

INSPECTION REPORT

DAGNALL SCHOOL

Dagnall, Berkhamsted

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110218

Headteacher: Mrs Jennifer Marriner-Kyle

Reporting inspector: Mrs Christine Nuttall
31046

Dates of inspection: 31 March – 2 April 2003

Inspection number: 246966

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	County
Age range of pupils:	4-7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Main Road South Dagnall Berkhamsted Hertfordshire
Postcode:	HP4 1QX
Telephone number:	01442 842473
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Brian Peevor
Date of previous inspection:	9 February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
31046	Christine Nuttall	Registered inspector	Mathematics, science, information and communication technology, design and technology, history, geography, special educational needs and inclusion	The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9528	Derek Bowers	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23235	Fred Riches	Team inspector	Foundation stage, English, art, music, physical education and religious education.	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Dagnall is a small village school with 38 pupils aged between four and seven. There are ten more boys than girls. There are 16 children in the reception class. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taught together in the second class. The school was awarded Beacon status in 2001. Pupils come from the village of Dagnall and the surrounding area; currently 66 per cent are from outside the school's designated catchment area. Housing locally is mixed, and the majority of pupils live in owner-occupied homes with a small minority living in rented accommodation. No pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is well below the national average. All families have their cultural roots in the British Isles. Children's attainment on entry to the reception year is wide-ranging, but average overall. Just over ten per cent of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is below average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Dagnall is a good school with several strengths. Pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well. Standards are consistently high in English, mathematics and science. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The recently appointed headteacher has quickly established herself within the school, demonstrating effective leadership and management skills. Governors are committed and highly effective. The school's links with its parents and the local community are very strong. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are consistently high in English, mathematics and science
- Good teaching promotes successful learning for all pupils
- The school cares very well for pupils. The provision for pupils' personal development is very good and results in very good attitudes and excellent relationships
- The newly appointed headteacher provides good leadership and management, well-supported by the highly effective governing body
- The partnership with parents and the contribution of the community to pupils' learning are excellent

What could be improved

- The plans to develop the school further over the next few years, ensuring that proposed initiatives are costed properly and surplus funds are utilised fully

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 there has been good improvement since then. Standards are higher and the teaching is better than it was. The school addressed fully the key issues raised by the last inspection, with particular sustained success in the progress of reception children in literacy and numeracy. A change of headteacher and a turnover of teachers recently have brought management challenges which the school is meeting well. It is in a good position to move forward.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	A*	A*	A	A
Writing	B	A*	A*	A
Mathematics	A	A	B	C

Key

Very high A*

well above A

average above B

average C

below average D

well below E

average

very low E*

Similar schools are those with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals

The table shows the school's performance has been consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In reading and writing, the school's results were in the top five per cent of all schools nationally in two of the last three years. Mathematics was less good last year mainly because there were more pupils with special educational needs, particularly in mathematics, than in previous years. In small schools the performance of one or two pupils can have a substantial impact on statistical data. At Dagnall in 2002, for example, there were 11 pupils in the year group with each pupil representing nine per cent. In reading and writing, the school did very well in comparison to similar schools. The school's results have improved above the national trend since the last inspection.

Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in all six areas of learning. A few reach the early learning goals before the end of their reception year and almost all reach them by the end of the Foundation Stage. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make at least good progress and standards are currently well above average in reading, and above average in writing and mathematics. Pupils of all abilities achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs do well because of the carefully planned support they receive. There is no significant difference between boys' and girls' attainment.

Standards in history have improved since the last inspection and are now above average, as are some aspects of art and design. Standards in singing are well above average throughout the school, however, in some aspects of music, standards are below expected levels. In all other subjects, standards are at the expected levels.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils show interest and are highly enthusiastic about their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in lessons, around school, and at lunchtimes and playtimes.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are polite, confident and friendly. Relationships at all levels are excellent.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils arrive on time and lessons start punctually.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good overall with some very good and excellent features. No teaching is unsatisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection where the overall judgement of teaching was satisfactory. One of the main strengths of the Foundation Stage provision is the excellent teamwork between teacher and assistant. This term, two of the four teachers are new to the school and, together with a third teacher, they share the teaching of Years 1 and 2. This arrangement requires particularly careful timetabling and planning to ensure effective teaching. The three teachers taking the class liaise with each other well. Strong teamwork and good teaching are evident and, as a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Literacy and numeracy are taught effectively. Particular strengths in the teaching include, the management and organisation of pupils' learning, high expectations of pupils' academic and social achievements, the excellent relationships between teachers and pupils and the planning of interesting activities.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum with a stimulating range of learning opportunities. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is very good. Some aspects of the music curriculum require further attention.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Early identification of needs in the Foundation Stage, followed by careful planning for individual pupils, ensures very good provision. Teaching assistants are very effective in providing sensitive support. Statutory requirements are met.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils are provided with a number of opportunities to take responsibility. Within lessons and at playtimes the school encourages regular collaborative learning and play.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. The school is a safe, secure environment. Pupils receive very good levels of support and guidance. Procedures for assessing pupils' academic and social achievements are very good. Assessment information is used well to match work closely to pupils' needs.

The school has an excellent partnership with parents, providing them with very good information about its work and their children's progress. Parents regard the school very highly and make an excellent contribution to its work.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The recently appointed headteacher has made a positive start and re-established strong teamwork. Members of staff give good support to the headteacher by carrying out their roles and responsibilities effectively and efficiently.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Governors are enthusiastic and committed. They give very good support to the headteacher and staff. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. All statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school makes good use of its analysis of pupils' performance in tests to plan for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory use is made of all available resources to bring about improvements in provision. The principles of best value are applied well. However the school does not focus sufficiently on longer term strategic planning and the financial implications of agreed priorities. There are no clear plans for the use of the substantial reserve the school has accumulated.

The school's staffing is very good. The number and quality of teaching and support staff enable pupils to make good progress. The accommodation has been improved over recent years and is satisfactory overall. Staff work hard to provide the full range of learning opportunities despite the lack of a hall. The resources for learning are satisfactory overall and very good for the children in the Foundation Stage.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school, make good progress and behave very well. • Teaching is good and expectations are high. • Children are helped to become responsible and teachers keep parents well informed about their progress. • The school works closely with parents and deals well with their questions and problems. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons.

Inspectors agree with all the aspects that please parents. The school provides a good range of activities to enhance the basic curriculum. Inspectors agree that there are no specific after-school clubs, but judge the range of extra-curricular trips, visits and participation in community events to be good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Introduction – attainment on entry

1. On entry to school, children's abilities are wide ranging but broadly average overall. They make at least good progress in all six areas of learning¹ as a result of effective teaching and a story-based curriculum that makes their learning interesting and relevant. They make very good progress in some aspects of their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their physical development. All children reach the early learning goals in their physical development before the end of the reception year. In the other areas of learning, a number of children reach the early learning goals² before the end of their reception year and almost all reach them by the time they enter Year 1.

Pupils' attainment in standard tests

2. Because the number of pupils that take the end of Year 2 national tests and assessments each year is small, comparing their achievements with all primary schools and similar schools nationally using test results is not sufficiently reliable, because of the small numbers involved. In 2002 at Dagnall, for example, each child represented nine per cent. However, standards in reading and writing in the national tests for Year 2 pupils over the four years to 2002 show that pupils have consistently attained standards well above the national average and frequently the school's performance has ranked in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Compared with similar schools (those with under eight per cent of pupils entitled to free school meals), pupils at Dagnall have achieved standards well above the average. In mathematics, results for the three years prior to 2002 were well above average. Last year saw a slight decline in the results for mathematics, however, they were still above the national average and in line with similar schools. In 2002, teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 in science show that the number of pupils reaching the expected level exceeded the national average and was the same as pupils in similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels in reading, writing, mathematics and science is well above the national average and this reflects the school's work to improve the challenge for higher attainers.

Improvement since the last inspection

3. At the time of the last inspection, standards in reading and writing were reported to be broadly average. Standards in these areas have improved significantly since then. In mathematics and science, standards were above average. There has been an improvement in science whilst standards in mathematics are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. Since 1998, the trend over time shows that pupils' achievements have continued to improve and variations in results from year to year are largely due to variations in the level of pupils' attainment when they start in reception and the proportion of pupils with special needs.

¹ The areas of learning are: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development.

² Early learning goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage

Inspection findings

Years 1 and 2 – English, mathematics and science

4. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make at least good progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
5. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading are well above the national average and above average in writing and speaking and listening. In reading, pupils use phonic skills well and use a range of other strategies to help them tackle difficult words. All pupils enjoy reading and make very good progress. There has been some improvement in writing standards since the last inspection when higher attaining pupils did not do as well in writing as they did in other subjects. This year all pupils are making good progress and higher attaining pupils are achieving standards above those expected for their age. In speaking and listening pupils develop skills in various subject lessons, as their teachers encourage good listening skills in class discussions. Most pupils contribute confidently to discussions and there has been good improvement in this area since the last inspection.
6. In mathematics, the quality of pupils' learning in Year 1 and 2 is good overall. Standards are above average and these are the same as they were at the time of the last inspection. However, there are a greater number of pupils with special educational needs currently than when the school was last inspected. All pupils make at least good progress. In Year 1 pupils are developing appropriate numerical skills and they add and subtract confidently to ten. Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of the concepts of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They have experienced looking at larger numbers and show understanding of place value using thousands, for example.
7. In science, standards are above average in Years 1 and 2. There is a clear emphasis on investigative work and pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well.

Years 1 and 2 – other subjects

8. Pupils are achieving standards above average in history. They achieve average standards in information and communication technology (ICT), design technology, geography, physical education and religious education. In music, whilst singing is well above the expected levels at the end of Year 2, other aspects of music are currently below expectations. With the exception of some aspects of music, pupils make at least satisfactory progress in all subjects. There has been a significant improvement in geography from the last inspection when standards were below average.

Educational inclusion

9. Pupils of different abilities and gender have equal access to the curriculum and all aspects of school life. Overall there is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls and all are challenged well. Teachers value all pupils equally and carefully identify those who are disadvantaged or need additional challenge in order to achieve their full potential. Despite the small numbers in each year group, higher attaining pupils achieve well and this is reflected in the number that achieve above average levels in national tests at the end of Year 2.

Pupils with special educational needs

10. Pupils with special needs make good progress towards targets on their individual education plans as a result of good support in lessons.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Relationships among adults and pupils throughout the school are excellent. Pupils love coming to school and show very positive attitudes to their work. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school and grounds at playtimes and lunchtimes is very good overall. All pupils respond very well to the school's caring staff team. As a result of their role modelling, pupils' personal development is also very good. Amid considerable staffing changes, the school has done extremely well to sustain the very positive picture reported at the last inspection.

Foundation Stage

12. Children settle quickly into the reception class. They are secure and happy in the well-organised indoor and outdoor environment and in the daily routines. They choose and pursue activities confidently and independently, accessing equipment and materials themselves and using them with care. Children show very positive attitudes when singing, dancing and when engaged in practical activities, such as creating dens for bears. They show confidence in the use of ICT equipment, including taking photographs with a digital camera under careful instruction and guidance. At the end of the activities, they know where to return equipment and do this without fuss. They dress independently to go outside and change independently for physical education sessions. Most take turns answering questions or making comments in class discussions, but a few still find concentration during this kind of activity difficult. Almost all listen and watch carefully when the class works together, although one or two need support to help them concentrate. The staff manage the occasional immature behaviour sensitively, calmly and supportively, without affecting the overall positive atmosphere.

Pupils' attitudes and responses

13. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work in most lessons. They are highly enthusiastic about school. In the reception class, fairy stories take over children's lives as their studies in all areas derive from the common theme of Goldilocks or Cinderella. The children and their parents become thoroughly involved in the imaginative pursuits organised by staff. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 researched and reported information on storms enthusiastically during a religious education lesson and read very expressively as a class Jill Murphy's *'Peace at Last'*. They thoroughly enjoy the additional events the school organises, such as dressing up as characters for World Book Day and Maypole and country dancing at annual village events. Pupils are positive about their work and most get on without fuss and are keen to share their work with the class. Occasionally, where lessons lack pace, a few pupils in both classes find it hard to concentrate and take turns. The response of the whole school is excellent during the weekly singing practice, when staff help pupils to show high levels of skill and thoroughly enjoy singing together.

Behaviour

14. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is very good in the main because relationships among staff and between staff and pupils are excellent. Where pupils occasionally show immature behaviour, both teaching and support staff manage them well. The ethos for acceptable behaviour is set and sustained through weekly sharing assemblies. Pupils enjoy receiving team points and are eager to see how well their team has done each week. Pupils participate in forming class rules. They understand why they need to keep these and try to follow them. They are friendly and caring towards each other and polite to all adults. There is a very pleasant atmosphere around the school and grounds at playtimes and lunchtimes with no signs of aggressive or anti-social behaviour. There have been no exclusions during the past year and there is no evidence from parents, children or staff that bullying is a problem in the school.

Personal Development and Relationships

15. Pupils' personal development is also very good. Pupils enjoy collaborative activities and get on very well together both during lessons and at playtimes. At lunch and during snack and drink time after play, they are well mannered and make the meal and snack times positive social occasions. They enjoy sitting with staff and clearly benefit considerably from the staff commitment to take lunch together with the pupils. Pupils manage their books and equipment well, helping hand out books and clearing up efficiently. Pupils show good levels of independence and confidence, when working with computer equipment for instance. Older pupils accept responsibility gladly, as when taking turns to choose music and operate the CD-player for assembly, but sometimes they still need adult guidance, as when getting out equipment for physical education. The excellent relationships make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning.

Attendance

16. Attendance is very good and is well above the national average. There are no unauthorised absences and few families take holidays during the school terms. The pupils are very punctual and there are few late marks in the registers. The registers are marked promptly and fully each day. Parents show their strong support for good attendance by reporting necessary absences very quickly on the first day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

Introduction

17. Teaching is good overall. Its quality ranges from satisfactory to excellent. In one fifth of the lessons, teaching is at least very good. In one lesson it was excellent. No teaching is unsatisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection where the overall judgement of teaching was satisfactory.
18. Only one of the original teachers, at the time of the last inspection, is still employed at Dagnall. All, except this one teacher, have been appointed in the last year. The Year 1 and 2 class is taught by the newly appointed headteacher and two other part-time teachers who are new.

The Foundation Stage

19. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall and includes several very good and some excellent elements. The strengths include the excellent partnerships between teacher and assistant and between staff and parents. These provide a positive atmosphere, in which children enjoy their learning and feel secure and happy as they go about their pursuits. Both indoor and outdoor areas are well resourced and well organised, with resources readily accessible to the children. The staff ensure that day-to-day routines encourage positive personal, social and emotional development and plan imaginatively, so that activities are based on themes that are interesting and relevant to the children. Occasionally, lessons involving the whole class sitting together last a little too long and lack pace, with the result that the least mature children lose focus. Overall, however, the teacher's close knowledge of the children, backed by careful day-to-day observational assessment, ensures that all children make good progress in all areas of learning. The very good and excellent features observed were related to physical development and a lesson with computer equipment. In both of these lessons, the teacher's brisk pace, thoughtful questioning, prompting and high expectations led to children doing their best and achieving extremely well.

Year 1 and 2

20. The teaching in Year 1 and 2 is good overall with one very good lesson observed. Both year groups are taught in the same class with the new headteacher having responsibility for half of the week's lessons. Two part-time teachers share the remainder of the week with the class. This arrangement works well because each of the three teachers takes responsibility for specific subjects and this ensures continuity and consistency for the pupils. Common strengths in the teaching include a thorough attention to planning and preparation. All three teachers plan carefully, noting clear learning goals for each lesson. Resources are well prepared. In a very good mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher had spent some time collecting items of food of varying weight for the pupils to use in their estimation of lighter and heavier than one kilogram. As a result, pupils made good strides forward in their understanding of weight and they were able to relate this to everyday shopping and food.
21. Within the satisfactory lessons seen there were a few areas for development. Although teachers note clear learning objectives on their planning and often display these in the classroom, these are not always shared with the pupils using vocabulary appropriate to their ability. As a result, the pupils rarely have knowledge of their own learning and teachers neglect to revisit the learning goals at the end of a lesson. Sometimes teachers spend too long each day talking to the pupils in whole class sessions and this means that there is less time for pupils to spend in active learning. Marking of pupils' work is another area needing review. At the moment there is some inconsistency between the three teachers sharing the Year 1 and 2 class and pupils are not always given sufficiently clear pointers about what they need to do to improve.

Teaching of literacy

22. Teachers have worked hard to implement the literacy strategy and plan lessons carefully with due regard to the national framework. For example, pupils have benefited from a focus by staff on ways of teaching reading and writing. Pupils learn to write in a variety of styles and for a range of purposes, in lessons other than literacy lessons, in order to extend writing skills further. In science, the teachers encourage pupils to use their writing skills effectively to label diagrams, make lists and record the results of their investigations and in history, for making notes. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to practice their reading in other lessons. In a religious education lesson, for example, pupils read non-fiction books whilst researching information about the power of nature. One Year 2 pupil confidently read, *'imagine living in the eye of a tropical storm'* whilst discovering facts about hurricanes. Phonic skills are taught well and pupils are using these to help them with reading and spelling.

Teaching of numeracy

23. Teachers have made very good use of the numeracy strategy and all lessons are planned using the national framework. The teaching of numeracy is good overall with some very good features. These include clear lesson planning, a brisk pace during the introductory mental and oral session, the organisation and use of resources and the deployment of learning support assistants. These all help pupils to develop their numeracy skills. Areas for development are related to making the purpose of the lessons clear to pupils, the challenge for some higher attainers and the conclusions to lessons.

Other subjects

24. The quality of teaching in ICT, music, religious education and physical education is satisfactory, with some good teaching in science and physical education. On the basis of samples of pupils' work, talking to pupils, scrutinising teachers' plans and discussions with subject co-ordinators teaching is also at least satisfactory in geography, art and

design and design and technology. In history, teaching is good and this reflects an improvement from the last inspection.

Common strengths

25. There are particular strengths that thread through all of the teaching. These include:

- adapting national subject guidelines to suit the needs of pupils;
- teachers' management and organisation of pupils' learning;
- high expectations of pupils' academic and social achievements;
- relationships between teachers and pupils;
- planning appropriate and interesting activities.

Special educational needs

26. Teachers plan tasks appropriately for pupils with special educational needs, ensuring that their needs are identified and that both teacher and attached assistant know the targets on each pupil's education plan. Teachers and assistants liaise closely in planning and reviewing learning targets for individual lessons. As a result of the support they receive the pupils focus and learn successfully during lessons.

Equal opportunities

27. All groups of pupils, including those with specific needs, and boys and girls, are equally motivated by teachers' strategies. Teaching assistants make particularly important contributions to the teaching and learning process to ensure that all pupils are included. Teachers plan more challenging work for higher attaining pupils than they did at the time of the last inspection. However, sometimes the work set is not quite at the right level. In one mathematics lesson, for example, the task for this group was too challenging and the pupils had great difficulty with it. In a different mathematics lesson, the more-able pupils were comparing weights above and below one kilogram and they found this relatively easy.

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

28. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum with a stimulating range of learning opportunities. It is relevant to pupils' current needs and interests and prepares them effectively for the next stage in their education. The story-based activities for the Foundation Stage are particularly relevant to pupils' interests. The curriculum at Key Stage 1 is at its strongest where teachers note natural links between subjects and use these to support pupils' learning. The school organises a wide variety of additional activities to sustain close links with the local community and surrounding schools. These greatly enhance the normal timetabled curriculum. Arrangements for personal, social and health education are satisfactory, with the recent introduction of Circle Time set to improve further this aspect of the school's provision. Teachers' inclusive approach ensures equal opportunities for all. All statutory requirements are met fully.

29. The school has addressed fully the issues raised by the last inspection. Design is now fully integrated into art and design and technology and Foundation Stage planning gives due attention to the development of early literacy and numeracy skills. The introduction of the national literacy and numeracy strategies, and the adoption and adaptation of planning schemes for all National Curriculum subjects and religious education, have strengthened planning. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection.

Curriculum planning

29. The school gives suitable priority to literacy and numeracy without squeezing the time available for other subjects. Teachers' planning for literacy follows the national strategy, with teachers adapting this to suit the needs of pupils when necessary. The consistent pattern of lessons contributes clearly to the high standards attained in English. The school has similarly adopted the national strategy for numeracy and developed weekly lesson planning based on this, although there is room for more regular, routine focus on the daily brisk practice of mental and oral skills.
30. Amid considerable staffing changes, teachers have worked hard to review and improve timetabling and planning for each of the other subjects. The school has good planning frameworks in place across the curriculum. The current staffing situation in Key Stage 1 requires particularly careful timetabling and planning to ensure effective teaching, as the three teachers taking the class liaise with each other. Strong teamwork is evident and all staff are open to reviewing current arrangements in the light of effectiveness. One area for attention is the long religious education session, currently linked only with ICT. Another is the planning for separate year group music lessons, to ensure that Year 2 pupils are challenged sufficiently. A particular strength is the way staff organise brisk physical education sessions. This requires considerable teamwork and results in effective, time-limited sessions, which teachers use well, as they demand a brisk pace and full focus.

Planning for mixed age and ability in Years 1 and 2

31. In all subjects, teachers plan effectively to meet the varying needs and abilities of pupils in the mixed age class. Teachers in the Key Stage 1 class recognise the need to liaise closely and are each aware of the groupings of pupils for different subjects. The variety of groupings for different subjects, sometimes in year groups, sometimes in mixed ability and sometimes in ability groups, is chosen carefully to match the purpose of the lessons. In literacy and numeracy lessons, ability groupings are the main organisational system, whereas in physical education and music, the school organises separate year group lessons. In other subjects, such as religious education, the school often selects mixed ability and mixed age groupings. The three teachers who take the class have considered carefully the issues of continuity and their own particular expertise in choosing how to timetable the week. The decision to take separate subject responsibilities and ensure continuity this way offers a positive solution to curriculum management. The three teachers and the support staff liaise closely to link learning across subjects where possible and to agree common expectations. This thoughtful planning contributes positively to both pupils' academic and personal development.

Curriculum for the Foundation Stage

32. The Curriculum for the Foundation Stage is very well planned and offers children a very good balance of activities across all six areas of learning. Alongside the structured timetable for class and group learning, the teacher plans a range of available additional activities from which children can choose. These are often linked to a focused theme and the most successful themes have been story-based. Currently pupils enjoy role-play, construction, investigation, writing and looking at books in connection with 'Goldilocks'. Their previous studies and activities stemmed from reading 'Cinderella'. A banquet at the ball had involved children creating four-course menus, sending out invitations, preparing the banquet, dressing up and welcoming the Fairy Godmother headteacher as one of the star guests. This example symbolises the relevance and fun of the learning opportunities offered. Children of all abilities find the activities interesting and fun.

Equal opportunities

33. The curriculum offers equality of opportunity for all pupils in all subjects. Pupils with special educational needs are rarely withdrawn for extra support. When they are, it is only for a brief and appropriate session, for example, speech therapy. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and the school seeks to set them appropriately challenging targets. Boys and girls receive equal attention in discussion and have similar access to all activities.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs

34. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below average. Provision for these pupils is very good overall, with very good arrangements for teachers and assistants to work together to plan suitable targets for pupils' individual education plans, in accordance with the national code of practice.

Personal, social and health education

35. The school makes sound provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. All staff are very good role models in the way they relate to each other and to pupils, showing respect, understanding and sensitivity. The school has agreed procedures for sex education and education about drugs awareness. These areas are covered both as part of the science curriculum and in the context of specific personal and social education sessions, as in Circle Times.

Additional activities, including visits and visitors and community links

36. The school provides a good range of activities to enhance the basic curriculum, including a lunchtime recorder club for Year 2 pupils. There are no regular after-school clubs, but the school participates in a range of annual community and area events, each of which offers opportunity for pupils to enjoy displaying their skills. The school participates in an area music festival. It organises country dancing and Maypole dancing at local village events and pupils present concerts in the local church and to members of the local Age Concern organisation. Annual Christian celebrations such as Mothering Sunday and Harvest Festival involve children as part of the local community, where they sing, read and share their work. The celebration of World Book Day offers an exciting opportunity to dress up and make favourite book characters come to life. Interesting venues for visits include the local church, the Roald Dahl Museum and the historic buildings in Aylesbury. The visits to Aylesbury, where the school links with another that has pupils from a range of ethnic backgrounds, offer particularly rich cultural experiences. Visitors to the school, such as the local Anglican and Methodist ministers and police officer, also support pupils' learning. Parents are very appreciative of the efforts of teachers to maintain such a range of additional activities.

Links with partner institutions

37. Links with partner institutions are very good. Children's smooth transition into school is fostered very well by the 'Chicks Club' sessions, good liaison with the playgroup and Parents as First Teachers (PAFT) sessions, all fully supported by the school. Pupils are well prepared for their transfer at the end of Year 2 and the headteacher is alert to opportunities for developing agreed curriculum planning with the neighbouring combined school, to ensure no themes are repeated in Year 3. The school's links with others in the context of its Beacon status are a benefit both to the other schools and to the school itself in the sharing of ideas and planning.

Provision for pupils' personal development (including spiritual, moral social and cultural development)

38. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. This maintains the strong picture noted at the last inspection.

Spiritual development

39. The school offers very good opportunities in religious education lessons and during collective worship for pupils to have time for reflection and to develop a sense of awe and wonder. The school has also recently introduced Circle Times to give pupils further a chance to listen thoughtfully to each other's ideas and to value each other. In a Year 1/2 lesson, pupils empathised with the disciples in the storm on the Sea of Galilee, imagining what it would be like to be in a storm. They showed a genuine sense of wonder as they read out information following brief research into storms and gasped as they heard about the speed and heat of lightning. In one assembly, pupils learned about the contribution of Toy Box Charity to the children of Guatemala. They had previously made a collection for these children, which they handed over personally to the aid workers. In another assembly based around the week's theme of 'Kindness', Year 2 pupils hung kindness bands on the twigs of a kindness tree, following the celebration of the Buddhist festival of Wesak. The pattern of enthusiastic singing also makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual development, as they join together readily to sing songs of praise. The school also links closely with the local shared Anglican/Methodist Church, with ministers visiting regularly and the school playing a full part in the spiritual life of the village through participation in annual Christian festivals.

Moral and Social development

40. The school fosters pupils' moral and social development very well. Within lessons and at playtimes the school encourages regular collaborative learning and play. At lunchtimes, the staff routinely sit with the pupils for lunch, ensuring that the shared meal is a pleasant social experience. Both classes enjoy a brief drink after morning play and especially in the reception class; this snack is a social occasion that forms part of the school's provision for personal development. All staff provide excellent role models for the pupils in the way they relate to each other and to the pupils. In each class, teachers have discussed and agreed class rules with their pupils and the Year 1/2 class have written and illustrated theirs themselves. The rules are displayed in both classes. The award of team points for effort, good work and thoughtful actions helps everyone remember that they are part of a community. The award of a rosette to the winning team each week is sufficient to maintain a very positive ethos throughout the school, where sanctions are rarely needed. Teachers help pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and they develop respect for one another through the way they discuss matters as they arise in class.
41. The school provides a number of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility. One notable pattern is the way an assistant brings a different pupil each day to choose the music and operate the CD-player at the start and end of assembly. In the reception class, staff promote independence very well, showing patience as they wait for children to manage their own coat buttons, for example. The older pupils also show good independence in changing for physical education lessons, but the high level of adult support in literacy and numeracy lessons means that pupils have less frequent opportunity to develop their independent learning skills than is intended by the national strategies.
42. Provision for pupils' cultural development is also very good. The local traditions of Maypole and country dancing are nurtured through annual participation in local events. The tradition of Mothering Sunday, started by a local family, is remembered through a

parents' assembly held in school. The school also plans opportunities in subjects such as art, music and history for pupils to discover about various world cultures. A link with another local school in Aylesbury with a mixed ethnic population is used particularly well to foster pupils' understanding of the multicultural nature of the British Isles today. The school's religious education planning shows that due attention is given to the study of other religions, though none was apparent at the time of the inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

Health, Safety and Care of all pupils

43. The school has very good procedures in place for the proper care, safety and security of all of its pupils. There are very good policies in place for health and safety, guidelines for school trips, educational visits, emergency procedures and medicines in school. All staff are actively involved with the pastoral care of all children. They have good local knowledge, which contributes to the community nature of the school. This strong caring ethos was recognised as a part of the Beacon award. The very experienced nursery nurse works with the youngest children and forms an excellent link with the parents. The Parents as First Teachers (PAFT) organisation has a base in the school and the staff make very early contact with new parents. Very good liaison between the staff and local playgroups and the 'Chicks' pre-school club which meets at the school helps to build the confidence of the parents and children prior to starting school.
44. The lunchtime supervisors are briefed well on procedures and on consistent expectations and management of the pupils. All staff join the children for lunch in a warm, family atmosphere.
45. The governors fulfil their responsibilities for health and safety very well through the premises committee. The responsible governor is very vigilant in monitoring the premises and grounds during his frequent visits and conducts regular formal surveys of the whole school. Any findings are recorded and reported fully to the whole governing body. Staff are also active in monitoring aspects of health and safety in lessons and at breaktimes. In addition, the county conducts expert health and safety visits and is due to inspect the safety of trees on the site. The school has used its very close working relationship with the parish council to lobby for traffic calming measures and longer speed restriction segments on the main road which passes the school. The parish has provided a safe parking area near to the school. All physical education, electrical and fire equipment is checked regularly under service contracts.

Child Protection

46. The comprehensive policy for child protection, which is based on the county guidelines, has been reviewed and endorsed this term by staff and governors. The headteacher and nursery nurse share the child protection responsibilities and training. All staff, including those appointed recently are familiar with the policy and procedures.

Measures to promote good behaviour and prevent oppressive behaviour

47. Very good policies and procedures are in place to help to ensure good behaviour and discipline. These are supplemented by clear guidelines on exclusions, anti-bullying and physical restraint. Close liaison between all staff ensures consistent management of the pupils throughout the day. Staff supervise the children well at breaktimes and lunchtimes. There is provision for the recording of any incidents but there is no evidence of any significant poor behaviour or bullying issues. Personal development is monitored throughout the year by the teachers and support staff due to their intimate knowledge of the pupils.

Measures to promote good attendance

48. Registers are marked promptly at the beginning of each session. Any late arrivals are recorded and monitored by the administrator. Although attendance is very good, the staff monitor any absences. Parents are made aware that they should inform the school promptly of the reasons any absences. Holidays during the term are discouraged and are at a relatively low level. The education welfare officer also checks attendance regularly. The few late arrivals during the year are recorded properly and monitored closely.

Assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic progress

49. The school has made good improvement in refining assessment procedures since the last inspection. The procedures now in place are very good. They are manageable for teachers and effective in providing information to share with headteacher, other staff, parents and pupils. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' progress as they move through the school are clear in most subjects. They are very effective in reading, writing, mathematics, science and physical education. As well as the statutory assessments in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 2, teachers carry out regular spelling and reading assessments.

Assessment procedures in the Foundation Stage

50. When children first enter the school they are carefully assessed in liaison with their parents to identify particular strengths and weaknesses. Children's special educational needs are therefore identified early and they receive good support. Children showing particular gifts and talents also receive early recognition. The reception class assessment system is particularly effective. The teacher has been using the newly introduced national Foundation Stage profile to highlight children's progress in each area specified. Using simple colour coding, she has tracked children's progress each half term and can see at a glance who needs to concentrate on which skills next.

Using assessment information as a basis for planning

51. The school makes very good use the information derived from assessments. In this small school teachers know all pupils very well and use day-to-day spoken assessment comments effectively to help prompt, support and challenge pupils in their daily work. Teachers use assessment to form groups in literacy and numeracy lessons and to set termly targets for pupils in Years 1 and 2 in these subjects. The school uses assessments to set annual targets in English, mathematics and science for individuals and year groups in terms of National Curriculum levels. A clearly accessible monitoring and target sheet for each year group gives a very clear overview for the headteacher and teachers needing the information. Some targets for individual pupils are pasted in the front of their literacy books, but these refer exclusively to handwriting, phonics and spelling. The school has not yet shared fully the process of looking at targets in writing with parents in order to enlist their support most effectively. That said, teachers use both formal and informal parent-teacher consultations to share information about what pupils need to do and the sharing of reading and spelling tasks for homework offers clear guidance to parents in these aspects of their children's learning.

Assessment of pupils with special educational needs

52. The school's practice has been to identify pupils with special educational needs at the beginning of the reception year. Good use is made of this early assessment information to pinpoint needs and appropriate support for children in the reception year. In Years 1 and 2 this appropriate support continues, so that pupils make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

Parents' views of the school

53. The school's partnership with parents is excellent. In the questionnaires all parents felt that behaviour in the school is good, that the school expects the children to work hard and is helping them to become more mature. Almost all parents also felt that the children like school, are making good progress and get the right amount of homework. Similar proportions feel that the teaching is good, the school is well led and managed and works closely with parents, including providing good information on how well the children are getting on. Almost all would feel comfortable approaching the school. These views were echoed in the meeting for parents. All evidence during the inspection strongly confirms this very positive picture. Twenty percent of parents who responded felt that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside of lessons. In their written comments and views expressed at the meeting most parents felt that after-school clubs are not appropriate for these young children. The inspectors agree with this view. There is a recorder club but more significantly the school organises a good range of visits and visitors to broaden the children's curricular experiences. These activities include participation in village and church events and many visitors from the local community during the year.

The information provided by the school

54. The quality of the information provided by the school for parents is very good. This includes the well-presented, informative prospectus and governors' annual report to parents. The level of satisfaction with information, including progress, expressed at the meeting and in the questionnaires was much higher than that shown in most schools. The very regular letters and newsletters are personalised for all parents. These are friendly and of good quality covering a wide range of topics to keep parents well informed.
55. The end of year pupil reports are of very good quality. The pattern in all subjects is to highlight the coverage of the curriculum in italics followed by detailed information on subject strengths and weaknesses for each child in each subject. These include targets where appropriate. There are also very good sections on personal, social and health education and on overall personal development. The children add useful comments on their perceptions of their achievements, preferences and areas for improvement. Most parents also comment on the reports.

Parents' support

56. The contribution of parents to their children's learning at school and at home is also a considerable strength. When children start school, parents, together with their children, complete a very helpful entry form, carefully designed by the local education authority, which gives a very full record of the children's abilities, likes and dislikes, as well as necessary formal information. Several parents are involved in PAFT. Some help run the local playgroup and others the Chicks Club. Both these organisations are founded on the strong partnership created between school and parents in the locality. The school's links with parents as their children start school and throughout the reception year are excellent. These provide a very positive grounding for the continued close partnership between home and school throughout the children's time at Dagnall. This naturally promotes positive attitudes towards school among the children and, in turn, successful learning.
57. Parents find the staff very approachable and welcoming. They are pleased to be involved in helping with homework and welcome the advice given by the school to help their children with reading. A good number of parents help regularly in the classrooms. The home-school agreement has been in place for three years and was produced after

consultation with governors and parents. Almost all parents sign and return these and the few who do not on principle are nonetheless active, supportive parents. Many parents support assemblies and services at the parish church. There are excellent turnouts for consultation evenings with teachers and the open mornings, which provide opportunities to view work. The Friends' Association is very active in supporting school with additional funds and building and maintaining the very close partnership. The committee meetings are attended regularly by staff.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Introduction – a time of change

58. The leadership of the school has changed since the last inspection and a new headteacher was appointed this January. The school has also altered considerably since the last inspection. It is now an infant school and no longer admits Year 3 pupils, as it did then, and the number on roll has increased considerably. All the teaching staff, except for one, have moved away, and several governors are new to the school this year. An acting headteacher managed the school during the previous term and staff felt some insecurity as a result of the many changes.

Leadership and management of the new headteacher

59. Since her appointment, the new headteacher has acquired a view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She has had to cope with the immediate appointment of two part-time teachers following the unexpected departure of a newly appointed teacher at the beginning of this term. The school caretaker also became ill during this time creating the need for the headteacher to make alternate arrangements for the cleaning and security of the school. Despite having to concentrate on these immediate tasks, the headteacher has established a secure team who work especially well together. She has achieved this by involving all teaching and non-teaching staff in the decision-making process, valuing their contributions and making sure that they have the resources and the time they need to carry out their responsibilities. As a result, all staff feel secure again and relationships within the school are excellent.
60. The new headteacher has good management skills and she has ensured that all staff have been involved in performance management this term as well as fulfilling her role as a class teacher. She is well organised and has managed to continue many of the Beacon initiatives that the school is involved in. It is relatively early for the headteacher to establish her own vision for the school although she does aspire to the aims already in place. She is committed to the pastoral care of children and staff and also to ensuring that the individual needs of each child are addressed. She is an experienced infant teacher with a good understanding of how effective pre-school provision can help children to make a successful start to their first year in school. There is no deputy at the school; however one teacher holds a management responsibility post mainly for the co-ordination of special educational needs and early years.

Co-ordination of early years provision

61. The reception teacher co-ordinates the work with children in the Foundation Stage very well. Liaison with parents and other early years providers is excellent. The curriculum is exciting and assessment systems are thorough. In this small school, strong teamwork among all staff ensures good continuity between the Foundation Stage and Year 1.

Role of subject co-ordinators

62. As staff numbers are low, each teacher, including the headteacher, carries a wide range of responsibilities. With two of the four teachers being new to the school this term, inevitably, most are just beginning to understand the strengths and weaknesses within their subject responsibilities. However, members of staff give good support to the headteacher by carrying out their roles and responsibilities effectively and efficiently. Priorities for each subject are agreed as a staff so that key staff can take the lead when appropriate. New subject co-ordinators have made a good start in reviewing resources and developing planning and they have the potential to lead their individual subjects well.

School improvement planning

63. The previous headteacher worked with the governors to draft a programme of improvement for the current year. It is well organised and provides an overview of initiatives in curriculum, management, community and premises, together with action plans for each area. It sets a useful agenda for the new headteacher in her first year. The improvement plan appropriately identifies performance indicators, who will be involved, timescales and specific tasks. However, the financial implications of some important initiatives are not included, and this is a weakness. The plan also only covers targets for the current year and needs to be extended to include longer term planning, in sensible outline.

The management of special educational needs and inclusion

64. The school provides equal opportunities for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. A new special needs co-ordinator was appointed last January. She has been at the school for a few years and knows the pupils and their parents well. Management of this aspect is very good. She works closely with the other teachers and parents in devising individual education plans and in the regular review of pupils' progress. She ensures that outside agencies such as speech and language therapists are used to provide additional input when required. The governor for special educational needs is also closely involved with the provision for the special educational needs pupils. The governor and the co-ordinator meet regularly and a report is prepared for feedback to the full governing body.

Very effective governing body

65. The members of the governing body support the work of the headteacher and staff very well. Governors are fully involved in the life and work of the school through curriculum links with staff, regular visits and attendance at school functions and events. A number of governors work in classrooms on a regular basis, for example giving time to help pupils use information and communication technology equipment and listening to pupils read. Through these procedures and specific termly meetings, they monitor the extent of progress towards the school's priorities. Governors also analyse available data on standards to ensure that all pupils are achieving well. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when the monitoring by governors was an issue for improvement. The chair of governors, who is relatively new to the post, has established a good working relationship with the new headteacher. He is aware of the need for governors to become more involved in shaping the future direction of the school through longer term strategic planning. All statutory requirements are met.

Financial planning

66. The school has addressed effectively the key issue from the previous inspection of developing the role of governors in monitoring the work of the school and in budget setting. The governors are very active at all stages of planning and monitor outcomes well. They plan annual expenditure taking into account information on standards achieved. A high priority is given to maintaining a good level of very good quality staffing.

The school's successes ensure that the majority of parents from Dagnall send their children to the school and almost two-thirds of the children are from other villages. Consequently the numbers on roll are the highest they have been since Dagnall became an infant school. The additional funding from these increased numbers has been used in part to redevelop the old kitchen into a teaching area and to improve wheel-chair access. The unsustainable swimming pool area has been re-designed as an early years outside area.

67. Class size funding will reduce by half next year and then to zero the following year. There is flexibility in some of the staff appointments but the staff and governors do not have any longer term financial planning which outlines a range of scenarios depending on staffing, pupil numbers and funding. The substantial reserve accumulated by the school will increase again at the end of the current year to a level, which is approximately equivalent to 25 per cent of expenditure. This is considerably higher the official guidance of 5 per cent. Although it might be desirable for a small school to hold a reserve in excess of the guideline there are no clear plans for the use of this money over the next few years.

Principles of best value

68. The school makes good use of the principles of best value in its expenditure decisions. The service contracts are reviewed annually and recently an alternative grounds maintenance contractor was chosen to secure better value for money. There is extensive consultation between governors and staff with governors fully involved in planning and monitoring expenditure. There is a substantial amount of voluntary work by parents, governors, staff and members of the local community who use their expertise for the benefit of the school. The parish council has provided outdoor seating, sign boards and has helped with the school's web site. The parents are very supportive particularly through the Friends of Dagnall School, which raised £3700 last year to supplement resources. This is very good support for a small school.
69. The school is aware of its relatively high costs from comparative information provided by the county and its close contacts with other schools, which it supports through the Beacon initiative. Good examples of efficient arrangements are the maintenance and repair services provided by the cleaner in charge and the flexible use of the teaching areas. Effective use is made of the strong local partnerships and consortia of primary and secondary schools. These provide some shared training and expertise.

Financial control

70. The administration gives excellent support to the whole school. This is particularly important with the teaching commitment of the headteacher and the support for other schools provided through the Beacon scheme. There are excellent routines and records in place to ensure the smooth running of the school. The most recent auditor's report in June 2002 found that the financial systems and procedures were excellent. All requirements on financial accountability, management information, financial planning, budgeting, separation of responsibilities and school fund management were all being met fully. The school uses all income from special grants, including the Beacon funding, for the purposes intended.

Value for money

71. Overall the attainment of the pupils on entry to the school is average and the socio-economic circumstances of their families are above average. The unit costs are very high due to the size of the school and are inflated further by the Beacon funding which benefits other schools. Taking these factors together with the good teaching, good

personal development of the pupils and good standards of work seen during the inspection, the school is giving good value for money.

Staffing

72. The school is generously staffed with appropriately qualified teachers. Consequently the classes are small and the school is arranged in two classes with all the reception children in one and Year 1 and 2 in the other. One teacher teaches the reception class whilst the headteacher and two additional part-time teachers share the other class. Most of these staff have been appointed this term and the very good team spirit is witness to effective induction procedures. There are a good number of experienced classroom and special needs assistants to provide appropriate help for individuals and small groups in classes, most usually in the literacy and numeracy sessions. The school secretary is extremely efficient and well organised. The caretaker, although absent during the inspection, maintains the school well. Lunchtime supervisors are helpful and encouraging.

Accommodation

73. The school's accommodation is satisfactory and allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. The two main classrooms are light and airy and organised effectively into activity areas. There is an additional room used by both classes and also for whole school assemblies each day. There is no hall but the reception classroom has fixed wall bars and ropes for use in physical education. Once a week the furniture in this classroom is removed to allow the whole school to experience indoor physical education and this is an effective way of ensuring that all aspects of physical education can be offered. The school has been extended in previous years with the most recent addition providing a small staffroom and indoor lavatories for the pupils. A new heating system is due to be installed soon and this will also improve the accommodation once unsightly pipes are removed. There is currently a problem with dampness on one of the outside walls. The governors are aware of this and are seeking ways of addressing the problem. Externally, the school has a large hard playground, areas of grass and an environmental area, all of which are well used for recreation and to deliver the curriculum. There is now a secure fenced area for reception children and this is used well to extend and enhance learning. The provision of this area is an improvement since the last inspection.

Learning resources

74. Resources are generally adequate and in some areas, such as information and communication technology, these are good. The school has a generous number of books and seeks to increase resources as appropriate.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

75. In order to build on the strengths of the school the headteacher, staff and governors need to improve:

The plans to develop the school further over the next few years, ensuring that proposed initiatives are properly costed and funds are fully utilised by:

- setting clear priorities for curriculum and staffing needs;
- allocating funding specifically to support the agreed priorities;
- ensuring that the costs of individual initiatives are identified in action plans;
- extending the current one year improvement plan with outline planning for at least the next two years.

(Reference paragraphs: 63, 65, 67)

Minor issues

The headteacher, staff and governors might consider including the following minor issues in its action plan:

Enable pupils to have better understanding of their learning by:

- using appropriate language to share learning objectives with pupils at the start of each lesson so they always understand what concept or skill they will be acquiring;
- making time to review and share what pupils have learned at the close of each lesson.

(Reference paragraphs: 21, 23, 103, 110, 146)

Improve the provision and quality of class music teaching by:

- reviewing the best way of co-ordinating new staff expertise to organise lessons in the most effective manner;
- increasing the level of challenge in order to capture pupils' enthusiastic participation.

(Reference paragraphs: 138, 139, 141, 142)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	16
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	2	8	5	0	0	0
Percentage	6	13	50	31	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	38
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0
Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4
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	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

School data	2.8%
National comparative data	5.4%

Unauthorised absence

School data	0%
National comparative data	0.5%

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	6	5	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	5	5	5
	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	5	5	5
	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	38
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	19

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	72

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Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	187015
Total expenditure	163163
Expenditure per pupil	4662
Balance brought forward from previous year	16485
Balance carried forward to next year	40337

Recruitment of teachers

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

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	39
Number of questionnaires returned	20

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	25	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	75	20	0	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	45	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	55	0	5	0
The teaching is good.	80	10	0	0	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	75	20	0	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	90	5	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	80	20	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	75	20	0	0	5
The school is well led and managed.	70	20	0	0	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	30	5	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	30	15	5	15

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

76. Children's skills and abilities on entry to school show a wide range, but are broadly average overall when they start school in the reception class in the autumn term before their fifth birthday. They make good progress in all six areas of learning. A few reach the early learning goals before the end of their reception year and almost all reach them by the end of the Foundation Stage. The only area needing more attention is the musical aspect of creative development. This is recognised by the school. Overall, the school has made good improvement in its provision for the youngest children. It has addressed the issues raised by the last inspection and now gives good attention to children's early communication, language and literacy skills, and to their mathematical development.
77. The youngest children in the year group attend mornings only initially but after Christmas all children stay in school for the full day. Visits by pre-school children and their parents to the class and by the reception teacher to the playgroup in the summer term contribute positively to a very full set of arrangements, which make starting school a positive experience. Close links with parents are a strength of the school's provision for children's development during the reception year. Parents readily participate in school events and involve themselves fully in the themes the children are following. They support readily with home learning, regularly sharing books with their children and helping them match words for example.
78. One of the main strengths of the Foundation Stage provision is the excellent teamwork between teacher and assistant. Children receive very good help and support straight away because of the close liaison with parents and early identification of needs and talents. The facilities, both indoor and outdoor, are very good and staff use them very well to promote achievement in all six areas of learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

79. Teaching in this area of learning is very good. Children make very good progress in the development of their personal, social and emotional skills. By the time they start Year 1, almost all have reached the early learning goals. Children progress successfully because of the regular routines, friendly atmosphere and the clear expectations of the staff. Sessions are well structured and the indoor and outdoor resources are well organised. Children feel secure. Children respond very well to the model of excellent relationships between teacher and assistant. They show friendship and care for each other. Most listen very well to staff and other children in discussions, although one or two find it difficult to sustain concentration when they have to sit and wait their turn for too long. For the most part, the teacher organises a very effective balance of active and sedentary pursuits. For example, the class put on their coats and marched out to the top of the hill after a twenty-minute singing practice in the hall. They sang and acted out 'the farmer's in his den' and danced 'in and out of the dusty bluebells' before coming in to sit together as a class to look at a big book. As well as ensuring full enjoyment and participation in all of the learning, this sequence also promoted good independence, with children doing up their own coat buttons and fetching and hanging up their own coats.
80. Children also show independence when they change for gymnastics sessions. They take turns and share materials and equipment well, as when creating dens for bears or making towers out of Lego. Children work and play in a range of groups and with a variety of equipment. This helps develop their social skills. They showed excellent

collaborative skills when working with the Roamer and with a digital camera. Children have opportunity to choose their own activities from a prepared range and sustain interest and concentration in their chosen pursuits, often collaborating with each other helpfully. At other times they work in small groups under adult direction. Children's behaviour is very good in the main. Where staff need to manage occasional immature reactions, they manage this well. Children have clearly developed good awareness of the difference between right and wrong.

Communication, language and literacy

81. Teaching and learning in this area are good. Children achieve well because the teacher provides interesting contexts for communication and writing and because the teaching of reading is well organised. Most children reach the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.
82. Teacher and assistant provide children with plenty of informal opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills in one-to-one, small group and whole class situations. The teacher encourages them to listen to instructions carefully in the class setting. During small group and one-to-one conversations during children's practical activities, both teacher and assistant engage children continuously in focused conversation about their activities, promoting good language development. Children thoroughly enjoy the opportunities for role-play, associated with the fairy story themes, dressing up and acting out episodes from Goldilocks and Cinderella this term. Their communication skills also benefit from the many daily opportunities to sing songs, rhymes and jingles, many with associated actions, which stimulate their minds, broaden their vocabulary and improve the fluency of their speech.
83. The school puts a strong emphasis on helping pupils develop phonic skills effectively. In sessions seen, children showed good knowledge of initial sounds and some consonant pairs, such as 'ch'. They know the sounds and how to write them. They enjoy relating them to associated actions. Children enjoy listening to stories and looking together at big books. When looking at big books together, the teacher positions children so that they can all see the text and involves all children in responding to her well-focused questions. Occasionally, the attempt to involve each in turn takes too long, as when asking children to take turns sounding out words in order to spell them, with the result that one or two children become restless. Children each have a book from the school's chosen reading scheme and all take their books home to share with their parents or carers. They play word-matching games at home and at school, using words from the books they are reading. The teacher recognises children's differing abilities and rates of progress and works closely with parents to provide books and activities, which will support the children effectively. This sharing of information and strategies has a very positive impact on children's attitudes and their progress.
84. Children are developing their writing skills well. All write their names clearly in a relevant context, as on Mother's Day Cards. Some already form a few words independently and a few write in sentences, describing where they travelled on a magic carpet for instance. They show good awareness of phonics and a readiness to risk using the vocabulary they need to express what they have to say. One child showed well-developed skills, when writing unaided ' I saw a lak wif green crocodils'. The teacher ensures that children write for genuine purposes, as when issuing invitations to Cinderella's banquet at the ball or when listing each course on the menu for example.

Mathematical development

85. Most children reach the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. A few higher attainers reach them before the end of their reception year. Children make good progress in developing their mathematical understanding and skills because they concentrate on practical activities in meaningful contexts. Teaching in this area of learning is good, focusing well on the development of mathematical vocabulary.
86. Children count confidently to twenty. Higher attainers work out different ways of making 20p using coins. One used coin stamps and simple sentences to tell a number story: 'I took 20p. I bought (picture). It cost 16p. 4p change.' This example shows good recognition and challenge for higher attainers, with work again firmly based in real situations that are relevant and interesting to the children. Children understand what 'o'clock' looks like on clock faces and show illustrations of the progress of Cinderella's day, accompanied by the clock showing the hour. Children use mathematical language confidently, understanding up, down, above, below, behind, more than and less than, for example. In one lesson observed, the teacher used humour well to stimulate children's interest in comparing how heavy or light objects are and whether they would balance. Children enjoyed comparing a plastic elephant and spider to see which was heavier and looking at the link between size and weight, using large and small containers. One child recognised that the 500g weight was in the shape of a hexagon. The teacher used good questioning and clear demonstration in this session, but the class worked together for a little too long, giving children insufficient time to explore balancing themselves. By the end of the session, children recognised that larger items are not always heavier than smaller ones.
87. Children are well supported in their mathematical development by both teacher and assistant. Ongoing records show which children need support with each aspect of their development and children of all abilities are therefore well supported. All children enjoy the regular singing and chanting of number songs and rhymes and play simple counting games at odd moments throughout the school day. They recognise the names of simple shapes, estimate and measure with non-standard units. They collect information and make block graphs, using a tally of favourite starters, main courses and desserts to plan Cinderella's banquet feast for example.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

88. Teaching is very good in most aspects of this area and the teaching and learning in one lesson using ICT equipment was excellent. As a result, children of all abilities make very good progress and almost all meet the early learning goals, several going beyond them, by the time they start in Year 1.
89. Teachers make very good use of the story themes to involve children in enjoyable practical experiences related to the story theme. During the inspection, in relation to the Goldilocks theme, children were making dens for different kinds of bear. They chose the colour for their den according to the environment in which the different kinds of bear live, and selected from a range of materials and paints available to create their den. They had discovered information about grizzly bears, brown bears, koala bears and polar bears, using books and a computer CD-rom. The teacher had then created a class information book about bears, using the children's findings. The teacher carefully interweaves children's focus on knowledge and understanding of the world with their early writing and drawing skills. For example, children represented their knowledge of the story of the first Christmas in zigzag picture books showing sequential illustrations. They were set the task of making a shaker at home and then at school, gave instructions for someone else to make a shaker.

90. In the lesson using computer equipment, the teacher introduced the Roamer device as a person who needed instructions to go for a walk safely to meet one of the teddies from the home corner. The involvement of the teaching assistant to sit alongside the children and share the excitement of estimating how many moves it would take to reach teddy added to children's enthusiastic and thoughtful participation. Small groups of children used the cassette recorder under supervision to tell the story of Goldilocks and the teacher helped children themselves operate the digital camera to take pictures of each other with their bears. The thorough planning, organisation and teamwork behind this range of activities led to highly successful learning, with children showing high levels of confidence, effort, imagination and skill.

Physical development

91. Children make very good progress in their physical development because of the very effective teaching in lessons using floor and apparatus and because of the very good opportunities for regular outdoor energetic activities. All children have reached the early learning goals before they enter Year 1.
92. During indoor class lessons in the reception classroom, routinely transformed into a gymnastics hall once a week over lunch by enthusiastic staff, the teaching is very good and children attain high standards. They listen and follow instructions very well. Each group shows very good ability in running and lifting their legs high off the floor in their twisting jumps. They move imaginatively around the floor, sliding and crawling, then refining these movements after watching demonstrations by children picked out by the teacher for their thoughtful work. They balance well; choosing which part of their body will be highest when they freeze. In partner work, they excel in changing their movements immediately to mimic those of the leader as they shadow each other. They follow instructions sensibly when collaborating to get out benches, mats and tables safely. They make very good use of the brisk sessions on each piece of apparatus in turn to show how they can move over and under the pole, wall bars, bench and tables.
93. The staff ensure regular daily opportunities for less directed physical activity in the well-resourced and thoughtfully-landscaped area outside the classroom. Here children enjoy exercise on a variety of wheeled toys and small apparatus. They also use the outdoor area for singing and dancing circle games and rhymes, marching up the mound like the Grand Old Duke of York before circle dancing 'In and Out the Dusty Bluebells'. The staff also plan for children to spend as much time as possible in the outdoor area undertaking other pursuits when the weather permits. The direct access from the reception room enables staff to use the outdoor area as an extension of the classroom, so that creative and design and making activities in particular can be pursued outside as well as in. Children show good dexterity with pencils, scissors and spatulas, as well as with lego and other construction equipment.

Creative development

94. Children make good progress in their creative development because of the good teaching and regular accessibility of resources in this area. Most children reach the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Children thoroughly enjoy engaging in role-play connected to the Goldilocks and Cinderella themes, for example. The role play areas within the classroom contain a good array of dressing up clothes and the outdoor area offers further space for children to act out Goldilocks' day. No directed art activities were seen during the inspection, but work displayed shows bold paintings of monsters and a number of illustrations of wishes, linked to Cinderella's wish, and rules, alongside the agreed class rules. A large collage of the Goldilocks story contains a mix of adult and children's work. Children's musical development is supported very well by the whole school weekly singing sessions, in which reception

children play a full and enthusiastic part. The reception teacher recognises a need to involve children more in music making to develop their sense of rhythm and build early experiences of using percussion instruments.

Strengths in the Foundation Stage:

- *High standards in physical development and some aspects of children's knowledge and understanding of the world;*
- *excellent team work and some good, very good and excellent teaching and learning;*
- *very good organisation and routines;*
- *very good use of the outdoor area;*
- *very good partnership with parents;*
- *links with parents and other early years education providers when children start school.*

Areas for development:

- *ensure an appropriate pace and time limit in whole class activities where children take turns answering and help all children to listen to each other;*
- *develop the use of musical instruments and rhythm patterns.*

ENGLISH

95. Standards have risen considerably since the last inspection in 1998, when they were average in speaking and listening, reading and writing. The results over the past four years have been consistently well above the national average and frequently the school's performance has ranked in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Compared with similar schools (those with under eight per cent of pupils entitled to free school meals), pupils at Dagnall have achieved standards well above the average. These results clearly show excellent improvement since the last inspection in all aspects of literacy. The very high standard in writing last year was due to a high proportion of pupils achieving beyond the usual level for their age, showing that higher attainers were clearly challenged well by the school.

96. The inspection found that in the current Year 2 standards in reading are well above average and in speaking and listening and writing they are above average. With small numbers of pupils in each year group, all small schools are liable to large fluctuations in comparative standards year by year. Each pupil counts for around eight per cent and one pupil attaining below or above the usual standard for seven-year-olds could make the difference between the school appearing to be above or below average when compared with the national picture. More important in small schools is the progress made by individual pupils since their arrival in the school. At Dagnall, records kept for the current Year 2 since their arrival at the school, together with the record of their own written work this year, show that boys and girls of all abilities achieve well. Higher attainers, pupils of average ability and those with special educational needs are all doing as well as they should.

Speaking and listening

97. In Years 1 and 2 teachers build successfully on the good foundation laid in the reception class. Pupils develop their speaking and listening skills in various subject lessons, as their teachers encourage good listening skills in class discussion sessions. Teachers phrase questions so that pupils need to answer in phrases and sentences rather than giving one-word answers. Most pupils contribute confidently. With a high level of classroom assistance available, pupils often have the chance to develop their speaking and listening skills in small groups. Most pupils listen carefully to their teachers and make suitable responses, but they are less proficient at listening to each other's

comments. Each pupil tends to address the teacher or assistant rather than the class or group, with the result that the conversations are between teacher/assistant and one pupil at a time. Pupils are not always encouraged to be aware of the wider audience.

Reading

98. Almost all pupils make very good progress in reading as a result of the well organised systems for teaching phonics, choosing books, reading at home and more recently, 'guided reading' sessions in school. The school has a range of very good strategies in place to encourage pupils to develop their reading skills. These include regular focus on reading together expressively as a class in literacy lessons and regular 'guided reading' sessions. In these sessions pupils of similar ability read alongside each other copies of a text from the school's chosen reading scheme while the teacher or assistant listens to each in turn. The group then discusses the text together, developing their understanding of the characters and plot, and sometimes of the grammar, punctuation and spelling patterns. In addition to their reading in school, pupils take books home daily. They are encouraged to read their own reading scheme book and to share with those at home their books chosen from the library van. The school also encourages a positive attitude towards reading by organising book events, as on World Book Day, when staff and pupils dressed as book characters.
99. While pupils' reading skills are proficient and they read expressively, few read much outside the school's reading scheme and higher attainers were unable to think of a favourite author, for example, other than Roderick Hunt, the author of the scheme books. Older pupils know how to access information in a non-fiction book by using the index, but the school library is not currently organised in such a way that pupils can help manage it or locate books on different subjects or by different authors from the shelves. Nevertheless, pupils make a very successful start to reading and enjoy the magic key adventures and others written to catch the interest of this age group. Several in both Year 1 and 2 read very confidently and those who hesitate a little use good phonic knowledge to tackle difficult words.

Writing

100. Pupils write for a range of different purposes. They develop their use of vocabulary well in story writing. The recent examples of snow stories show several pupils able to develop a story with a start, middle and an end. The poems on raindrops racing each other down window panes also show expressive use of vocabulary. Almost all pupils show good ability at ordering and phrasing instructions. Higher attainers occasionally use speech marks correctly in their writing and almost all pupils in Year 2 use capital letters at the start of sentences and remember where to put full stops. Marking shows that a few need reminding. Work in both year groups since Christmas, both in literacy books and on displays in the classroom, shows good progress being made by pupils of all abilities. Most pupils are writing at the levels expected for their age, with a third of Year 2 pupils doing better than this. All pupils in Year 2 write in a joined, cursive script. Higher attainers spell almost all the words they use correctly and all pupils make good use of their knowledge of letter sounds to spell phonetically. Written work on display shows a high standard of handwriting and spelling. Both the pieces on walls and in class collections are very attractively presented, helping pupils see themselves as writing for a genuine audience.

Teaching and learning

101. The quality of teaching and learning, both in the literacy hour and in lessons where literacy skills are developed or applied in other subjects, are good. In literacy lessons, the teacher draws close attention to basic skills and also ensures enjoyment in learning to read and write. The planning for these daily lessons is very detailed and preparation

is thorough. In the lesson observed, the teacher made very good use of a book sack to involve pupils in following the sequence and partly acting out 'Peace at Last'. With one pupil using a pointer to guide the class's eyes along the big book text, the teacher ensured very expressive reading and thorough enjoyment of the repetitive phrases. The support assistants make very strong contributions to pupils' learning during the group sessions, though their role during the whole class parts of the lesson could be developed further. The groups and equipment are well organised. Pupils with special educational needs received very good support, ensuring that they participate in whole class sessions and have well-focused, manageable tasks to complete during group times.

102. In one lesson, an adult supported each of four groups. This close level of support ensured that all pupils had good opportunity to participate actively in discussion but in the long term, pupils in such a well-supervised setting would have little room for developing independence in their learning skills. Teachers use homework effectively in developing pupils' reading and spelling skills. Books and a reading record book are sent home daily. Teachers also occasionally send research tasks home. These arrangements involve parents appropriately in their children's learning.
103. A relative weakness is that expectations of when it is acceptable for pupils to participate informally without putting hands up and taking turns. Nor is the use of time in the literacy hour clear. While the school rightly uses the strategy flexibly, pupils still need to know the time limits for individual writing, for example, to ensure full concentration, and they still need time to review and share what they have learned at the close of the lesson. These elements help pupils become more aware themselves of how well they are doing.
104. Overall, day-to-day assessment and marking are effective. Marking strategies have been agreed among the staff team working with the Year 1/2 class and this shows that the school has addressed a weakness highlighted at the last inspection. All teachers make good links to develop pupils' reading and writing skills in other subjects. Research in religious education and letter writing in history are particularly good examples of this.
105. The headteacher is subject co-ordinator and has rapidly gained a comprehensive overview of standards and needs. She is clear about what needs to be done to improve the school's provision and has already purchased further sets of books for guided reading sessions. Resources are good and the school has very good assessment procedures in place. Staff use assessment information well to organise groups and set targets for reading and spelling. There is room for further development in sharing target setting for writing with pupils and parents.

Strengths in English:

- *standards;*
- *good links with other subjects;*
- *support for pupils with special educational needs.*

Areas for development:

- *management of class discussions;*
- *the use of plenary sessions to review targets and achievements*
- *sharing targets in writing.*

MATHEMATICS

106. Results in national tests at the end of Year 2, over the period from 1999 to 2002, have consistently been either above or well above the national average. In 2002, results were again above average and, when compared to similar schools, they were average. To achieve these results, pupils make good progress from their levels of attainment on entry to reception. The current Year 2 pupils are attaining standards that are above the average.
107. The previous inspection found that attainment was above average at the end of Year 2. Attainment remains the same, because there are now more pupils with special educational needs than at the time of the last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning were previously reported to be at least sound but it is now good. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are much improved, and information gathered is used effectively to set individual targets for the pupils. The vast majority of pupils in Years 1 and 2, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well because of effective teaching.
108. In Year 1, most pupils count accurately to 20, and about a third beyond this. They add and subtract confidently to 10 and understand that it is easier to begin with the larger number when adding. They are developing quick mental recall of these addition and subtraction patterns. Their books show that they have experience of ordering numbers to 50 and several have an initial understanding of the place value of digits when writing tens and units. They estimate and measure length, using both standard and non-standard units. Targets attached to the front of pupils' books show recognition of their different levels of attainment, but conversations with pupils show that higher attainers are not being fully challenged. Teaching correctly ensures thorough coverage of the numeracy strategy for Year 1 and planning includes the opportunity for Year 1 pupils to work in groups with Year 2. In practice, pupils of average and below average ability are receiving a thorough grounding, but a few higher attainers are currently working well within themselves.
109. In Year 2, pupils have good understanding of the concepts of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They order numbers up to 100, counting in twos, threes and fives and spotting patterns beginning at a given number. They solve problems involving the use of money to buy different items and describe the properties of common shapes. In one lesson, the teacher provided good opportunities for learning and pupils made good progress in comparing everyday food packages with a one-kilogram weight. They initially estimated whether the product would be lighter or heavier than a kilogram before testing their predication on a balance. A small group of higher attainers were insufficiently challenged by this activity. They could have extended their learning by estimating in grams and kilograms and then accurately weighing using these measures. In another lesson, pupils were given practical opportunities to find a half and a quarter of simple shapes including rectangles, squares and circles. The majority of pupils made good progress in their understanding of these common fractions. However, in this lesson, the extension activity for the higher attaining pupils was too ambitious. The small group of higher attainers struggled with the task and did not achieve the learning objective.
110. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. Pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, benefit from the teachers' very effective use of support staff. Support for individuals and groups of pupils is of a high standard. Good use of questions, for instance at the beginning of numeracy lessons in the Year 1 and 2 class, encourages pupils to explain how they have arrived at an answer and this makes a

positive contribution to learning. Planning is clear and lessons are well structured. Teachers identify learning goals for each lesson in their planning, but do not clarify the main learning points with pupils at the outset or refer to them at the end. As a result, pupils learn by completing the activities, but do not fully appreciate the concept or skill they have consolidated or acquired. Teachers' explanations are invariably clear, and resources, such as counting sticks, are used to good effect. Information and communication technology is used very well to support learning, for instance when pupils in Year 1 were observed using number programs. Pupils' numeracy skills are well used in other subjects, as when they use data handling in science to illustrate the growth of plants. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils make a significant contribution to learning. As a result, pupils enjoy their mathematics and display very good attitudes. They are keen to become involved in whole class sessions and settle quickly to individual tasks. Behaviour is very good and pupils maintain their concentration. Teachers usually give good attention to meeting the needs of the range of abilities amongst pupils in the class, but more able pupils are not always challenged at the right level.

111. The headteacher has taken on the co-ordinator's role for mathematics and she has quickly acquired an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses. With an almost total change of teaching staff this term, she is aware of the need to consolidate the improvements since the last inspection. Resources are adequate and the co-ordinator is investigating ways to improve resources particularly for practical investigations.

Strengths in mathematics:

- *pupils make good progress to achieve above average standards;*
- *the quality of teaching;*
- *relationships between teachers and pupils are very good;*
- *pupils have very good attitudes to their work;*
- *the use of support staff to improve learning;*
- *the use of numeracy in other subjects.*

Areas for development:

- *ensure activities for the higher attaining pupils are always matched to their ability;*
- *share learning objectives with pupils so they always understand what concept or skill they have acquired.*

SCIENCE

112. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2002 show that standards were well above the national average. All pupils achieved the expected level 2, and almost a half achieved the higher level 3. These results suggest that more able pupils were recognised and appropriately challenged. The strongest area was the study of life and living things, although a high proportion of pupils also attained well in experimental and investigative science, compared with the national figure. These teacher assessments show an improvement in standards from the time of the last inspection when the school's results were above average. Pupils reach above average standards in the current Year 2. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 are putting a clear emphasis on investigative work and pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well.
113. During Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress in the acquisition of knowledge and in the development of skills. This is because of mainly good quality teaching and learning. Pupils develop a good knowledge across all areas of science. For example, Year 1 pupils know the five senses and they understand that push and pull forces cause

movement. Year 2 pupils sort materials according to their properties and they can make sensible predications about how far different vehicles will travel down a ramp. Teachers and support assistants give pupils with special educational needs very good support and this helps them to extend their knowledge. Pupils make good use of drawings to record their work, and the written work of the more able pupils contains appropriate detail.

114. Pupils enjoy practical science and their very good attitudes to the subject contribute significantly to their good achievement and progress. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils enjoyed a session investigating the similarities and differences between humans. They concentrated very well, and were sensible when drawing each other's faces to note common and different features. Behaviour was very good in both whole-class and group activities. The interesting activities that the teacher had planned helped to maintain these good levels of concentration and effort.
115. In the one lesson seen the teaching and learning were good. Pupils became interested from the initial activity, when they had to draw the faces of their partners and note similar and different features. Good use of numeracy skills was developed as the pupils collated data for the whole class and then suggested methods of displaying the results using bar charts. Good use of ICT skills was also used in this lesson as a small group of pupils produced their graph using the 'RN Starting Graphs' program. More able pupils would have benefited from greater levels of challenge as the task was well within their capabilities. A scrutiny of pupils' past work shows that teachers give less able pupils effective support and their recording is modified as necessary. This is helpful in moving these pupils on in their learning at a good pace. However, on some occasions, not enough demand is made of other pupils and there is a tendency to under estimate the capabilities of higher attainers. Teachers give pupils regular opportunities to apply their numeracy skills when conducting experiments. Pupils' books also show appropriate use of literacy skills in science.
116. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. She has quickly developed a good awareness of pupils' strengths and areas for improvement through her discussions with staff and knowledge of the pupils. Pupils follow a broad curriculum, which helps to ensure all areas of scientific knowledge are developed well. Much is taught within class topics and, as a result, links with other subjects, such as design and technology, help learning become relevant. Resources are adequate and used well. Science makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. In particular, pupils are encouraged to look closely at living things, to enjoy finding out for themselves and to co-operate and share resources.

Strengths in science:

- *links with other subjects;*
- *regular use of practical work and investigations;*
- *pupils' very good attitudes and enthusiasm for the subject;*
- *good teaching and learning.*

Areas for development:

- *extended challenges for the more able pupils*

ART AND DESIGN

117. No art and design lessons were timetabled during the inspection. Judgements are based on work seen on display and in pupils' folders, discussions with staff and

teachers' planning. Standards are above average in sketching and painting as a result of carefully focused work on techniques and the use of some elements of a design process leading to finished work in a variety of two-dimensional media. The school has made good improvement in these aspects of the subject since the last inspection, when the design element was a weakness.

118. The pupils' work indicates good, well-focused teaching and learning. Boys and girls of all abilities achieve well. They develop good shading, hatching and observational pencil-sketching skills. Drawings of plants and flowers, for example, show pupils paying careful attention to detail. The self-portrait paintings and prior pencil designs in sketchbooks show good teaching of the process of observation, positioning features and then mixing colours. The landscapes on display show a wide variety of printing and brush techniques, with a good focus on the impression created by the mix of colours and techniques. Collage and textile work seen is of satisfactory standard, with good attention given to colour and texture. There is no current evidence of three-dimensional work. This occurs only once in the two-year cycle of work planned. There is insufficient emphasis on this aspect of the subject.
119. The planning framework is otherwise sound and ensures good coverage of all other strands of art. The responsibility for the subject lies with a new member of staff, who already has a good overview of work from reception to transfer. Assessment procedures, to ensure each pupil's needs and talents are recognised and built on, are underdeveloped. Resources are satisfactory and all staff make good use of opportunities to apply pupils' art skills in other curriculum areas, illustrating stories in English, reports in history and descriptions in religious education, for example. Through this application in other subjects and through the care taken in the work, the subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Strengths in art and design:

- *teaching of skills and techniques;*
- *the use of a design stage prior to the use of other media.*

Areas for development:

- *greater emphasis on three-dimensional work;*
- *the effective use of assessment to recognise both needs and talents.*

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

120. Owing to the organisation of the timetable, no design and technology lessons were observed. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work and displays, design work in books, a portfolio of work samples and references in other subjects, gives a clear picture of standards. The quality of design and technology provision has improved, and standards in all aspects of the subject are now average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress and achieve well. This represents an improvement since the last inspection.
121. Pupils talk about design and technology enthusiastically and they enjoy the work they are given to complete. They discuss their designs with confidence and explain clearly how they made their finished product. Several comment on the practical nature of the tasks and how they appreciate being able to work in pairs or small groups. Pupils do not understand how they can improve their designs by modifying them and evaluating the quality and effectiveness of the finished product.

122. The quality of teaching and learning are at least satisfactory. Positive features include the careful attention that is given to aspects of the design process and the need to select appropriate materials to make the design. Teachers' marking of designs is helpful, and is used to record, for instance, how easily pupils could follow their designs during the making process. The design and technology curriculum provides satisfactory coverage of the key areas of design and make. Teachers' planning is satisfactory, but too often all products are very similar, and pupils do not always have sufficient chance to explore different designs or techniques. Assessment is suitably organised to cover two or three key features during each topic. One aspect of the design process that is not as strong is pupils' evaluation of their products both during the making process and of the finished product. Very rarely do pupils modify their designs during the making process. Good links are made with other subjects. For example, science work on push and pull forces is applied when pupils investigate toys and playground equipment, and they apply this knowledge to their own playground designs. Pupils' work shows concentration and perseverance and a satisfactory understanding of the design and make process.

123. The subject co-ordinator is new to the post and is only just beginning to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. She is less than a term in post and does not have a full overview of standards or pupils' progress. Resources are adequate but would benefit from a wider variety of materials and tools.

Strengths in design and technology:

- *pupils' attitudes and enthusiasm for the subject;*
- *careful attention to the design element in teaching;*
- *links with other subjects.*

Areas for development:

- *improve pupils' ability to evaluate and modify their designs;*
- *extend the range of resources;*
- *provide more opportunities for pupils to explore a wide range of designs and techniques.*

GEOGRAPHY

124. No lessons were observed during the inspection. Evidence was gathered from a limited quantity of pupils' work, the long term planning for the whole school, the subject portfolio and from resource provision. Further key evidence was gained through discussions with staff and pupils.

125. Standards in geography by the end of Year 2 are broadly in line with those expected nationally. This is not as strong a picture as that found at the time of the previous inspection when standards were judged to be above average. However, the school has maintained a good profile for the subject despite the national focus on others. This is partly because work is linked well to other subjects and literacy and numeracy are included within the topics that are studied. In addition, computers are used well to enhance learning. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make equal progress with other pupils. Work is blocked into various sessions throughout the year.

126. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have undertaken some simple mapping during their work on 'China'. They show some good understanding of geographical vocabulary from their perceptive comments about the similarities and differences between China and England. Work is presented well and valued by the teacher. It shows a suitable level of

planning to ensure that there is a good balance between skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work. During discussion, they are able to recall many details and the reasons why they have studied a particular area. They are good speakers and listen to questions well.

127. On the limited evidence available, the overall quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers make good use of a national scheme to plan their work. The main strengths in teaching are teachers' planning, the interesting activities provided for pupils and the links with other subjects. Work samples show an emphasis on learning factual information through a variety of methods. The good use made of the local environment for geography is the strongest aspect. No assessment system is currently in place and, as a result, teachers find it difficult to judge the standards the pupils are achieving.

128. The co-ordinator is new to the role this term and has had insufficient time to do more than have a simple overview of the subject. However, she is enthusiastic and intends to work with staff to improve provision and standards further. Resources are at least adequate and include a range of maps, CD-ROMs and a growing reference section in the library.

Strengths in geography:

- *links with other subjects;*
- *use of ICT;*
- *use of the local environment.*

Areas for development:

- *introduce an assessment system to identify gaps in learning;*
- *improve the range of resources.*

HISTORY

129. No history lessons were observed during the inspection. On the basis of the scrutiny of pupils' past and present work, a study of teachers' planning and discussions with pupils, by the end of Year 2, levels of attainment in history exceed those expected nationally and progress for the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good. These standards are an improvement on those found at the time of the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be in line with those expected nationally.

130. The scrutiny of the pupils' work in Years 1 and 2 shows that pupils make good progress over time. Much of the learning involves discussion of the pupils' ideas and observations about the past through the examination of pictures and artefacts. Photographic evidence and discussions with the pupils reveals some good learning and knowledge about homes in the past. Pupils in Year 2 can use simple terms about the passing of time. They have a good understanding of the vocabulary of time using words such as, 'nowadays', 'recent', 'modern', 'long ago' and 'in the past'. Pupils' learning of chronology is reinforced when they make time lines of events in the life of Florence Nightingale. Pupils consolidate and make good use of their literacy skills in history lessons. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 imagine themselves as Florence Nightingale. They compose a letter to John Delane, editor of the Times, describing the terrible conditions in the hospital at Scutari. Their letters contain important details about the Crimean war and they use a range of adjectives to add emphasis to their points. Pupils use skills from their art lessons to draw portraits of Florence Nightingale whilst

discovering costume of the era and the difficulties Florence encountered as a nurse wearing flowing clothes. In discussion, pupils describe using the Internet to find more information about Florence Nightingale and using pictures from the Internet to enhance their studies. As a result of all these effective learning strategies, pupils are enthusiastic about history and have very good attitudes to the subject.

131. The quality of teaching and learning are at least good. Teachers have a clear understanding of the subject and set appropriate learning goals for each lesson. They make good use of learning in other subjects and ensure that links are developed well. Teachers are successful at developing pupils' enquiry skills through a range of well-planned activities and the provision of good resources. Pupils' past work and teachers' planning show that pupils have many opportunities to look at photographs, pictures in books, maps and artefacts to answer simple questions about life in the past. Teachers make effective use of trips and visits in the local area to promote pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils' work shows that levels of challenge in activities are usually good. However, there is a tendency for more able pupils to do the same work as other pupils before they move on to more demanding tasks, and this means that they do not always make as much progress as might be expected. Currently, there is no assessment of attainment in history, although end-of-unit assessments are being planned as a way forward.

132. The co-ordinator is new to the role. She has, as yet, had limited opportunities to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. However, she is enthusiastic about her role. Resources for history are good and include some artefacts as well as books, pictures and videos. More use of the Internet is planned and a good start has been made on this whilst studying Florence Nightingale.

Strengths in history:

- *pupils' enthusiasm for and understanding of the past;*
- *improved standards achieved by pupils;*
- *links with other areas of the curriculum;*
- *the use of helpful artefacts;*
- *teachers' planning.*

Areas for development:

- *greater challenge for more able pupils;*
- *the development of a simple assessment system.*

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

133. Standards are in line with expectations at the end of Year 2, with many pupils going further. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection, which indicates that standards have been maintained. All pupils make good, and sometimes very good, progress from reception to Year 2. This is a significant improvement from the previous inspection when progress was judged to be satisfactory.

134. The main reason why pupils make good progress is because information and communication technology is an integral part of their learning from their first term in school. Computers are regularly switched on in classrooms and there are very few lessons where computers are not used to support pupils' learning. Pupils practise spellings, word process stories and create graphs during lessons, and these activities make a significant contribution to the good progress made. Pupils learn mouse control and typing skills from an early age. By the end of their time in school, they can retrieve

information and combine written text and pictures at a basic level. The use of a digital camera is at an early stage of development, but it is being used well. For example, reception children were observed using the camera to take pictures of one another whilst learning about the uses of everyday technology. They successfully gauged the distance of the subject to include head and shoulders and were able to slide the control to view the image they had taken. In the same lesson, reception children discovered how to programme a moving robot, called a 'Roamer', so that it moved in a straight line towards the teddy bear some distance away. This was an excellent session in which all children made significant progress and thoroughly enjoyed their learning of new skills.

135. In Years 1 and 2, pupils use their ICT skills in several different subjects. In religious education, for example, whilst learning about the power of nature, pupils use appropriate tools on the computer to create a night storm picture. They confidently use flood fill and spray tools to good effect and then use their knowledge of the print icon to print copies of the finished picture. In science, pupils enter data about similarities and differences of colour of hair and eyes to produce a bar chart. In numeracy, less able pupils used a number program to reinforce their understanding of addition. They are beginning to make effective use of the Internet for research as, for example, in their studies about Florence Nightingale in history. Use of the Internet is at an early stage of development and pupils have yet to experience the use of electronic mail and links with other schools. Pupils are highly enthusiastic and fully focused when working on the computers.
136. The teaching and learning are good overall. All teachers have improved their subject knowledge and confidence through training under the New Opportunities Fund. Although no whole class ICT lessons were observed, there were numerous opportunities during lessons in other subjects to judge the quality of teaching and learning. The quality of teaching and learning in the reception class was excellent and provided the children with opportunities to use a wide range of resources including computers, the programmable 'Roamer', tape recorders and the digital camera. Teachers' planning reveals good activities in Years 1 and 2 to maximise the use of ICT across the whole curriculum. There is an assessment system in place although this is at an early stage of development.
137. The headteacher has taken on the role of subject co-ordinator and is aware of the strengths of the subject. Resources have improved since the previous inspection and Internet facilities have been introduced.

Strengths in ICT:

- *use of ICT across the curriculum;*
- *improved resources;*
- *enthusiasm and very good attitudes of the pupils;*
- *the good progress made by pupils.*

Areas for development:

- *use of e-mail to communicate with others.*

MUSIC

138. Standards in singing are very high. The school's provision for this aspect of the subject has improved since the last inspection. Standards in other aspects of class-based music education are below average and not as high as they should be, showing a decline in standards since the last inspection. The improvement in singing is largely due to the appointment of an assistant with particular subject expertise, who takes regular singing practice for the whole school, and the supportive teamwork of the rest of

the staff. The decline in other aspects, particularly the use of instruments to perform rhythmic and tuned patterns, is a result of the effect of recent staffing upheaval on continuity of teaching in the subject. Current lessons are catching up on gaps in learning. Both boys and girls of all abilities make very good progress in the development of singing skills and satisfactory progress as they catch up on skills, knowledge and understanding involving the use of tuned and untuned percussion instruments.

139. In the class lessons, pupils name percussion instruments and explore the sounds they make. All pupils identify tambourines and triangles, but few recognise a guiro or castanets. Year 1 pupils undertake tasks suitable for their age, but those in Year 2, rather than producing musical patterns and organising sounds and ideas, are still, like the younger year group, exploring different ways to make sounds with instruments. They are at an early level of understanding. They make satisfactory progress at this level, but a few lose concentration and interest, as they do not sense enough challenge in the activities. By contrast, in the weekly school singing sessions, pupils sing in tune enthusiastically and expressively. Their sense of rhythm, ability to pitch a note and follow a tune, and their diction are above the standards usually seen for these age groups. In the new song being taught, pupils quickly grasped the difficult lyrics of the first verse and chorus, pitched the opening note of each musical phrase accurately and showed very good ability to follow difficult jumps in the melody as well as following simple melodic steps.
140. Teaching and learning in weekly singing sessions led by an assistant and with several adults modelling enthusiastic participation, are very good. Pupils participate energetically in a warm-up activity, clapping in time on the numbers in 'Give it all you've got' and showing a high level of skill in their use of lips, tongue, teeth and lips to sustain a rapid rap. They sing tunefully, enjoying accompanying actions as they prepare for Palm Sunday with 'We have a King who rides a donkey'. When learning a new song ('A Windmill in old Amsterdam'), they concentrate extremely well to listen and echo. All pupils, including those in the reception class, follow the behaviour modelled by the rest of the teaching and support staff, taking the confident lead from the assistant as she asks them to chant and then sing a phrase at a time. The brisk pace and high expectations result in pupils surpassing standards expected for their age.
141. The quality of teaching and learning in lessons are satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and organised, with equipment and visual aids well prepared. They begin at a good pace, but this is not maintained, as pupils take too long selecting and experimenting one at a time. As a result, others, waiting their turn, tend to lose concentration. Although Year 2 pupils need some help with filling gaps in previous experience, the level of challenge is not high enough to win their enthusiastic participation. While pupils in both year groups make some gains in their learning from the activities undertaken, teaching does not routinely involve them in knowing the purpose of the lesson activities at the outset or in reviewing at the close whether aims have been met. In the long run they are therefore not achieving as well as they could.
142. Resources are satisfactory and the school uses a sound planning framework based on national guidelines. Planning and resources include music from a range of cultures. A recently appointed teacher has temporary overview of the subject and an assistant takes Year 2 pupils weekly for recorder tuition. Amid recent staffing changes there has not been time to review the best way of co-ordinating new staff expertise to organise lessons in the most effective manner, in order to match teaching to pupils' needs and abilities. Except for annual reporting comments, there is no record of effective assessment procedures.

143. Because of the strong singing, the subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development, especially their spiritual, social and cultural development. Pupils sing at church festivals and village community events. They also join pupils from other local schools to sing at an annual music festival, benefiting from participation in a large choir. In daily acts of collective worship, the lively singing helps create a sense of community and togetherness. The choice of music to listen to when entering and leaving assemblies, by a different pupil each day, shows the school's attention to little details that promote self-esteem.

Strengths in music:

- *standards in singing;*
- *quality of the teaching of singing;*
- *positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.*

Areas for development:

- *raising standards in music making with instruments in class lessons;*
- *making the best use of staff expertise;*
- *assessment.*

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

144. Standards in gymnastics are average overall, with several pupils showing particular talent. No games or dance activities were timetabled during the inspection, but the annual timetable shows good organisation of each aspect of the subject. The standards show sound improvement since the last inspection, when they were satisfactory.
145. Year 2 pupils move around the hall and use the apparatus showing good awareness of space and working enthusiastically. They listen carefully to their teachers and follow the clear instructions promptly. They focus well and show thoughtful control of their actions and balances. Pupils with special educational needs do well as a result of good support and pupils showing talent are recognised and challenged within lessons successfully. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Pupils show very positive attitudes towards the subject, putting considerable effort and imagination into travelling across the floor in a range of different ways, first on two feet and then four limbs. They travel over and under equipment in equally imaginative ways.
146. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers and pupils are always appropriately dressed, creating a purposeful atmosphere. The most effective elements in promoting good learning are the teachers' high expectations, clear instructions and use of pupils' demonstrations to praise individuals and encourage others. Good subject knowledge leads to clear planning, thoughtful preparation and a clear focus on what pupils need to learn. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace, with a suitable warm-up activity leading quickly into floor work. Pupils still need guidance when getting out mats, benches and tables, but this is likely to stem from some inconsistency of teacher expectations during staffing changes. One area for development in teaching is the routine sharing of the lesson aims at the outset, with pupils reviewing whether they have met these at the close. In the lessons seen, teachers gave insufficient attention to helping pupils assess the quality of their work in order to build on their recognised achievement and move further in the next lesson.
147. The subject co-ordinator has ensured a well-planned curriculum and the staff teamwork effectively to transform a classroom into a sports hall for regular indoor physical education lessons. Assessment procedures are in place, recorded on a termly basis, but there is a need for staff to discuss progress and share this with individual

pupils on a more regular basis, in order to ensure that pupils' abilities are fully recognised and developed. Annual performances of maypole and country dancing ensure that this aspect of the subject makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.

Strengths in physical education:

- *pupils' sustained focus and effort in lessons;*
- *good teaching;*
- *the contribution of dancing to community events and to pupils' personal development;*
- *the teamwork of staff in creating the regular space and time for the subject.*

Areas for development:

- *sharing lesson aims with pupils;*
- *building on learning lesson by lesson through shared review at the end of lessons.*

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

148. By the end of Year 2, pupils' knowledge and understanding broadly meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' limited recorded work shows good understanding and a positive attitude to the subject. These were also reflected in the lesson observed. The school has not quite maintained the very strong picture shown at the time of the last inspection, but this is the result of an unsettled staffing situation over the past year. Both boys and girls of all abilities achieve satisfactorily in the subject.
149. Pupils have learned about special occasions in the Christian calendar, for example harvest and Christmas. They have labelled a diagram of a Christingle, showing the meaning of the symbols. They have reflected on 'what a friend is' and 'Things I do/ don't do well'. Their writings about opening the curtains to see snow show a genuine sense of awe and wonder. Their sentences about the feelings of 'the boy' at the different stages of his adventure with the snowman show good ability to empathise. In the lesson observed, pupils showed considerable interest in the information they found about various types of storm, as they reflected on the power to be found in the natural world in relation to the Bible story of Jesus calming the storm. Recent studies have not included attention to other religions, although Judaism was covered last year. Pupils do not therefore show much knowledge of what they have covered in this aspect of their studies. Their exercise books do not include work prior to the current term, revealing some difficulty in continuity during staffing changes.
150. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory. Year 1 and 2 pupils, learning about the power of nature, are fascinated by facts about lightning and tropical storms, such as Hurricane Mitch. They make good use of their literacy skills in religious education lessons, both in researching information and in recording their thoughts and feelings. A few higher attainers made a positive start to the challenge to express their feelings on a stormy night, while the teacher's requirement for other pupils to create an illustration of a storm and describe it in one or two sentences constituted an appropriately demanding task for them. The use of an ICT art program provided an imaginative strand to broaden pupils recording of their images of the storm. Only part of a full afternoon's lesson was observed. While several elements of the teaching were good, the length of the session resulted in a lack of pace at times, especially during the time given for pupils to record and illustrate. Pupils lacked the sense of a time frame to work to and concentration therefore lapsed a little. When pupils shared comments, they tended to talk to the teacher and the teacher to each in turn, with others not all realising they were meant to be an actively listening audience.

151. The planning for the subject is sound. Subject co-ordination is at an interim stage, with the current nominal co-ordinator temporary, part-time and new to the school. Resources are satisfactory and the school has access to artefacts from a local resource base. The school uses the local church, but does not make visits or have visitors from places of worship for religions other than Christianity. The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The planting and displaying of Busy Lizzies by the pupils is a further example of the school's good focus on developing a sense of awe and wonder in the context of studies on 'power in nature' in religious education.

Strengths in religious education:

- *pupils' positive attitudes to the subject;*
- *pupils' ability to express their feelings.*

Areas for development:

- *a realistic approach to subject co-ordination in a small school;*
- *more focus on learning about the religions chosen.*