Visits further afield are used effectively to extend pupils' social experience and sense of responsibility.
32. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have many opportunities to study local and national culture through subjects such as English, history, geography and art. A wide range of external visitors is used to support the pupils' cultural development. A recent detailed study of World War 2 is a good example of the study of national culture and pupils also have the opportunity to take part in brief residential visits aimed at enhancing their experience and knowledge of both local and national cultural traditions. The wider study of the richness of other cultures, both in our own country and across the world, is partly addressed by a small range of classroom displays and artefacts. For example, some pupils in the school recently studied an Indian dance and others tasted Asian food but the depth and range of the multi-cultural element of the cultural provision at the school is currently unsatisfactory.

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

33. The procedures for child protection and welfare are good, as are the procedures for the monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development. The educational and personal support and guidance for pupils are good and so are the systems for assessing the pupils' attainment.
34. Child protection procedures are in place and are effective. The school staff, well supported by a range of external agencies, provides a high degree of welfare support to individual pupils, for example, in the good provision for pupils with learning and other difficulties. This high quality input includes the less able pupils whose needs are identified by checks on their individual learning, particularly in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. These systems have recently been implemented across the whole school and are beginning to provide additional information for teachers to use in planning and the school to use in reviewing its performance. Although higher attaining pupils are also identified by the assessment systems, the current provision for addressing their needs in terms of higher expectations and extension work in the classroom is a weakness. The record-keeping aspect of the new colour-coded assessment system is maintained to a good standard. However, these records are not used consistently to plan work at higher levels for more able pupils. The school uses a range of tests such as check-ups on the attainment of the children in the Foundation Stage and those done at the end of a unit of learning. These help to set targets for individual pupils, although they seldom affect planning. The school seeks to promote the needs of any gifted and talented pupils and currently has a draft policy about provision for these pupils. The headteacher is also active in checking up on the pupils' attainment in writing across the school. Good use is made of mark books and 'once-a-month' books to assist in developing a consistent approach to assessment throughout the school.
35. In the classroom, teachers are quick to observe any personal difficulties exhibited by the pupils and to take supportive action to overcome them. The school operates a good first-aid system for minor accidents and good records are maintained. The school carries out occasional health and safety audits of the site and sound records are kept.

36. The school, together with the occasional assistance of external agencies, regularly checks the attendance of pupils. Although unauthorised absence is a little above the national average, the school promotes good attendance and parents are regularly reminded to act responsibly when considering taking their children on holiday during term time. There is a range of effective strategies for checking and controlling the pupils' behaviour and these are promoted well in lessons, especially in personal, social and health education. The school is also very open in its attitude to admitting pupils who may have experienced difficulty at other schools or who may have an ethnic minority or traveller background.
37. The school provides a good level of educational and personal support to pupils, which is aimed at raising their individual achievement and in increasing their self-esteem. The school sensitively acknowledges pupils' individual achievements through the praise given to them in the classroom and, more formally, in regular sharing and presentation assemblies.
38. The high level of child protection and welfare support to pupils at the school, together with the very good procedures for promoting pupils' personal development, have a positive impact on their learning and they are a significant strength of the school.
39. The care and support received by children with learning difficulties is good. Teachers and support staff know the pupils they work with well. The school's values are carefully reflected in the way that pupils with special educational needs are given the same opportunities to succeed as everyone else. Teachers check up on their personal development very well and are sensitive to raising their levels of self-esteem. Their contributions are valued highly and their achievements are recognised well. Needs are quickly identified when they enter school. When they are faced with particular difficulties, the school takes prompt action in alerting external agencies and in taking supportive action to help that child to settle in until further strategies can be devised. The pupils' progress is effectively tracked in literacy and numeracy and good records are kept as they move on up the school. Good liaison with outside agencies ensures valuable support.

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

40. Parents' views of the school are very good, as are the school's links with parents. The impact of parental involvement with the school is very good.
41. A parents' meeting with the inspectors was moderately well attended and a high percentage returned the parental questionnaire. A significant majority of parents are very supportive of the school and of its aims and objectives. Parents feel that their children like school and that they make good progress. Parents also feel that the teachers are good and that the school is well managed. The school has improved its openness to parents and a partnership to support the pupils' learning is developing well. A reading workshop for parents is planned in the near future and this follows other recent workshops on literacy and numeracy organised by the school. Before-school and after-school clubs have been provided and they add to the growing partnership between home and the school. The information provided by the school through the prospectus, annual reports to parents and through regular newsletters is often good although the end of year reports are inconsistent about how improvements could be made.
42. Some parents are frequent visitors to the school both to provide classroom help and to organise and run extra-curricular activities and other events. All parents have been invited to enter into a home/school agreement, which is designed to promote improved relationships between the school, parents and children. Several parents were interviewed during the inspection and all had positive opinions. The school opens its doors to the parents of new children to the school and good access to the teaching staff and headteacher is a particular feature of the school. There is also a good level of

additional support provided to the parents of pupils with learning difficulties, who are welcome to discuss any issues in confidence with senior members of staff.

43. Many parents play an important part in their children's education by helping them at home, for example, listening to them read or in assisting them with occasional project work, which is related to a particular topic being studied at school. A parents and teachers' association is very supportive of the school and effectively provides a further link between home and the school. Parental attendance at school concerts, celebrations and sports days is very good. A new homework policy has recently been produced, which takes significant account of parental views. The school's links with parents provides a very strong contribution to pupils' learning and personal development and it is a significant strength of the school.
44. Parents of pupils with learning difficulties are involved well in supporting their children's learning. They are informed as soon as the school has concerns and they are consulted in all procedures. They are kept aware of the school's targets for their child and meet staff regularly to discuss how much progress has been made. Parents feel their children are well supported at school.

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

45. The leadership and management of the new headteacher and senior staff are good overall. The headteacher provides particularly strong, yet sensitive, leadership in promoting a good level of educational discussion amongst the teachers. This helps in providing a clear educational direction, the application of strong principles and aims and has firmly established a strong shared commitment to improvement, raising standards and promoting the pupils' personal development. The quality of leadership and management have been at least maintained since the last inspection. There have been improvements in the school's acceptance of parental views and decisions are made taking the staff's views into account more fully. There is greater delegation of responsibilities. A key issue from the last report concerned the role of the subject co-ordinators and this has been improved to include the checking of planning, pupils' work and assessments. However, there are still limitations in the ability that co-ordinators have to evaluate provision in their subject, for example, in checking the quality of teaching. The new headteacher has carried out a number of lesson observations and there are effective feedback and evaluation systems. Co-ordinators of all subjects are given some time to carry out their role.
46. In the last two years there has been a high turnover of teachers and over half are new to the school. Several are newly qualified or relatively inexperienced. In response, the headteacher has implemented very good procedures for the induction of new teachers and the systems for newly qualified teachers are also very effective. The school has implemented the governors' policy for performance management effectively and is well on course to gain the status of an Investor in People. Since the headteacher's appointment, there have been a number of staffing difficulties, which the headteacher and governors have overcome with sound pastoral care for staff and sensitive consideration of individuals' professional and pastoral needs. There is a strong commitment to professional development and staff frequently attend training courses relevant to their own and the school's needs. Further training is also carried out at the school and this is particularly effective for information and communication technology. Support staff too have opportunities for developing their effectiveness and some have advanced expertise.
47. The management of the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and similar to what it was in the last inspection and the school fully meets the requirements of the new code of practice. Responsibilities are carried out effectively by the co-ordinator who liaises closely with the governor responsible. The majority of teaching assistants have undergone or are undergoing training but this has not yet extended to them all. As a result when a child with particular difficulties is disruptive,

strategies for dealing with such situations are limited. Although teachers and support staff are skilful in managing children with specific difficulties, they have not all had training for dealing with more severe difficulties. However, advice from specialists is sought and gained when needed.

48. An action plan following the last inspection report is of poor quality, although the key issues raised have largely been improved. Attainment in mathematics has improved for the more able pupils. The roles of subject co-ordinators are now defined well and generally effective, although their ability to check the quality of teaching is still limited. The school's development plan is a comprehensive document and helps to provide detailed direction to improvements. The work carried out is regularly reviewed and reported to governors who also play a good part in checking the impact of actions carried out. The plan is carefully designed to take others' views into account and governors are keen to ensure adequate funding for its implementation. However, the criteria listed by which its impact can be checked are occasionally too general for clear decisions about impact to be made.
49. The day-to-day management of the school's finances is satisfactory and the finance officer provides regular reports to the headteacher and governing body to assist them in keeping a check on the process and promoting the educational priorities. Specific grants are used effectively for their intended purpose and this has a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. The governors are active in over-seeing the use of finances and each governor has specific aspects of responsibility. Their statutory responsibilities are met and they have a good understanding of the school's main strengths and weaknesses through their part when visiting lessons. A major decision was made to provide classes of one age group only and it is too early to check that this has been of benefit to standards. This is also the case for the decision to teach literacy and numeracy to groups of similar ability in Years 3 and 4. Such strategies are designed to raise standards but have yet to be proved effective.
50. The school's accommodation is good for the effective delivery of the curriculum. Classrooms are in good decorative order and most are reasonable in size although storage space for resources is at a premium in some classrooms. The siting of the main entrance and some of the classrooms adjacent to the main hall causes a little disruption from time to time as staff and visitors walk through the hall during lesson times. The school now has the use of a new and well-designed computer suite and the school library is well appointed with space for quiet reading. The external facilities are good and include an adventure playground and large grass area, which is used well during the summer months for sporting activities and games. The school also has the additional advantage of a heated outdoor swimming pool, which is used extensively during the summer months.
51. The library is well stocked and the new computer suite is a very good resource. Play apparatus in the playground is soon to be provided through the efforts of the school council, and should make for more purposeful play. Resources throughout the school are satisfactory and used well.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Those issues that the school has already identified are marked \*.

52. In order to continue improvements, the governors, headteacher and teachers should:

- (1) increase the proportion of high attainment in writing\* and in science by:
  - providing teaching and tasks at the higher levels of the national curriculum for more able pupils;
  - ensuring lesson plans have sufficiently different challenges;
  - monitoring the progress of the more able pupils;
  - providing test materials in science at the end of Year 4.(Paragraphs: 2,3,4,5,7,16,17,34,62,63,64,67,78,79,80.)
  
- (2) increase consistency in the teachers' use of assessment\* and class management by:
  - improving the guidance offered about day-to-day checks on learning;
  - finding ways to spread the best practice in these aspects;
  - improving the guidance offered about discipline in lessons;
  - carrying out more regular checks on these aspects of teaching.(Paragraphs: 6,7,15,16,17,34,45,70,76,82,83,88,98,117,122.)
  
- (3) give subject co-ordinators more powers in promoting higher standards\* by:
  - the provision of training for, and opportunities to, observe lessons in their subjects;
  - implementing a system for drawing together assessment information in their subject so that they can check provision and standards through the school;
  - promoting a greater emphasis of the expectations made of the more able pupils.(Paragraphs: 83,88,93,98,103,108,111,119,123.)
  
- (4) improve the provision made for the pupils' cultural development by:
  - celebrating the cultural backgrounds of pupils within the school;
  - providing links with adults and schools having predominantly different cultural backgrounds;
  - identifying more clearly the opportunities within the curriculum to provide learning about other cultures and British multi-cultural life.(Paragraphs: 28,32,87,98,110,123.)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	26	22	1	0	0
Percentage	0	12.5	46.5	39	2	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 almost two percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	236
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	34

#### 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	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	25	26	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	21	23
	Girls	25	25	26
	Total	45	46	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (92)	90 (89)	96 (94)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	23	21
	Girls	25	26	26
	Total	45	49	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (89)	96 (89)	92 (89)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

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

### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
238	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
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 – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.1
Average class size	26.2

#### Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	196

FTE means full-time equivalent.

### Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	512,113
Total expenditure	495,525
Expenditure per pupil	2,091
Balance brought forward from previous year	23,044
Balance carried forward to next year	16,588

### Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 39.5%

Number of questionnaires sent out

240

Number of questionnaires returned

95

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	34	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	45	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	52	4	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	49	15	2	2
The teaching is good.	58	37	4	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	52	4	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	27	1	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	41	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	52	40	6	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	63	34	2	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	45	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	57	33	7	1	2

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

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

53. Since the previous inspection, the school has made satisfactory progress in implementing the Foundation Stage curriculum. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good overall with some shortcomings in physical development and in communication, literacy and language. In physical development, the quality and range of equipment to improve pupils' skills of movement in climbing are limited. In writing, there are not enough opportunities for children to practise their skills in a variety of ways. Most children make a confident start and settle very well into the school's routines.
54. Children enter school with slightly below average attainment and make good progress overall, mostly meeting and sometimes exceeding the expected standards by the end of the reception year. Their attainment in the area relating to knowledge and understanding of the world is above average, and it is also above average in personal, social and emotional development. Reading is a strong feature of their attainment in communication, language and literacy. These aspects are improvements since the previous inspection, when they were average.
55. There has been an improvement in the teaching from mostly satisfactory to mostly good with some very good features. The teacher and her assistants form a strong team. A particular strength is the team's carefully planned objectives upon which teaching is sharply focussed. They know well how to attract children's interest through an exciting programme of well resourced and relevant activities, combined with strategies for sustaining and developing their skills. Good use of open-ended questions extends the children's thinking and develops their problem-solving skills. There are well-developed systems for observing what children do and say and using these observations in their teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties are quickly identified and their needs are met effectively. The staff have very good skills in managing children, high expectations for developing independence and they provide a safe and happy environment in which children achieve success. Parents make an important contribution to raising standards of achievement, for example, in reading.

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

56. Children of all groups make very good progress in this area of learning. Their relationships with each other are very good. They take turns, respect each other's contributions and are gentle and kindly with children with learning difficulties. They listen, concentrate and persevere with a mature sense of what is expected of them. They play with purposeful intent and co-operate with each other in pairs and groups with well-focussed activity and high levels of independence. They initiate inventive activities. Staff are sensitive to ways of encouraging all children to do better and to raise their self-esteem and the teaching is very good. Staff are quick to anticipate where children need support and are flexible in adapting to their individual needs.

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

57. Children make good progress in reading and satisfactory progress in speaking, listening and writing. The teaching is good overall. Many read simple books and point out words with a given initial letter. The majority know that print conveys meaning. All handle a book correctly. They learn their letters successfully and undertake simple language and reading games on the computer, some without help. Such features indicate good progress towards the expected standards at the end of the reception year. Children speak clearly and talk about what they are doing confidently. They initiate conversations with others. Several write their names and the higher attaining children

spell words phonetically in their own written sentences. Most others write some letters or make marks, some already forming a sentence of sorts but need practice in developing their skills in a variety of ways.

### **Mathematical development**

58. The children make sound progress overall. The teaching is satisfactory. Several count to 10, some beyond and many can write and order numerals to 5 and beyond. They order numbers to 10 with the help of appropriate resources, showing they have satisfactory standards. Some know when others have less or more small toys than they, but are not yet able to identify the differences. They have not yet acquired skills of adding up or subtracting; an aspect of mathematics planned to be taught later this term. They recognise different patterns from the environment, such as 'the stripes' made by the playground fencing, the repeating patterns observable in a car tyre and identify simple two-dimensional shapes. Positioning language is used correctly, and the children order two objects by length and by height. Such features indicate sound standards.

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

59. Imaginative planning and good opportunities for problem solving enable the children to make good progress, particularly in elements related to exploration and investigation. The teaching is good. The children like to check on the growth of their bulbs in their outdoor garden. They build complicated structures with big blocks, often collaborating with each other about how to solve problems such as finding a way to make a cross bar to keep the structure upright. Their junk models are detailed and often complicated. In their investigations about metal, those involved explain what the function of the magnet is and are clear about what is likely to stick to it and what is not. Good progress is made in information and communication technology, where, for example, two girls in a language programme made adept use of the mouse to select the necessary icons. Their sense of place is increased by such activities as finding hidden treasure in the classroom by looking at the map of the classroom and identifying hiding places from the blue dots placed on various parts. They are gaining a sense of their own culture from a topic on weddings but their awareness of other cultures is limited because staff do not always talk about the resources that represent other cultures. The children talk about the best qualities in their friends and how they feel about them and these are recorded in a large display.

### **Physical development**

60. Sound progress is made but more can be done to develop variety and inventiveness in children's skills of climbing and balancing. Teaching is satisfactory. The children make good progress in their use of tools and equipment and they demonstrate an increasing skill, control and safety as indicated in their activity involving the hammering of nails into an assortment of different materials to fix them onto a log of wood. They explore malleable materials such as clay, using tools skilfully to create patterns. Outdoors, they use bikes and carts with considerable agility, using space well, adjusting speed and changing direction to avoid each other.

### **Creative development**

61. Children make sound progress in their exploration of media and materials and the teaching is satisfactory. The children use lines and shapes to make patterns, choose particular colours and materials purposefully from a good selection to create often lively collages such as those about the seasons. Good progress is made in their observational portraits of themselves and of animals such as owls. They enjoy music and keep the underlying beat of a recorded piece of music and use instruments with care. They are developing the capacity to play softly or loudly as the extract expects.

They use their imagination well in their exchanges as parents out shopping with their children and when outdoors where, for example, they construct an elaborate road for the bikes and carts which includes a zebra crossing and car parking spaces.

## ENGLISH

62. The current standards of pupils observed are average, overall. The results of the Year 2 pupils in the 2002 national tests were average in writing but they were below average in reading. These results were well below the average of schools having pupils from similar backgrounds. Over the last three years, the results have exceeded the national average and have largely kept up with the national trend, only falling below in reading in 2002, where there were fewer pupils than average with high attainment. Nevertheless, the current standards are a little lower than those reported in the last inspection. The girls achieve better standards than the boys. However, since the children enter Year 1 with attainment that is broadly average in this subject, and standards at Year 4 are broadly average, their achievement is satisfactory.
63. While the standards of the current Year 2 and Year 4 pupils are average overall, in writing and in speaking the percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels is currently below average. This is because teachers' expectations for what they can do are often not high enough. In writing, the pupils do not receive enough opportunities to develop their literacy skills by writing at length. This weakness is variable between year groups but has led to unfavourable comparisons with similar schools. However, the progress made by pupils in reading is at least satisfactory and higher-attainers make good progress in reading. Pupils with learning difficulties and those with lower attainment make good progress in literacy because teaching focuses carefully on their closely identified needs.
64. As in the last inspection report, by the end of Year 4, the pupils achieve average standards in reading, writing, speaking and listening and the majority make sound progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and those with lower attainment make good progress. The improvement in standards has been limited because teachers' expectations are not sufficiently varied for pupils of different abilities and the range of opportunities available to develop writing skills is not wide enough. These issues are being tackled by the co-ordinator.
65. Pupils across the school have developed good listening skills and are capable of concentrating intently when asked questions and given detailed explanations or instructions. They listen to each other carefully and respond accordingly. They are confident, audible speakers who can describe events and experiences clearly but their skills of presentation and speaking to different audiences are not developed enough. Older pupils' skills of analysing information and offering an informed view are hesitant and sometimes lack depth.
66. Across the school, the pupils have satisfactory fluency and accuracy in their reading and a good understanding and recollection of what they have read. Their skills of comprehension are mostly good and higher attaining pupils in Year 4 can discuss characters and their motivation thoughtfully. By Year 2, the pupils understand many important conventions of non-fiction, including the function of a glossary, index and contents page, but they are slow at retrieving information, often laboriously searching word-by-word. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, also have too few skills with which to research for information in other subjects. Pupils' skills of reading new words are developing satisfactorily in Year 2 but some average older pupils have not developed their strategies enough and try to sound out words letter-by-letter.
67. In writing, the main strengths are in the good development of the basic skills of spelling and punctuation across the school. The pupils' writing is presented well. It is usually accurate and clearly written in joined-up handwriting by the end of Year 4 and Year 2. The main weaknesses are in the quality of writing by the higher-attaining pupils whose

work is not significantly better than that produced by pupils of average ability. Sentences are generally sequenced well and basically correct grammatically but the choice of apt and interesting vocabulary by Year 2 pupils is limited. From an analysis of past work, older pupils' writing is not developed imaginatively through the use of more complex sentences. Some lively, more adventurous efforts were seen during the inspection, which would indicate that when teachers' expectations are high, pupils attain better results.

68. Across the school, pupils make sound use of their literacy skills in other subjects but not enough to make a significant difference to the quality of their writing and to the use of effective research skills in Years 3 and 4.
69. Teaching and learning are satisfactory across the school with some good features, particularly in Year 2, where the teaching of reading is often good and in one Year 3 class, where the teaching of information and communication technology skills for use when finding out information is very good. Carefully planned lessons, good knowledge and understanding of the subject, focussed questions, clear explanations and effective use of well-briefed classroom assistants make an impact on children's learning and raise the level of their achievement. Where expectations are too low, the pupils are not encouraged to do their best and too little time is spent on developing the more advanced reading and writing skills.
70. Sound use is made of the National Literacy Strategy to extend and develop the pupils' skills. In lessons, the whole-class discussion is not always used effectively to correct misunderstandings or reinforce learning and pupils seldom have opportunities to extend their speaking skills or evaluate their own work. The range of books to span a variety of genres is limited but the school has recognised the gaps and is purchasing books to remedy the shortfall. It is also purchasing reading material of likely interest for boys in an effort to overcome the difference in attainment between boys and girls. Teachers use an effective system of checks on attainment, which help their planning and through which they track the pupils' progress. Marking is often encouraging but seldom gives guidance on improvement. Through careful checking and evaluation, the co-ordinator has correctly identified important areas for improvement and sound action plans and being carried out. The co-ordination of English is good and attempting to raise expectations. It is managed well and led with a clear vision of what needs to be done to improve the pupils' achievement.

## **MATHEMATICS**

71. Standards are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. The pupils enter Year 1 with average standards and leave the school after Year 4 with average standards. This represents satisfactory achievement. The results of the 2002 national tests for Year 2 pupils showed standards that were very similar to the national average and to those reported in the last inspection. There were, however, below the average of similar schools. Standards this year are also in line with national expectations and there are likely to be more higher attaining pupils. The low number of pupils attaining at the higher level, which was an issue in the last inspection, has been improved. Attainment of the oldest pupils is in line with national averages, although their rate of progress has been slightly slower. The recent setting of pupils in Years 3 and 4 has started to improve this rate of progress. The school's test data indicate that good progress is now being made by all pupils including the higher attainers as they progress through the first three years of the school. The teaching and learning that was seen indicate that such progress is being made particularly in the lower part of the school. Currently pupils' work is regularly checked for progress and targets for their future learning are being set, although teachers make inconsistent use of these targets. The pupils with learning difficulties make good progress throughout the school.
72. Year 2 pupils count up and down in two's and know the odd and even numbers to 50, with some to a 100 and beyond. Many pupils count in fives and tens and know that

addition is the opposite of subtraction. Work was seen on reading and writing numbers to 100, and the idea of larger, smaller, in-between and the ordering the numbers. This idea was understood by many of the pupils, with the higher-attainers able to go beyond 100. This competence confirms satisfactory standards for the age group.

73. In Year 4 pupils are learning to add two and three digit numbers, with the more able pupils understanding standard methods of adding columns of figures. All pupils made progress in their knowledge of the mechanics of addition, although opportunities were missed for the more able to take their learning even further. The pupils are taught to use the correct mathematical language when dealing with problems in the subject and are frequently asked to explore different ways of reaching an answer and to explain their methods. They therefore learn a number of alternative strategies to solve number problems.
74. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented satisfactorily and all the teachers have received effective training. Numeracy lessons are divided into the recommended sections. Most lessons have an effective start with mental number work and a whole-class discussion at the end. In the best lessons this final discussion is used well to reinforce, extend, and check up on the pupils' learning. Homework is set and supports learning satisfactorily.
75. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good. All the lessons observed were at least satisfactory, with five out of the eight observed being good or very good. Where teaching is good or better the mental sessions are lively, and all the pupils participate fully. In the best lessons the teachers have a clear idea of what is to be learnt, they use the correct mathematical language and set realistic, achievable and challenging targets. In these lessons the higher-attainers are given good extension work.
76. A satisfactory range of resources is used well and has a good impact on the teaching and learning. Planning across the school is good and the teachers have recently adopted a good system to check what each pupil has learnt, and to track and target their progress. However, these daily check-ups are not consistently used and recorded in order to amend daily planning. Consequently, the work planned for the different ability groups, especially for the higher ability pupils, is not consistently different enough. In the best classes it is designed to extend their learning rather than give them extra problems of the same type to solve.
77. There have been some observations of mathematics teaching but not by the co-ordinator. This limits the co-ordinator's ability to evaluate provision and standards throughout the school. The curriculum is taught fully, with a good emphasis on the pupils' understanding and ability to explain and apply their knowledge. However, the subject management, while satisfactory overall, lacks the rigour needed to gain greater consistency in approach throughout the school and raise expectations and standards in the top two years.

## **SCIENCE**

78. Standards are satisfactory at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Teachers carry out checks on each pupil's attainment as part of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2. In 2002 these checks showed that although there were slightly fewer pupils than average achieving a high level of attainment, overall attainment was average with 92 per cent reaching the expected standard. This result was slightly lower than the average for schools having pupils from similar backgrounds but it was an improvement on the 2001 result. Although the work of the current pupils of Year 4 is not as advanced as that of the Year 4 pupils of last year, they are learning well in lessons and most of them are on course to attain the expected standards by the end of the year. However, the proportion of pupils with high attainment is lower than average. In their tests at the end of Year 2 there was a below average 6 per cent of these pupils who achieved the higher level. Even so, more able pupils are still not being given enough

opportunities to work at the higher level. Achievement in the subject is satisfactory, though standards are not as high as those reported in the last inspection.

79. In a long Year 4 lesson, the pupils learnt how to classify a variety of materials into groups depending on whether they come from animals, plants and trees, or the ground. This followed discussion about man-made and natural materials and the pupils' own suggestions for categorising. The pupils showed satisfactory general knowledge and were able to invent their own categories. They were provided with appropriate help such as a recording sheet with columns for the three categories, word lists to help with spelling and books and sheets to allow for research when the derivations were not known. Lower attainers managed the work because of the extra help provided. The higher attaining pupils were challenged by the research needed but the level of scientific challenge was no higher than that for the other pupils. Throughout the school the extra challenges asked of higher attaining pupils usually concern more difficult ways of recording their work. Their work rarely shows a higher level of thinking and learning.
80. Pupils in Year 2 understand terms such as force and friction and most have a sound understanding of the need to make tests fair. In two well taught lessons these pupils learnt how different surfaces make a difference to the force needed to move an object on them. A majority of the pupils had a good sense of making the comparisons between the surfaces fair tests. However, higher attaining pupils had little opportunity to suggest or plan how the tests could be carried out, although teachers are keen to prompt the pupils to make their own predictions of the outcomes.
81. The pupils are generally interested in the subject and parents report that they often arrive home talking about exciting science lessons. This is because the teachers are keen to motivate the pupils by providing lessons that include practical work, experiments and learning that relate to the pupils' everyday experiences. For example, in a number of lessons the pupils are very keen to explain their observations out of school, which usually relate well to the subject being discussed in lessons. All the lessons seen in the inspection involved the pupils actively and the teachers are well aware of that part of the programme of study concerning scientific enquiry. In the work of the Year 4 pupils, however, there are few examples of pupils designing their own experiments, although the pupils of Year 2 have a sound understanding of the need for making tests fair.
82. The active lessons provide good opportunities for the pupils to learn to collaborate and to take initiatives. In most cases, they do these things well and they use the well-provided resources effectively. Some of the lessons, particularly in Year 4 can be noisy but this noise is usually that of pupils discussing the work. In two-thirds of the lessons seen class management is good and the pupils respond with good behaviour and concentration. However, the speed and overall quantity of written work are below average. Although the teachers usually make clear to pupils what they expect them to learn, they rarely explain their expectations of the speed and the amount of work. At the ends of most lessons, teachers ask the pupils questions to find out how much has been learnt and remind pupils of the main lesson points. This is good practice. However, there is inconsistency in how teachers record this information and use it to plan future lessons. Classroom support assistants are not used enough in helping to note pupils' responses. However, most assistants support lower attaining pupils well, sometimes prompting them to take a greater part in whole-class discussions.
83. All the teachers reflect upon the overall effectiveness of their lessons and the pupils' learning of each part of the programme of study are recorded. Furthermore, these records are checked by the co-ordinator to ensure the full curriculum is being taught as is the teachers' planning. However, these systems are not quite sufficient for a clear picture of attainment and provision in the school to be gained. For example, it is not known whether those pupils who achieved above average results at the end of Year 2 are on course to achieve well at the end of Year 4. The subject has not been given the same degree of attention as English and mathematics in the review of performance

and analysis of results. For example, standards are not checked by tests in Years 3 or 4 and teachers' own estimations of pupils' standards are seldom moderated by others. However, there are good actions planned in the school development plan, some of which are already in place. For example, the school's resources are well organised and teachers now make a good emphasis on teaching the correct scientific terminology. The new co-ordinator has made a good start. However, teaching and learning are not yet checked sufficiently to promote high expectations for pupils with the potential for high attainment. In the last inspection, the checking of such issues was reported as under-developed, and there has not been enough improvement. Currently, the quality of the lessons seen indicate good teaching for Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory overall in Years 3 and 4. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The teachers and the co-ordinator work hard to make the subject meaningful for the pupils and, for example, provide visits and special events to enhance the curriculum.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

84. Standards at the end of Year 2 meet national expectations but there was no evidence to show that the higher attainment noted during the previous inspection has been maintained. Standards at the end of Year 4 also meet national expectations and have been maintained since the last report. The pupils make satisfactory progress. There was limited evidence of the range of experiences required by the National Curriculum because of the time-table. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2 and very little evidence was available in Years 3 and 4 except for two lessons in Year 4.
85. In Years 1 and 2, other evidence from current displays and the co-ordinator's collection of completed work suggest that pupils are developing a good understanding of how to combine colour, line, shape and space. Their work is related well to other subjects without losing opportunities to develop the visual and tactile skills appropriate to art. For example, group collages made by Year 1 pupils make good use of a range of materials to produce the necessary effects of 'Tatty Ratty's' journeys, linked to a geographical topic and including a three dimensional effect to heighten the illusion. Their mathematically linked half-red and half-orange pictures demonstrate a good grasp of design, which leads to an effective combination of the different shapes available to them. In their design and technology linked models of robots, the key elements of robotic design are successfully captured. Their pastel weather pictures demonstrate a lively sense of movement through their use of lines. In Year 2, pupils used their information and communication technology skills satisfactorily to design road safety pictures.
86. Very little evidence was available in Years 3 and 4 to determine the breadth and quality of in the subject. In both lessons observed, several pupils demonstrated a good use of design skills and a thorough knowledge and understanding of the processes involved in making a printing tile. Sketchbooks are used productively. Pupils have a good basic knowledge of how to use their previous experiences and they handle tools with careful precision.
87. Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory across the school with some good features in individual classes. Judging from the quality of pupils' work in Years 1 and 2, good features include a strong emphasis on clear, well-focussed learning intentions to refine pupils' creative grasp of basic skills and techniques and to encourage good standards of the finished product. Teachers of older pupils demonstrate a thorough grasp of the processes that lead to the completed items. Through this, they provide effective guidance for what to do next and how to do it but not enough evaluation of how pupils can further refine and improve their work. There were very few examples of pupils appraising art from different cultures or periods.

88. Leadership of the subject is sound. A long-term plan has been produced which matches the requirements of the curriculum to the school's topic plan with a strong emphasis on a progression of skills from one year group to another. Assessment is informal at present although a possible assessment system has been introduced to staff. Teaching and learning are not monitored and evaluated to ensure that the co-ordinator has a good grasp of strengths and areas for further development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

89. Standards attained by the Year 2 pupils are above the national expectation. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The school has maintained standards for pupils in Years 3 and 4, which meet national expectations.
90. Year 1 designs cover topics such as making glove puppets. These are labelled well and drawn accurately from the front and back. Under headings such as "What I will do" and "What it looks like" they clearly set out the processes involved and the resources needed to complete their projects. In Year 2, pupils use tools safely and skilfully to assemble, join and combine different materials and shapes to make railway engines in the style of Stevenson's 'Rocket' and suggest ways to improve their designs and models. From a good knowledge of Stevenson's invention, gleaned from sources such as the Internet, they respond well to the challenge of how to represent features of the engine, such as a tall chimney to dispel the smoke. Their wind chimes, made for use in the school's central courtyard, work successfully because pupils' designs indicate a clear understanding of the attributes needed to make their models work effectively for the intended purpose.
91. Past investigations by older pupils of how to design and assemble a box reinforce pupils' understanding of how to use information from a range of sources including ICT. From their assembly of levers and hinges to control movement, they develop a sound understanding of how levers operate and the function of a pivot. Their diagrams are carefully drawn and labelled. Where they are engaged in designing models with moveable arms and legs, some are confused about the difference between a drawing and a design. As a result, they find it difficult to suggest improvements because they are unclear of what is needed for their designs and constructions to be successful.
92. Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 and 4, where there are some good features but also some weaknesses. The good teaching is characterised by high expectations, a good subject knowledge, and inventive planning which links successfully to other subjects of the curriculum. Investigation and well defined practical tasks that extend pupils' grasp of a range of skills and techniques are a strength across the school but the pupils' capacity to evaluate their work, and suggest improvements is weaker in the older classes.
93. The leadership of the subject is sound. A long-term plan that incorporates topics and skills carefully matched to the requirements of the National curriculum has been compiled and resources have been updated. Teaching has not been monitored for its impact on learning.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

94. The standards achieved by the Year 2 and Year 4 pupils are above what is nationally expected. The school has maintained the standards seen at the last inspection. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress.
95. In Year 4, the pupils were studying the symbols and keys used on ordnance survey maps. They have good knowledge of how to use maps and link the subject with history by using maps and symbols to map how typical Anglo-Saxon settlements were located. Work seen in Year 3 on the continents was of a good standard, with a particularly good

three-dimensional artwork model of the world and the continents. Currently, Year 3 are studying aspects of conservation and pollution.

96. There are good planned opportunities for the links between geography and numeracy to be taught, for example, in map work. Communication skills are promoted through speaking and listening activities. The pattern of topics to be studied gives guidance to teachers about continuity and progression of the skills and the work to be taught. Opportunities are now being taken to weave geography into the studies of history and English.
97. Of the lessons observed none were unsatisfactory, one was good and the others were satisfactory. In the best lesson, there were high expectations of pupil's behaviour and their standards of work. The correct technical language was used throughout. Explicit teaching enabled the pupils to have a very clear idea of the moral dilemmas and decisions involving conservation and re-cycling. The scrutiny of previous work showed a mixed standard of presentation of work, with good map-work skills but the need for more written work.
98. There is a need for more formal checks on what is learnt to be introduced and more time is needed for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching and standards throughout the school. The pupils enjoy the subject and work together well. The subject makes a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their knowledge of the world and its peoples. However, opportunities are missed to help pupils understand about multicultural life in Britain.
99. There is a satisfactory range of resources in the school that are well used. The work is well planned with the school adapting a professional scheme to their own scheme and resources. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator.

## **HISTORY**

100. The standards achieved by the pupils in history at the end of Year 2 and when they leave the school at the end of Year 4 are above what is nationally expected. This means that the school has maintained these good standards since the last inspection. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress.
101. The teaching was good in the lesson observed. The aim of the lesson was to give the pupils a sense of changes over time by looking at toys from different ages; their wear and tear, decoration, costumes, construction materials and style. Through good questioning techniques the teacher brought out these differences and the pupils developed their sense of time. The scrutiny of pupils' previous work showed a mixed standard of presentation of work, particularly in the upper part of the school, with the need for more written work.
102. The Year 4 pupils have recently studied World War 2 and have a thorough knowledge of the events and the effects on people's lifestyles. Their account of the evacuees into the local area was enriched by a visit from a grandfather of one of the pupils who gave his first-hand account of the experience. The pupils' account of the "black market", rationing, "spivs" and goods "falling off the backs of lorries" showed they had been interested, which meant that they remembered well.
103. The pattern of topics to be studied ensures continuity and progression of the skills and work to be taught. Opportunities are now being taken to weave history into the studies of geography and English. There is a need for more formal procedures to check-up on the pupils' attainment to be introduced and time to be allocated for the co-ordinator to review teaching and standards throughout the school.
104. The pupils enjoy the lessons and work well together. The subject makes a sound contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their

knowledge of the past. There is a satisfactory range of resources in the school that are used well. The work is planned well and the school adapts units of work from a nationally recommended scheme to its own scheme and resources. The co-ordinator is making a significant difference to the organisation and approach to the teaching of history through her enthusiasm, hard work and good subject knowledge.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

105. Standards are satisfactory for pupils throughout the school and have been maintained since the last inspection. There are a number of improvements which are strong points in the school's provision and the pupils' capability. Provision has been considerably improved through a new computer suite and training has also enhanced the confidence and capability of staff. In a number of lessons, new programs were being taught and the pupils' learning was good in two-thirds of the lessons. At the time of the last inspection, standards were in line with national expectations and the teaching was satisfactory with most pupils making satisfactory progress, although there were not always enough challenging tasks for higher attaining pupils.
106. In a good Year 2 lesson, all the pupils were introduced to the ideas that the pupils needed to know in order to operate a new program. The pupils showed that they had a good understanding of left and right and of amounts of turning because of clear explanations. They were then able to relate this to a turtle on the screen. Their task was to direct it to certain parts of the screen. All the pupils found this task challenging and were well supported by staff. All the pupils learnt well how a screen turtle can be controlled but few succeeded accurately, although they quickly improved their accuracy during the lesson. In a Year 4 lesson, the pupils used data previously gained to create tables, charts and graphs. Many did this independently for the first time and were excited to see various representations of the same data. This was also a new program for the pupils and all abilities were challenged equally. In other lessons seen, teachers were introducing new programs and all the pupils were learning equally well.
107. The teaching is good. In one lesson it was very good, in three it was good and in the remaining lessons it was satisfactory. Teachers show a good understanding of what they teach. The pupils' learning is good overall and occasionally very good. Currently, a range of new software is being introduced and the pupils learn to use it quickly, because of the clear teaching and explanations. However, their opportunities to practise what they have been learning are limited to lessons in the computer suite because the computers in classrooms are too seldom used. Many of the class-based machines are old but could provide practice with some applications. More importantly, the subject is not used enough to support learning in other subjects and provide a means of recording the pupils' work. However, a good degree of support is provided for pupils with learning difficulties in the computer suite. This is usually through classroom assistants or the teacher and is good. Consequently, the pupils with learning difficulties learn well and the difference in the capabilities of pupils in the same age group is small. For example, Year 4 pupils of all abilities can open a computer and enter a program. They can save, print and access files. All have a sound understanding of the wide range of uses of information and communication technology in the wider world. Although there was a difference in their levels of confidence, they all were close to achieving the expected standard for their age and, in some respects, slightly above it.
108. The school's new computer suite is well organised and has significantly improved the school's provision. However, the computers are often prone to breakdown or have faults and the co-ordinator for the subject is usually the first port of call. This reduces the time available for checking and improving the pupils' learning in the subject. The school has a maintenance contract but this is only used for more persistent problems. The co-ordinator provides much support for teachers by helping them to plan lessons and providing training in new software. This has been very effective and enhanced teachers' capability and confidence.

## MUSIC

109. Standards are satisfactory throughout the school. They are similar to those at the time of the last inspection for Year 4, but for Year 2 they are not as high as the good standards found then. However, there are several aspects about which teachers are enthusiastic and pupils make good progress as a result. The standard of singing is satisfactory overall, though there are considerable differences in its quality from one class to the next. In assemblies the pupils sing largely in tune and in time but with little enthusiasm, reflecting the different levels of expertise of the teachers.
110. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy the subject and make good efforts, for example, to copy rhythms. In some classes they are taught the difference between rhythm and pulse and most learn to keep a pulse well. Pupils in Year 2 find copying a rhythm harder but make good attempts. In this part of the school they have understood how simple compositions can be written down and some have devised their own methods. Listening to music often takes place at the beginnings of assemblies, though the range of different types of music is limited and there is no clear plan to provide pupils with opportunities to appreciate a wide enough range of music from different cultures and ages.
111. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils learnt to appreciate pitch better through the use of hand movements. They were also introduced to the letter names of notes. The older pupils have many opportunities to perform and a number of enriching events provide additional experiences. A few pupils have lessons in playing an instrument such cello, violin and piano. There are also guitar and recorder groups. Frequently, pupils perform with instruments or sing in assemblies. However, the pupils' progress in the National Curriculum for the subject is largely dependent upon the level of expertise of the class teacher. Not enough is done to provide consistency in the curriculum and teaching expertise. There has been some support for teaching in the school but too little to provide teachers with the competence and confidence to teach the full programme of study.
112. However, there is a helpful system to record the pupils' achievements and guidance to help plan lessons. These are promoted by the enthusiastic co-ordinator, who also uses tape recordings to help teachers to judge levels of attainment. The school has many resources although their storage is untidy and unlikely to maintain the instruments in good condition.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

113. Standards of attainment are above what is expected for pupils nationally. Standards have been maintained at this level since the last inspection.
114. Pupils experience the full National Curriculum programmes of study. In gymnastics, dance, drama, movement and games lessons, all pupils make good progress in the development of their skills. They are taught to improve their skills and to work collaboratively throughout the school. Swimming is part of the curriculum for all pupils; they make good progress and enjoy the sessions.
115. In most of the lessons observed, pupils are encouraged to warm up, and are aware of the importance of exercise and safety. They are usually also taught to cool down correctly at the end of a period of exercise. Few of the teachers provide good role models by changing for the lessons, though all pupils change into suitable clothing. Most of the pupils are aware of the need for safety and some are learning to improve their performance by evaluation, discussion and further practise. Nevertheless, there is not enough evaluation and discussion to help the pupils to gain awareness of high quality of movement.

116. In Year 1 the pupils learn to improve their ball control skills by practising throwing and catching. They made good progress in the lesson seen because of the clear instructions given and the variety of activities set. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 learn how to move around the hall with different shapes and moves and improve their poise, control and co-ordination. In one of the Year 2 lessons seen, the use of dramatic descriptive language enhanced the pupils' performance and focussed their attention well on thinking about their moves. The football skills of passing and control are being practised in Year 4.
117. The quality of teaching observed was very good in one lesson, good in two, satisfactory in one but unsatisfactory in another. The teachers encourage the pupils to take part with enthusiasm and challenge them to think about their performance and how to improve. Where the teaching was very good the teachers helped the pupils to think and assess their own progress. Consequently, they made good progress in the skills that were the objective of the lesson. The lessons are planned so as to gradually develop the skill or sequence that is the lesson objective. Most of the teachers have good subject knowledge, and so give clear instructions, which emphasise how improvements can be made. They give encouraging and appropriate praise.
118. All the pupils enjoy physical education and their response is good. The only bad behaviour seen was in the unsatisfactory lesson where the pupils were not involved in the activities enough and became bored and restless. This was due to poor classroom and pupil management, the inappropriate choice of resources and activity, the lack of direct teaching and the negative nature of the approach to the lesson.
119. The school has a satisfactory range of modern resources and equipment that is well used. The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good, with a soccer team and club and fixtures against other schools. The community is very well involved with the teaching of physical education. The residential trip for Year 4 adds outdoor pursuits to the subject curriculum. There is now a need for time to be allocated for the co-ordinator to monitor the teaching and standards throughout the school.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

120. Standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and are similar to those reported in the last inspection. The sample of lessons observed, a review of a sample of pupils' past work and other evidence, such as displays, support this finding. The school's overall aims are reflected well in planning for the subject and there is a strong emphasis on learning about the human condition and moral behaviour from religions. The subject is often linked to lessons in personal, social and health education. There are examples of good work about Christian stories, such as some good Year 4 explanations of Epiphany and a good learning about Jesus visiting "His Father's house", from which the pupils extended their understanding of the word "Father". In a very well taught Year 2 lesson, the pupils gained a strong sense of alternative worlds by considering "special places" although this was not related to places of worship since the lesson was more concerned with personal than religious education.
121. In most of the lessons observed, the pupils responded well to the teaching and were interested and behaved well. This is largely because the teaching is good overall and effective methods are used to engage the pupils' interest and involvement. Attitudes and behaviour are good for Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 and 4. The pupils' behaviour is good in the daily assemblies, which support the pupils' learning in lessons. A limited number of displays around the school reflect the pupils' interest in topics, such as the Festival of Light and Jesus in the Temple. While the pupils' past work is generally well presented, it does not clearly show progression in understanding of the key ideas explicit in the agreed syllabus, such as symbolism or commitment.
122. Overall, the teaching is good throughout and teachers have sound knowledge of what they teach. However, the emphasis on topics, aspects of which are taught in personal,

social and health education lessons, promotes the pupils' social and emotional development well, but sometimes at the cost of their learning of religions and the key ideas about faiths. Teachers use a variety of methods well to enhance the pupils' learning, for example, mime and story-telling. Artefacts and other resources are used to better effect than at the time of the last inspection. However, teachers' checks on what the pupils know and understand are inconsistent and consequently, higher-attaining pupils are seldom given harder work. Their written work is limited in quantity. Marking is satisfactory but seldom engages pupils in further improvements or poses searching questions. Those pupils with learning difficulties are supported in their written work and they take a full part in discussion lessons, often making effective contributions.

123. The school's policy and scheme of work are being revised because they were provided for mixed age classes. The current guidance in the scheme of work is not clear enough about levels of attainment or the key concepts that should permeate the topics. There is a strong emphasis on learning from religions. This is often linked to personal, social and health education lessons and sometimes there is insufficient clarity about which subject is being learnt. The provision of artefacts and resources has improved since the last inspection, but links with the cultural aspects associated with different faiths are not prominent. The subject is soundly led by a knowledgeable co-ordinator who carries out some checks of the pupils' attainment. However, the time and means provided are too limited for an accurate view of the school's provision and standards to be gained.