

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **PRIORY PARK INFANT SCHOOL**

St Neots, Cambridgeshire

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110687

Headteacher: Mrs E Rugg

Reporting inspector: Mr John Francis  
17976

Dates of inspection: 16 – 19 June 2003

Inspection number: 247028

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
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Almond Rd St Neots Cambridgeshire
Postcode:	PE19 1DZ
Telephone number:	01480 398010
Fax number:	01480 398011
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Lynn Johnston
Date of previous inspection:	6 October 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17976	Mr J Francis	Registered inspector	Mathematics Physical Education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? <i>The schools results and pupil's achievements</i> How well are the pupils taught How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11096	Ms M Davie	Lay inspector		How high are standards? <i>Pupil's attitudes ,values and personal development</i> How well does the school care for it's pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27635	Ms D Cinamon	Team inspector	English Art and Design Design and technology Special educational needs English as an additional language	
30266	Ms H Rask	Team inspector	Geography History Religious Education Foundation Stage	
25359	Mr P Crispin	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music Educational inclusion, including race equality	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**

This larger than average three-form entry infant school has 223 full time pupils on roll, (113 boys and 110 girls) in 9 classes, including 68 children in three reception classes. The area served by the school is an equal mixture of privately owned and housing association properties. Eight percent of the pupils are eligible for a free school meal, which is below average. There are few pupils from minority ethnic groups. Few pupils have English as an additional language and most of these are fluent in English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs - mainly for speech and communication or behavioural difficulties, is broadly average, and there are six pupils with statements of special educational needs – also average. Attainment on entry is below that expected for children of this age.

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

This is a good school: lively and friendly. Pupils' personal development is very good; pupils behave well and have good attitudes to school. The quality of teaching overall is good and pupils make good progress throughout the school attaining standards in English and mathematics that are higher than those of similar schools. The headteacher provides very good leadership and clear educational direction to the work of the school and the school has made good progress in many areas since her appointment. The headteacher, governors and senior staff are good at monitoring the school's performance. The school offers good value for money.

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

- The headteacher provides very good leadership and management.
- Teaching is good.
- Systems for checking on standards and progress are good.
- Pupils achieve well and make good progress in English and mathematics.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs enabling them to make good progress.
- There are good procedures for assessing pupils' progress, which are used well to guide curricular planning.
- There is very good provision for pupils' moral and social development.
- There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities.
- There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour.
- There are very good relationships with partner institutions.
- The school involves parents well and they make a very good contribution to their children's learning.

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

- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum.
- The quality of teachers' marking.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the inspection of October 1997. Assessment procedures are now good, religious education (RE) is now taught effectively and the provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Good progress has been made in improving attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards have also improved in art and RE, as has the progress of children in the reception classes. There have been improvements in pupils' personal development and the provision for this, relationships, the quality and range of the curriculum, links with parents and the contribution they make to their children's education, leadership and management by headteacher and key staff and the way the school evaluates its own performance. The school has a good capacity for further improvement.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	C	A	C	C
writing	C	B	B	B
mathematics	C	B	B	B

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Results from national tests in 2002, show average standards in reading, but above average standards in writing and mathematics. However, the percentage of pupils attaining higher than expected level in all three subjects is above average. Teachers assessed standards in science to be above average.

The inspection found that standards in reading have improved and are now above the expected level. In writing and mathematics, standards have been maintained, although the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels continues to improve a little. Pupils achieve well and are making good progress. Standards of presentation and handwriting require some improvement in Year 2. Current standards in science are broadly average but pupils' skills in science investigations are good. Standards in art and design are above the level expected for pupils of this age. In all other subjects, including RE and ICT, attainment is in line with the expectations for seven-year-olds. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and meet the expectations set out in their individual action plans (IEPs). Those pupils with English as an additional language make good progress. Children in the reception classes make good progress and the majority are on course to achieve the expected levels in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1, with a few exceeding these.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to school and show great enthusiasm, which contributes well to their ability to learn and how they work in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good in lessons and around school. Pupils show very good self-control and self-discipline.
Personal development and relationships	This is very good. Very good relationships contribute well to pupils' learning.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is in line with the national average.

## 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.*

The quality of teaching is good and evident in the work seen in pupils' books and the progress they make over time. During the inspection good teaching was seen in all year groups. However, the most consistently good teaching is seen in the reception classes and Year 1. The major strengths are in the teaching of basic skills, the teachers' classroom management, good relationships, and the contribution of support staff to pupils' learning. Good support is provided for pupils with special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language.

Overall, teaching is good in English, mathematics, art and design and across all areas of learning in the reception classes. This gives these children a very good start to their education. Skills in literacy and numeracy are generally well taught, as are other basic skills, and teachers are good at managing their pupils. Pupils try hard and learn well. The only significant areas of weakness across Years 1 and 2 are in the quality and effectiveness of teachers' marking and their lack of use of ICT to support learning.

#### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	This is good. The curriculum is broad, balanced and is enhanced by the range of visits and visitors. In some subjects there is a lack of progression in the planning between Year 1 and Year 2 classes.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils receive good support and have clear IEPs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Most of these pupils are sufficiently fluent not to require additional help. Where support is provided it is generally of good quality.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is good: pupils' personal development is catered for well. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good, and arrangements for promoting their spiritual and cultural awareness are good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is good. Pupils flourish in the school's caring environment.

There are good communications and links between the school and home. Parents have positive views of the school, have a very good level of involvement in their children's education and make a very good contribution to their learning. There are very good links with partner schools.

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

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	This is good. The leadership and management skills of the headteacher are very good. Senior staff play an active role in school development and the wider involvement of all staff results in a shared commitment and improving standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	This is satisfactory. Governors are well led, committed and well informed, particularly about standards and pupils' progress. They have a very clear understanding of the issues facing the school and carry out their duties satisfactorily. There are some omissions to the policies they are required to have including disability access and drugs misuse.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is good. The school evaluates its performance well through carefully monitoring and analysis of data. It is working hard to further improve standards.
The strategic use of resources	This is satisfactory. The school uses its premises and equipment satisfactorily, although there is a need to make greater use of the ICT equipment. Funding is carefully spent and appropriate use is made of

	grants for specific purposes, such as those for special educational needs.
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Staffing levels are appropriate, the accommodation and learning resources are good.

**PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like school</li> <li>• Children make good progress</li> <li>• Behaviour in the school is good</li> <li>• Teaching is good</li> <li>• The school has high expectations</li> <li>• They are kept well informed about their children's progress</li> <li>• The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities provided.</li> </ul>

Parents' positive views of the school are supported by the findings of the inspection. However, the inspection judges the range and variety of extra-curricular activities to be very good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. There has been a gradual but steady improvement in standards over the past three years, particularly in writing and mathematics. The most recently published national test results (2002) show standards in reading to be average and in writing and mathematics to be above average. Improvement in reading, writing and mathematics has been at a faster rate than the average for schools nationally. Teachers assessed standards in science to be above the expected levels.
2. Baseline assessments indicate that the children's attainment on entry to the reception classes is below that expected for children of this age, with particular weaknesses in personal, social and emotional development and their skills in speaking and listening. However, these children make good progress and most are on course to attain, and some exceed, the early learning goals<sup>1</sup> in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1.
3. The inspection found that standards are above average in English (including reading, writing and speaking and listening) and mathematics - particularly numeracy. Good analysis of the last year's tests identified areas of underachievement, and well-targeted work was put into place to address this. As a result, pupils are achieving well in these subjects. More pupils are now attaining higher levels in reading, and while the overall good standards in writing and mathematics have been maintained, more pupils attain at higher levels. This is a good improvement over the standards reported in the previous inspection. Throughout Year 1 and Year 2 pupils continue to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In science, current standards are broadly average, although pupils have good skills and understanding of investigative and experimental science. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.
4. In art, pupils achieve well and standards are above the level expected. In all other subjects, including ICT and RE, pupils make satisfactory progress and attain standards in line with the expected levels for seven-year-olds. In RE, this represents a good improvement since the last inspection, where standards were below the level expected by the locally agreed syllabus.
5. Pupils with special educational needs receive good classroom support, achieve well and their attainment at seven is broadly in line with the expectations for pupils of this age in English and mathematics. The few other pupils with English as an additional language make the same good progress as other pupils. Those identified by the school as being particularly gifted or talented make good progress.

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

6. Pupils' good behaviour has been successfully maintained since the last inspection and along with their good attitudes, makes a significant contribution to their achievements.

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<sup>1</sup> These are in the areas of learning that include personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development and physical development that children should obtain by the end of reception year.

They enjoy coming to school, settle down quickly and show they want to learn. They take part in extra-curricular activities with a lot of enthusiasm, as was demonstrated by the large number of boys and girls who eagerly attended the country dancing club during the inspection. Pupils throughout the school, including children in the reception classes, are generally able to concentrate on their activities for a good period of time and, as a result, achieve well.

7. In lessons, pupils respond well to their teacher's high expectations. In a Year 1 English lesson, for example, any who became inattentive during the introduction responded very quickly to a quick look or word, which ensured they soon concentrated again and understood their tasks. The very good relationships established in this lesson also resulted in pupils putting a good deal of effort into their work, shown by how keen they were to share their work at the end of the session.
8. Behaviour in lessons is good and it is very good at play times and when pupils are moving around the school. Parents are very pleased with the standards of behaviour. Dinnertime is a pleasant, family occasion, where pupils behave with a good deal of social awareness, helped by the very good systems which have been developed to get them in, seated and settled before a prayer is said and dinner begun. Pupils move around the school very sensibly, helped by the calm, caring supervision they get from their teachers. They play together very well on the playground, where a good mix of activities involving boys and girls and pupils of different ages was observed. Girls enjoyed practising skipping, but so did a number of boys who tried really hard to improve their skills.
9. In lessons pupils are attentive and well motivated by the resources their teachers choose to capture their interest. There is, however, a small minority of pupils throughout the school who occasionally have difficulty maintaining their levels of concentration, sometimes because of their own particular learning needs, sometimes because occasionally they are required to sit and listen to their teachers for too long. Strategies for dealing with them are not always successful and the flow of the lesson is sometimes disrupted as a result.
10. Pupils' personal development is very good and they have very good relationships with their teachers and peers, as well as a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. This is encouraged well by the school principle '*say sorry, don't lose a friend!*' They treat each other with respect and show a good deal of concern if one of their friends is distressed, for example, if s/he has had a tumble on the playground. These attributes are quickly developed in children when they enter the reception classes. They respond well to the opportunities they are given to help out around the school in the role of special person, delivering the registers or leading their class to the hall for assembly. Pupils work together very well in many lessons and can usually get on with their work without too much extra adult help. This was shown in a Year 2 PE lesson where pairs followed each other's movements on the apparatus. Incidents of bullying are rare, and pupils confirm that they are dealt with effectively if they happen. Pupils demonstrate good manners by the polite way they speak to adults and each other.
11. Attendance has improved over the last year and while not a high as at the time of the previous inspection, is once again around the national average. Unauthorised absence is carefully monitored by the school and is at about the same level as is found nationally. The well below average attendance last year was attributable to a small number of pupils who had long periods of absence throughout the year. There is little lateness in the morning and pupils are therefore making a good start to their day.

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

12. The overall quality of teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. While just 55 percent of the teaching observed was good or very good, the quality of the work seen in pupils' books and results in national tests show that teaching and learning is consistently of a higher quality than was observed. Good teaching is seen in each year group. The most consistently good teaching is in the reception classes where almost 80 per cent of the teaching observed was good or better. This is giving these children a very good start to their education. However, it was in Year 1 where most of the very good teaching was observed, building well on this good start. Very good teaching was seen across a range of subjects including English, mathematics, PE and music. In these lessons, teachers' good subject knowledge and the enthusiasm they generated gave the lessons a brisk pace and maintained pupils' interest throughout. As a result, pupils achieved well and made very good progress.
13. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for and make good progress as teachers match the work effectively to these needs, including using the information contained in their IEPs. Good attention is given to ensuring that these pupils make progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills to give them with a good basis for their future learning. The support provided by teachers and class assistants for pupils with special educational needs has a good impact on their achievement. Pupils with English as an additional language receive good support where it is judged necessary. For those pupils the school has identified as having particular gifts or talents, good provision is made to ensure they are suitably stretched through providing additional challenges for them in their work.
14. In the reception classes, there is good direct teaching across the range of activities covering all aspects of the early years curriculum. The teachers understand the needs of these children and good planning leads effectively towards the early learning goals. Very good teaching of music in one class included the use of good, accurate vocabulary such as pulse and tempo and meant that children were stretched and as a result made very good progress. However, the limited involvement of adults in outdoor play activities reduces the benefit children get from these.
15. Teachers' are well organised, manage their classes well and benefit from the good contributions provided by learning support assistants (LSA) whether with specific pupils or working with larger groups. Most lessons have a relaxed, friendly, but purposeful approach and involve pupils well, for example, in the introductions or the plenary session at the end. Pupils enjoy this involvement and are keen to demonstrate their understanding. The good relationships between teachers and pupils contribute well to pupils' learning.
16. Literacy and numeracy are taught well. The introductions to these lessons give them a brisk start and the review sessions at the end provide a suitable evaluation of the lesson. Good planning generally matches activities and work well to pupils' abilities. Suitable activities are planned for those pupils who are higher attaining. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Accurate use of mathematical vocabulary and good questioning helps pupils to develop links between aspects of mathematics, for example, work on subtraction in a very good Year 1 lesson was extended to give pupils the opportunity to solve and make up number problems.
17. Medium-term planning is good and used well by the teachers for all subjects. Literacy skills are consistently reinforced across all subjects. However, there are weaknesses in the use of ICT to support pupils' learning. While teachers use ICT to demonstrate

specific points to pupils, for example, in mathematics lessons, they miss opportunities to develop pupils' skills in ICT in subjects across the curriculum. Teachers set objectives for pupils' learning in their planning but do not always share these at the start of the lesson or put them into language that is easily understood. There are examples of good assessment through questioning, which also provides good opportunities for pupils to judge their own success. However, the quality of teachers' written marking is not informative. Teachers mark work regularly but there is few written comments in pupils' books. While pupils' target cards contain medium-term targets, agreed with parents at consultations, not enough is done to identify pupils' regular errors and set short-term targets to help them improve.

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

18. The school provides a good curriculum that meets the needs of the pupils. There are some aspects of the curriculum that are particularly strong, for example, art and extracurricular activities, and these make a significant contribution to the life of the school. This is an improvement on the last inspection. All pupils have equal access to all that the school offers.
19. The curriculum is broad and balanced and takes full account of all the requirements of the National Curriculum and RE. The provision for the reception children covers all aspects of the recommended curriculum well and provides stimulating activities. The school is particularly successful at making links across subjects and this brings the curriculum alive and makes it relevant for pupils. For example, there are strong links between science, literacy and art. Key skills are evident in different subjects; appropriate emphasis is given to speaking and listening and using literacy skills including writing. However, ICT is not used enough in lessons. In science and design technology (DT), there is insufficient progression in skills from Year 1 to Year 2.
20. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and are given extra help, either through working with LSAs or a special needs teacher. Most of the support for special needs is in the classroom and this enables these pupils to participate in lessons. Teachers ensure that the work the pupils do meets their needs. The school makes very effective provision for the small number of pupils with physical impairments, ensuring that they have full access to the curriculum. Pupils with English as an additional language have equal access to the curriculum. The school makes good provision to ensure all pupils are included in all aspects of the curriculum.
21. There is a full and effective programme of personal, health, social and moral education. This includes 'circle time', where pupils have planned opportunities for discussion on particular topics. Other subjects also contribute, such as when pupils learn about the use of drugs as medicines in science. The programme complements many incidental activities that contribute to pupils' very good personal development.
22. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Opportunities include music, country dancing, various sports, often with professional coaches, and French. Pupils of all ages are provided with opportunities for such activities, which are well supported by both boys and girls. There is also a good range of visits, such as those to the local park and museum that make learning more interesting and also contribute to pupils' personal development. These visits are carefully planned to contribute effectively to the wider curriculum. A wide range of visitors includes theatre groups, musicians, police and

health carers, who make a good contribution. Pupils are also encouraged to consider others through fund-raising events that support a variety of charities.

23. There are very good links with partner schools, including pre-school provision. For example, children from the nearby pre-school group join with the reception class for music sessions. Careful arrangements are made to ensure that transition to junior school is a positive experience and pupils from both schools attend each other's performances. The older classes join those from other local schools for an annual music festival. Students from the local secondary school have helped to develop the environmental area. Staff join with teachers from other schools for shared training and to discuss educational issues.
24. Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and this represents very good improvement since the time of the last inspection
25. Provision for spiritual development is now good. The head teacher takes care to ensure that assemblies comply with the legal requirement for an act of collective worship through a carefully planned programme of stories and themes. A good range of visitors contributes to assemblies. Assemblies are predominantly of a Christian character, but also acknowledge and focus on other faiths. For example, local church ministers and a visitor from India were among recent visitors. Pupils' spiritual development is fostered in lessons in a number of different ways. For example, Year 1 pupils were full of wonder when looking through a digital microscope and Year 2 pupils showed great respect and care for mini beasts which they collected, observed and then returned to the wild area. Children in the reception classes were enthralled to see fluffy yellow chicks hatch from eggs in an incubator.
26. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school rules are well displayed and clearly explained to pupils, each class is encouraged to make its own additional rules. All staff manages behaviour in a positive manner and pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong through moral themes and stories in assembly and through circle time discussions in the classroom. For example, Year 2 pupils were quick to comment on fair and unfair treatment received by Gandhi when they heard stories from his life. Pupils know about the need to recycle and to keep their school tidy and free of litter. Pupils are aware of the needs of others less fortunate than themselves and support a range of charities.
27. Very good provision is also made for pupils' social development. Boys and girls listen thoughtfully to one another during circle time and enjoy taking on small tasks and responsibilities around the school. For example, five Year 2 pupils check that the contents of a special bag of outdoor-toys and equipment are returned correctly at the end of lunchtime. The headteacher promotes social skills well when she leads parachute games at playtime and large numbers of children work together as a team. The school's behaviour policy and anti bullying strategy is well understood by the staff and pupils. Staff treat pupils very respectfully and adults have high expectations for good behaviour throughout the school day, where the efforts of each child are valued.
28. Provision for pupils' cultural development is now good. The school has addressed earlier shortcomings through a broader multicultural perspective to enrich pupils' knowledge and understanding in many areas of their learning. Visitors make a valuable contribution to pupils' cultural development. For example, a visitor from India became the catalyst for a topic on India and a local restaurant owner brought in a range of Indian food for the pupils to share. A parent visitor explained about the celebrations for Chinese New

Year to inform the children's own celebrations. A visiting musician brought in a wide range of instruments from around the world for pupils to try.

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

29. The school has maintained the good quality of educational and personal support and guidance found at the time of the last inspection and improved several aspects of this. Pupils flourish in the school's happy, caring and hard working environment. The headteacher takes a very hands-on role in all aspects concerning pupils' care and welfare and as a result the systems all work well. Staff know pupils very well and provide very good role models in the kind, caring way they help them to respond to expectations and develop good work habits and high levels of perseverance. Parents appreciate the easy access they have to staff so that any worries or concerns can be dealt with quickly.
30. The headteacher is the designated person responsible for child protection. She ensures that her own training is updated regularly and that staff are aware of their responsibilities. Meals supervisors have good relationships with pupils and treat them in the same caring manner as all staff within the school. There is a good awareness of pupils' healthcare needs, accidents and emergencies are dealt with appropriately and all staff have been trained to administer medication for severely allergic reactions. The building and grounds are regularly checked to ensure that pupils are working in a safe environment. Procedures are in place to ensure the safe and secure use of the Internet. Most required policies are in place and regularly reviewed to ensure they meet the needs of the pupils. However, the school is missing a policy for dealing with drugs misuse as well as a disability access plan.
31. There are good systems in place to track pupils' progress from entry into the reception class. This very good improvement on the previous inspection is a result of the active, meticulous work on assessment by the headteacher. Records are well used to group pupils and identify those who may need more help, particularly in English and mathematics. Information is monitored to make forecasts about pupils' attainment enabling the school to adjust its provision and take steps to raise attainment.
32. The school tracks the progress of pupils with special educational needs well and uses this information to target support. Individual learning targets provide useful guidance for teachers and LSAs and these are regularly reviewed. Staff are quick to alert outside agencies when they are concerned about a pupil and their advice is used well. The school has good liaison with pre-school providers so that no time is lost in identifying needs. Provision for hearing-impaired pupils is good.
33. There are good procedures to promote regular attendance, and parents confirm they are fully aware of the school systems for notifying absence. Registers are monitored regularly and the headteacher has a good awareness of which pupils are being adversely affected by low rates of attendance. Despite making every effort to dissuade parents from taking their children out of school for family holidays a significant minority do, which means that some children miss important parts of their work and find it more difficult to catch up. Procedures to ensure that pupils behave themselves are also good. Most pupils have good levels of self-discipline and rarely need to be reprimanded. Nonetheless, the headteacher has very high expectations of them and takes a leading role in ensuring they behave well, regularly by helping them in and out of the hall and supervising on the playground.

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

34. Parents' views of the school are good. They are particularly pleased with the good attitudes the school promotes and rightly feel that as a result their children are well motivated. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are very complimentary about the support their children are receiving and the confidence the school is helping them to develop. A small number feel there is a weakness in communication with them, particularly in the tone of some letters referring to lateness and absence. These have however, been found to be appropriate.
35. The school makes good efforts to work closely with parents. The headteacher is very visible around school at the beginning and end of the day and always ready to have a quick chat with parents, which contributes greatly to the friendly atmosphere. Monthly newsletters are supplemented by additional information about forthcoming events and give parents a good overview of school life. Parents also receive a termly newsletter telling them what their child will be learning. Although a parent consultation was recently carried out to determine their satisfaction with school practices, parents were not informed of the overall outcomes of this. This is a weakness.
36. Written reports on pupils' progress are generally good, most giving a clear idea of strengths and weaknesses in English, mathematics and science as well as a comment about overall progress. They are, however, not all used as a further means of sharing learning targets, particularly with parents who do not take the opportunity to see their child's teacher. Children have a personal profile, which is given to parents at the end of Year 2, providing them with a comprehensive record of their child's early education. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are appropriately involved in the programmes for supporting their children.
37. The prospectus and governor's annual report to parents give a wide range of useful information about the school, however they do not contain all of the required information. The prospectus does not explain whether the school has a religious affiliation or not, nor does it tell parents that they have the right to withdraw their child from RE and acts of collective worship if they wish: neither document gives attendance information in a helpful manner. The governors' report has the wrong rates, and the prospectus gives the number of absences by session rather than as a percentage.
38. Parents provide a very high level of support to the school and make a very good contribution to their children's learning. They regularly listen to their children read and this is helping them to make good progress. Parents are very welcome in school, many regularly help in classrooms and there are good systems in place to ensure they know what to do. A very good number of parents turn out for all activities and there is a high level of attendance at parent consultation meetings. They appreciate the flexibility with which the school works around their own busy schedules to ensure that they can all get in to see their child's teacher.
39. A very supportive and highly successful parent teacher association help to raise substantial additional funds with which they buy extra resources for the children's use. Money raised from a recent event was shared between the school, which used it to do further work on the environmental area and a children's cancer charity.

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

40. The leadership and management of the school overall are good. The headteacher's contribution to this is very good and provides clear direction to the work of the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The headteacher's high profile around school means she is knowledgeable about many small details, which ensure

smooth day-to-day running. Her clear focus on improving standards including regular, detailed monitoring, has improved attainment in reading, writing and mathematics over the past three years. The careful analysis of test results has identified areas of weakness and action has been taken to remedy these. The role of the subject leaders for English and mathematics in monitoring the progress of their subject is developing well. As a result, the school has moved from one with average standards to one that now attains above the national average in these subjects.

41. The senior management team is effective and more recent changes to the way it operates have widened the involvement of other staff. This has created a broader basis for consultation and better professional development for all teachers, enabling them to begin to develop their co-ordination role more effectively. This links well to the school's performance management and appraisal systems. The headteacher regularly observes lessons and helps teachers with their own professional development, for example, by giving them the opportunity to attend courses or manage various subject areas. The staff handbook has been updated recently and ensures that there is easy reference to systems and procedures so that pupils' safety and welfare are never compromised. The management of pupils with special educational needs is good. Regular meetings between the special needs co-ordinator (SENCo) and the specialist teacher ensure good liaison. The weekly meetings held by the SENCo with the LSAs are very effective in addressing concerns. Training for all staff is good.
42. The governing body is supportive and has an effective structure but many of the governors are recently appointed and are therefore, inexperienced. To address this, all governors are taking part in training provided by the LEA and the headteacher. At present much of its monitoring is through data analysis. However, all governors are very knowledgeable about standards in the school, the progress pupils are making, especially in comparison with similar schools and what the school still needs to do. Until recently there has been no set pattern for direct monitoring in school, but this is now in place and governors are linked to subject co-ordinators. The governing body meets most of the statutory requirements placed upon it but there are no policies on disability access and drugs misuse.
43. The school development plan is effective tool for school improvement; and a significant improvement on that used at the time of the previous inspection, but it still has some weaknesses. The school's priorities have been clearly identified and are closely linked to the budget. However, in some aspects there is not a clear enough distinction between monitoring (checking what has been done) and evaluation (assessing the impact) and not all outcomes are readily measurable. Much of the monitoring this year has been done by the headteacher but governors now have a much greater role in evaluating the success of the initiatives. Good budget management and control provides the governing body with good quality information on which to base its decisions. The principles of best value are applied, where possible, to major spending decisions. Grants for specific purposes are used appropriately. The current budget surplus from last year is planned to compensate for a significant reduction in pupil numbers for next year, which is a sensible use of this money.
44. Teachers are suitably qualified and provide a good balance of curricular strengths. Non-teaching staff, many of whom have had specific training to help them in their roles, contribute well to the education of the pupils. Staff development is encouraged and the school has a continuing commitment to this. Resources for most subjects are good. The accommodation is good overall. The provision for reception children is generally good and there are very good outdoor facilities, including a well developed and well used environmental area.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

45. In order to improve the school further, and raise standards to a higher level, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

(1) Improve the use of ICT across the curriculum by:\*

- taking all opportunities to integrate it more effectively into planning across all subjects
- making better use of the improved resources
- improving teachers' own skills and confidence in using ICT
- monitoring its implementation and evaluating its impact and effectiveness

(Paragraphs 17,19, 69, 75, 85, 87, 92, 96, 98 refer)

(2) Improve the quality and consistency of teachers' marking so that pupils are given more information about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

(Paragraphs 17, 65, 73 refer)

## **OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL**

- Improve the quality of presentation and handwriting, particularly for pupils in Year 2\*  
(Paragraphs 62, 65 refer)
- Improve the planning for progression in skills in science and DT.  
(Paragraphs 19, 73, 81 refer)
- Correct minor omissions from the school prospectus and governors annual report to parents and complete governors' policies for disability access and drugs misuse  
(Paragraphs 30, 37, 42 refer)

*\* The school has already identified these issues in its improvement plan and has put measures in place aimed at addressing these weaknesses.*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	45
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	4	21	20	0	0	0
Percentage	0	9	47	44	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. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	225
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	19

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	38

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.8

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	33	35	68

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	30	32
	Girls	34	32	35
	Total	63	62	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (90)	91 (95)	99 (95)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	30	32
	Girls	34	35	35
	Total	64	65	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (91)	96 (91)	99 (98)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	150	0	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24:1
Average class size	24

### Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	241

### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	2002/3
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	£
Total income	613,014
Total expenditure	540,510
Expenditure per pupil	2,402
Balance brought forward from previous year	53,000
Balance carried forward to next year	56,000

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	225
Number of questionnaires returned	131

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	30	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	37	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	41	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	47	4	1	1
The teaching is good.	76	22	2	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	42	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	26	8	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	35	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	44	46	9	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	44	38	11	4	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	39	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	40	15	2	4

## **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**

46. Children make good progress in the reception classes and by the end of the year the majority of children are likely to reach the expected standards in all areas of their learning, with a small number of children achieving above these. Children with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress towards their personal targets.
47. The management of the reception classes is good. Teachers, nursery nurse, nursery assistant and LSA work well as a team. Parent helpers make a valuable contribution. Children have good opportunities to develop their learning, for example, good use is made of the wild area to develop knowledge and understanding of the world. However, there is insufficient adult involvement when children use the enclosed outdoor area. The school has rightly identified this as an area for development. Since the time of the last inspection there has been very good improvement in assessment and good use is made of ongoing assessment to inform planning.

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

48. Good teaching in this aspect means that children quickly learn the rules of the school and learn the difference between right and wrong behaviour. Good teaching during circle time helps children learn to take turns and to talk and listen to one another respectfully. Children enjoy taking on responsibility for helping in the class and taking the register. Behaviour in lessons is usually good, children are eager to undertake activities and teachers make much use of praise. A small minority of children are still learning to take turns and to remember the rules of school life.

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

49. Teaching in this area is good, and the children make good progress in developing early reading and writing skills and in developing the range of their speaking and listening. For example, children were exploring the story of Jack and the Beanstalk and were able to sequence and recall the main events from the story line. Children became engrossed while acting out the story using puppets. A child with special educational needs was most excited by this activity when working with an adult helper. A good range of dressing up clothes also enabled a group of children to take on the roles of the characters in the story.
50. Writing skills are taught appropriately. Children learn and recall the direction of pencil strokes as they attempt letters independently in their own writing. The higher attaining children write in simple sentences and show a growing awareness of individual letter sounds in their spelling of unknown words, as well as a developing knowledge of words. Children have good opportunities to make books, such as 'bean' diaries, recording the growth of their beans. However, there are few opportunities to write lists, messages, notes and letters in the role-play areas to enhance understanding of the different purposes of writing.
51. Teachers are successfully introducing a new approach to the teaching of letter sounds. They check where children recognise these at the start, end or middle of words during tasks and in reading. Early reading skills are systematically taught and as a result children are confident and interested when they tackle their own early independent

reading. Books are taken home regularly and reading records are well maintained. Children are encouraged to develop their knowledge of words they recognise on sight and also to use their knowledge of letter sounds and the overall meaning of what they are reading through discussion.

### **Mathematical development**

52. Good teaching ensures that children attempt to solve mathematical problems and begin to explore pattern in numbers. They recognise numerals from one to nine and some beyond this and count in twos up to ten together. The majority of children are beginning to understand the processes of addition and subtraction through practical activities and games. Teachers take care to introduce practical situations in their teaching to encourage children to recognise mathematics in their everyday world. For example, children count in twos as they sort pairs of socks, shoelaces and gloves and then record this using pictures and numbers. Higher attaining children move a jumping frog two spaces at a time along a number track and count in twos up to ten or twenty as they see the pattern they have made.
53. Children are taught to form numerals correctly and learn how to record sets of numbers up to ten and beyond. They learn the names of different shapes. Teachers introduce a good range of mathematical vocabulary during lessons, which helps children to talk about their mathematical discoveries. Children enjoy many number rhymes and songs and are eager participants as they count loudly and softly in turn around a circle to identify odd and even numbers.
54. Teachers provide appropriate practical mathematical experiences, for example in sand and water trays where children explore volume and capacity. However, there is not always enough adult involvement to stretch the children and encourage problem solving, especially when they are using the outdoor area.

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

55. Teaching in this area is good and children have many and varied first hand learning experiences to enrich their learning. Particularly good use is made of the local area and the school's 'wild area' to develop scientific exploration. For example, on a local walk, children discover the features of their local environment. In the 'wild area' they gather natural materials to create a smelly cocktail as part of an exploration of the senses: they also look at minibeasts they discover there. The children enjoy a visit to a nearby environmental area and are fascinated to watch the broad beans they have planted grow into plants. The higher attaining children name and label the stem, petal, leaves and roots of plants.
56. Children learn about diverse religious festivals and celebrations. For example, they make pictures when they explore the Hindu festival of Holi. They learn about Chinese celebrations for the birth of a baby from a parent visitor and later write their own good wishes to place in a red envelope to send to a baby. Children make a special class book of the disciples when they learn about Jesus and his helpers as part of a focus on Christianity and discuss the contents of this with interest.
57. Children have sound opportunities to use the computers in the classrooms. Children handle the mouse with increasing confidence and click and drag down selected colours when using a painting program. Good development of early historical enquiry skills is fostered when children bring in photos from their earliest years and note how they have grown from babyhood. Children are proud of the large models they create from

recyclable material and construct a range of different buildings using wooden blocks. One group of children took care and helped one another when constructing pointed castle towers.

### **Physical development**

58. Teaching is good overall and the children regularly use a range of small and large apparatus in the hall and outdoors on the school field. Lessons are planned with care to ensure progression of skills, for example, in hand eye co-ordination, rolling and catching balls and aiming at a target. A small number are very good at this. The children run, skip and jump and good use of praise encourages everyone to try hard to improve. Children are encouraged to develop their awareness of space. Good links are made with personal development as children change independently and listen to and follow instructions with increasing accuracy in the lessons.
59. Staff provide good opportunities for the children to develop their cutting and pasting skills and children are taught the safe use of tools during practical activities. An appropriate range of apparatus is provided in the small, enclosed outdoor play area, such as tricycles, cars, trolleys, pot stilts and see saws which develop children's skills in balancing and steering.

### **Creative development**

60. Teaching is good overall, and the children make good progress in developing their use of paint, collage and printing through well-planned art activities. They produce lively work and a good start is made in early sketchbooks, where they record texture rubbings and observational drawings. The teacher in one class encouraged close observation of real leaves, which led to children making good representations of a giant beanstalk. Role-play areas such as a shop, hospital and home area are used to act out fantasy play.
61. In a very good lesson with a lively pace, the teacher's very good specialist music knowledge led one class to make very good gains in their music making. They maintained a steady beat and learned to play together in fast and slow tempo. The teacher used very good technical vocabulary to extend the children's knowledge and understanding. The children have regular opportunities to make music and all enjoy this. Teachers introduce the children to a good range of songs and rhymes.

### **ENGLISH**

62. Standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are above national expectations. This is good improvement on the previous inspection. Presentation and handwriting, however, does not improve sufficiently by the end of Year 2.
63. The majority of pupils speak confidently. They explain what they are doing in sufficient detail, answer questions readily and talk sensibly with their peers about their activities. Because teachers listen attentively, pupils are confident in putting forward their ideas. By the end of Year 1 most are able to create sentences that include more than one adjective, for example, to describe the butterflies they saw on their visit to the butterfly park. Higher attaining Year 2 pupils summarise the stories they read with a very clear sense of what the listener needs to hear.
64. Most Year 2 pupils read well enough to make sense of material from different areas of the curriculum. Lessons usually begin with work on key vocabulary, so when pupils read

they are already familiar with the topic and this aids fluency. Higher attaining pupils who were looking for statements to turn into written questions understand challenging texts about the life cycle of the butterfly. Pupils enjoy stories and by the end of Year 2 most read their books well. They talk about what has happened and make predictions about the outcomes. They have good strategies for reading; use their knowledge of sounds to work out unfamiliar words and the context to explain what these mean. Pupils know what authors and illustrators do and talk about their favourite authors and stories and show real pleasure in books. Most pupils know how to find information in non-fiction books by using contents and indexes and some are able to use advanced skills such as scanning the text.

65. By the end of Year 1 pupils are writing well. They write accounts in different areas of the curriculum such as RE and record observations in science. Their sentence construction is good, they spell common words well and their spelling of more complex words is plausible. While the teaching of writing is effective in the early stages in getting pupils to write confidently and copiously, there is not sufficient emphasis on helping pupils to be more accurate in their spelling as they get older. The practice of making pupils wholly reliant on their own spelling results in unnecessary reinforcement of incorrect key vocabulary. Neither does marking indicate, for example, which spellings pupils should correct. Opportunities are missed for pupils to edit work that is word-processed on the computer. There is room for improvement in handwriting and presentation especially in Year 2. Writing often sprawls all over the page and is not well set out! Pupils' handwriting is hampered when they write in narrow notebooks and on unlined paper. However, Year 2 pupils make good progress in the content of their writing and in control of different forms. They write logical accounts of events and good stories. Following a visit from a storyteller, pupils wrote at length, showing good attention to choice of vocabulary. Play-scripts by higher attaining pupils make effective distinctions between speech for the narrator and that of the characters.
66. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. LSAs provide good support. The few pupils who have English as an additional language make good progress, as do those identified as having particular talents in English.
67. Teaching is good overall but expectations of what pupils might achieve are not consistently high. In the best lessons teachers enable pupils to make very good progress because they maintain a good pace and expect pupils to work hard and finish their tasks. Pupils are encouraged to use their learning targets; this was very effective in one lesson where a boy with special educational needs was able to complete his work alongside the other pupils. Drama lessons enable pupils to be fully involved in a full range of drama activities including writing. In some lessons, pupils do not produce as much work as they could because the pace of teaching is too slow. Some lessons are too long: time could be used more effectively with a change of activity.
68. Management is satisfactory. Good use is made of assessment procedures to track pupils' progress. The home/school reading programme is effective in promoting reading; many of the comments by parents show they support their children well. Although teachers and LSAs keep meticulous records of pupils' progress, there are no comments in the home/school diaries to help those parents who are less sure how to help their children. Homework is set regularly but some of the spelling lists are too long for effective learning.

## **MATHEMATICS**

69. Standards are good and have improved since the previous inspection. Good teaching and pupils' positive attitudes ensure that they make good progress in their learning and by the age of seven attain levels above average, particularly in number work. Their numeracy skills are well taught and firmly established. The good rate of progress ensures that more pupils achieve higher levels than the national average. Scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with them in lessons indicates clearly that they develop good mathematical knowledge, understanding and skills. In response to the previous inspection the school is successfully promoting the early skills of using and applying mathematics to everyday situations and developing the use of mathematics in other subjects. What is less effective is in the regular use of ICT to support mathematical learning. Teachers fail to take all of the opportunities ICT presents to develop pupils' mathematics skills and understanding.
70. In number work, the majority of pupils in Year 1 gain a good grasp of the vocabulary relating to subtraction and understand phrases such as 'less than', 'take away', and 'minus'. In a very good lesson the variety of approaches used by the teacher meant that by the end of the introduction, most pupils had a secure grasp of this and were able to apply their knowledge readily to numbers up to 20. Higher attaining pupils were able to go beyond this to working with 50. Generally lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are confident in their counting to 100 and the idea of 'one more' and 'one less' than a given number. Pupils with English as an additional language manage the number part of the work well, but have more difficulty when working out problems involving words. Pupils in Year 2 count forwards and backwards to 100, in tens and fives. In a good lesson on multiples of ten, pupils were able to extend this to working in 20's. Higher attaining pupils divide higher numbers by breaking them down into manageable blocks of ten. Scrutiny of pupils' workbooks shows good understanding of other aspects of mathematics such as shape and measures, money, time and using simple data. In lessons pupils respond well with good listening skills and hard work. They work well together when required, sharing equipment readily and helping one another.
71. Good teaching, including strategies such as encouraging individual pupils to demonstrate to others, ensures the pupils' constant involvement and enthusiasm. The good and very good teaching has good pace, varied activities and approaches and a good level of challenge, prompting eager responses from the pupils. The quality of the questions asked by teachers check on pupils' understanding, for example, "*How did you work that out?*" "*Can anyone explain a different way of doing it?*" In a very good lesson in Year 1, the review session at the end of the lesson stretched pupils by getting them to think of 'mind pictures' and word problems based on the main part of the lesson. This change of approach consolidated their learning well and gave the teacher a clear view of their level of understanding. When teaching is satisfactory rather than good, the teachers do not provide sufficient support materials for pupils and for some, their attention wandered when they found the task difficult. Good use is made of LSAs, both for those pupils with specific learning needs and more generally within the classes during independent work. During a Year 2 lesson, the LSA worked well with an average attaining group, supporting pupils in developing their understanding of doubling numbers and multiples of ten.
72. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator analyses the information gained from classroom monitoring and assessment well and uses this to set appropriate targets for improvement. The success of this can be seen in the improvements in attainment. Planning for the subject is good and its development is co-ordinated well.

## SCIENCE

73. Attainment by the end of Year 2 overall is in line with national expectations, maintaining the standards found in the previous inspection. However, pupils have good skills in science investigation and experimentation. Younger pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress. Older pupils make satisfactory progress. This is evident when looking at their work, where samples do not show sufficient difference when compared to those who are a year younger. This is partly because of curriculum planning but also marking, which fails to show pupils what they need to do to improve.
74. Pupils respond well and show great interest, especially when investigating at first hand. During an investigation about habitats, pupils handled living things with care and respect. They observed features and took measurements, referring to information books that helped to identify the creatures. Careful drawings were made which were incorporated into a large-scale map of the school grounds: this enabled pupils to recognise that different living things are found in various habitats.
75. The curriculum is broad, balanced and well planned, covering all the required aspects of science and including regular opportunities for investigations and experimental work. This is an improvement over the previous inspection. Good use is made of the school grounds to study life processes and living things. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good lessons. The best teaching asks challenging questions of the pupils and encourages the use of correct scientific terms. Such lessons also enable pupils to use ICT to aid their science work. For example, pupils using a digital microscope to closely observe leaf structures were 'hooked' on science. Some use is made of this technology and other ICT, but this needs to be planned so that all pupils learn to use it on a regular basis.
76. Resources are appropriate and easily accessible, with a good range of reference material including large information books which can be shared with a whole class. The effective use of these books in some lessons makes an effective contribution to the development of literacy skills. The subject leader has worked hard to produce a relevant and encompassing curriculum and provides effective support to colleagues. Opportunities for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning have been limited which has not identified strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

77. Standards have improved since the previous inspection and are above national expectations. Pupils achieve well. This because the work is carefully planned to develop a range of skills and pupils have the opportunity to return to a theme in a different medium. Pupils are introduced to the work of artists that are appropriate for the work they are doing such as Mondrian for computer generated pictures, Georgia O'Keefe for flower paintings and Rousseau for tiger paintings.
78. Sketchbooks are used particularly well for experimenting with techniques, colour mixing and observation of patterns. Year 1 pupils showed good observation in the pastel drawings of the chicks they hatched earlier in the year. They have good pencil control and show attention to detail, for example, in drawings of a herd of elephants. In Year 1 and 2, observations from small wooden figures show good attention to pose, limbs and joints. This knowledge is transferred well to pupils' paintings of animals in their environment. These show good movement, careful colour mixing and a really good feel of animals moving through undergrowth. Pupils use clay to make patterned tiles and learn the skill of weaving. They draw 'mendi' patterns on hands as part of their India

topic; the drawings of the Indian visitor who came to the school show good observation of her clothing and fabric pattern. Although topics and tasks are similar in both year groups, pupils are working at their own level and make good progress.

79. Teaching is generally good. Lessons are well planned for pupils to build on prior learning. In one lesson, Year 1 pupils were encouraged to use different media on the theme of butterflies following a visit to the butterfly park. The teacher helped pupils to recall what they had seen and with the aid of postcards, to focus on detail, structure and colour. Pupils used what they learn in one medium well when they move to another. They made good attempts to draw butterflies and find ways to decorate their wings on the computer without much guidance from their teacher. Teachers and LSA overly direct some teaching at times and this stifles creativity.
80. The subject is well managed. The targets for improvement are appropriate and include clear expectations for each year group and the need to talk more with pupils about their work. Artwork is imaginatively displayed.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (DT)**

81. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection and are in line with national expectations. Pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils experience a sound range of topics over a two-year period but there is not always sufficient difference in the promotion of skills, knowledge and understanding between Year 1 and 2.
82. Currently pupils are working on animal sculptures in which they learn that rolled paper makes for strength and can be used as legs to support the bodies of animals. These are then covered with a plaster fabric to make a hard finish. Pupils are skilled in applying this material. Year 1 pupils have made some delightful creatures but these follow an adult model and are not designed by the pupils. Nor have they experimented themselves with different ways of using the materials. Year 2 models show more variety because the older pupils are more able to create three-dimensional shapes. One high attaining pupil described how she fashioned her tiger so that it shows a cat like movement about to spring.
83. Sometimes the balance between design and making is uneven. Most activity is focused on making products; although pupils draw designs, they are rarely given the opportunity to think in advance about the materials they would like to use or to select tools and ways of working. The activities are mostly adult directed with higher value given to the finished product rather than to problem solving. As well as making pop-up toys, shields and masks, pupils have made sweet and savoury breads and successfully evaluated these products.
84. Teaching is satisfactory, although what is taught is somewhat limited by the overall planning of the curriculum. Lessons are well managed, the teaching of skills is good and there is an appropriate emphasis on health and safety. Pupils with special needs are well integrated and make good progress on practical tasks. Those with English as an additional language are given good support where necessary.
85. Management of the subject is satisfactory but insufficient attention is given to the progression of skills and opportunity for pupils to design and try out their own ideas. There are at present no plans to use ICT in the subject.

## GEOGRAPHY

86. Standards are in line with expectations for seven year olds and all pupils make satisfactory progress, as at the time of the previous inspection. It was not possible to observe any lessons due to timetable arrangements, but judgements take into account pupils' work, photographs, displays and discussions. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 work on a rolling programme and study the same content, although work is appropriately planned to take account of skills development and different learning needs of pupils.
87. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils enjoy the subject and develop appropriate geographical skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 explore holidays at the seaside and record what they might pack in a suitcase for such a contrasting area. Through neighbourhood walks they look at different types of buildings and then later consider types of houses suited for different types of climate. They visit the Buckden recycling centre and learn about the recycling of glass and paper and consider what makes a clean and tidy environment at school. Year 1 pupils locate places they have visited, using a large map of the United Kingdom and Year 2 pupils plan a route by air to India from Britain on a large world map. Effective use is made of a floor robot to use co-ordinates and plot a route across the school's wild area, but fuller use needs to be made of ICT to extend other work undertaken in geography.
88. Through the stimulus of a visitor from India, pupils learn about the similarities and differences between Britain and India. They are fascinated to learn that assemblies may often be held outdoors in India and that the climate is very much hotter in India than in Britain. Well presented displays increase the pupils' understanding of aspects of Indian life, for example loose clothing suited for a hot climate, aromatic spices and vegetables used in cooking and a range of items used for food preparation. .
89. Subject co-ordination is sound and resources are good. The co-ordinator has planned time next term to monitor developments and teaching. The children use globes and a range of maps, including local aerial maps with their teachers. However they have few opportunities to record and make their own maps. Assessment does not yet effectively track skills progression closely.

## HISTORY

90. Standards are in line with expectations by the age of seven and all pupils make satisfactory progress, as found in the previous inspection. The school has a two-year rolling programme for the subject and teachers plan for progression of skills and knowledge through this approach. Pupils behave sensibly in lessons and start to develop early enquiry skills to find out about the past. For example, Year 1 pupils were curious to find out why castles were made of stones and had a drawbridge. When they learned about some of the hardships in everyday life of people in the past one child wrote. *'I am glad that I did not live a long time ago.'*
91. Pupils develop a sense of when events took place and create a simple time line in their classrooms to illustrate this. They handle and explore a range of artefacts from the past and compare old and new toys. During explorations of the local area, children recorded old and new buildings through drawings. A recent celebration of the school's Golden Jubilee brought together pupils past and present for a tea party and provided an opportunity to find out about the history of their school.

92. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers adapt and simplify stories about the lives of famous people in order that the children gain a satisfactory understanding of the past. Pupils sequence events from the life of Guy Fawkes and in connection with work undertaken on India, they learn about the life of Gandhi. Teaching is most effective when the children are helped to plan their own enquiries and ask questions about the past and when first hand visits and experiences are provided. ICT is not yet used sufficiently to develop pupils' enquiry skills, knowledge and understanding.
93. Subject co-ordination is satisfactory and there is planned time for monitoring. Although teachers assess knowledge and understanding through discussions during lessons, they do not yet have a system for assessing what skills pupils have gained by the end of each planned unit of work. As a result, there are few records available for teachers in subsequent years to refer to. Resources are good, especially the range of artefacts and objects from the past.

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

94. Standards by the end of Year 2 are satisfactory, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Less time is devoted to the subject than is usual, partly because the school has decided to teach ICT skills through other subjects. Although work is carefully planned to link with these subjects, pupils do not have enough opportunity to achieve as much as they could.
95. No specific ICT lessons were seen during the inspection, but samples of work and teachers' planning show that teaching is satisfactory overall. Where teachers are confident in using particular software, pupils are provided with reasonable opportunities to access ICT. Pupils in Year 1 practise their skills with the mouse and know how to use some simple maths programs. During an art lesson a pupil was able to draw and modify a butterfly using an art program. In Year 2, pupils using a word processing program are able to work independently to write a letter, adjusting the size and style of font and formatting it properly. They can then save it to disk. They are able to use CD-ROMS to find information using menus, index and keywords to support work in science and history. However, work is not systematically printed out or stored on floppy disk to provide a record of work for each pupil.
96. In many lessons computers are not used, which means that pupils have infrequent opportunities to learn new skills systematically or to practise them. Although teachers are careful to ensure that all pupils get a turn, pupils often work unsupervised and so do not know how well they have done, or how to improve their work further. In some lessons the use of ICT supports learning well, as in a science lesson, where pupils using a digital microscope to observe leaf structures were amazed at the patterns and structures revealed.
97. The school has recently made considerable investment to replace older equipment, providing each classroom with two up-to-date computers and a printer. This does mean that it takes a long time for all pupils in a class to learn new ICT skills. The school is aware of this and is evaluating the purchase of laptop computers, to enable whole groups to work simultaneously. A good range of educational software is available to provide ICT experiences in most subjects, together with a digital microscope and camera.
98. The subject leaders have worked hard to improve the quality of the curriculum and equip the school with up to date equipment. Staff knowledge has improved significantly through a national training course. However, teachers needed to increase their

knowledge of, and confidence in, using specific software programs. Work is not yet sufficiently monitored to ensure that ICT is included in all planning.

## **MUSIC**

99. The standard of music by the end of Year 2 is broadly average, although pupils who benefit from some very talented teaching achieve well. Guidance on planning is effective, and provides very good support for non-specialist musicians; they are becoming more confident in their teaching, which is also having a positive impact on pupils' learning.
100. By Year 2, pupils know the correct names for a range of instruments and recognise a range of musical symbols. They understand the different ways these instruments can be played and handle them carefully. They keep to a pulse, and recognise changes in tempo, pitch and dynamics. They choose appropriate sound effects and contribute ideas to a musical score to accompany the reading of a story.
101. There are regular opportunities to sing within classes and as a whole school. Singing known songs accurately, tunefully and with good intonation, pupils follow the teacher's directions to sing softly or more strongly. Singing is less successful when songs are pitched in an unsuitable key for pupils' voices. Pupils of all abilities play a full part in the music of the school.
102. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good and sometimes very good where subject expertise combined with confidence, enthusiasm and very careful planning provides very good, enjoyable experiences for the pupils. A thriving recorder club provides many pupils with the opportunity to learn a musical instrument and conventional music notation. Year 2 pupils take part in an annual music festival with other local schools, providing another dimension to their music making. Visiting musicians provide opportunities for pupils to listen to live music, including instruments from other cultures.
103. The subject is carefully resourced; each class has a small collection of instruments for spontaneous use. The central collection consists of a good quantity and quality of instruments. These are carefully looked after and handled by pupils. There is a good range of recorded music from different periods of time and of different musical cultures, which contributes well to pupils' cultural development.
104. The subject leader is knowledgeable, and manages the subject well. Other staff with musical expertise ably supports her and considerable care and effort has gone into planning the curriculum and providing appropriate resources. Although there have been few opportunities to develop staff skills, the subject leader regularly attends training. A limited amount of monitoring has been possible and support and advice offered where necessary.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)**

105. Standards are in line with those expected by the age of seven and similar to those of the last inspection. Pupils are enthusiastic about gymnastics and on entering the hall are quickly into appropriate warm up activities to prepare them for the work that follows. All pupils listen carefully and follow instructions and move sensibly around the room with an awareness of space and others round them so that everyone is safe. Those with behavioural difficulties are managed well. Pupils devise a sequence of actions that

develop their skills in movement and holding a fixed position. However, this rarely goes beyond a satisfactory level because teachers are not sufficiently skilled in offering the technical advice that pupils need to improve their performance beyond this. While teachers use pupils to demonstrate good technique, there is insufficient analysis of this. Teachers do not explain what it is that is good about it and what pupils should be looking for to help them improve their own performance. Similarly, pupils are not given the opportunity themselves to comment on the quality of others' performance and suggest where improvements might be made. As a result, pupils do not always know what it is that would make their performance better.

106. In both Year 1 and 2, pupils use the large apparatus confidently, climbing and travelling with good balance and control. Pupils are very adept at setting out and putting away the large apparatus and do this with confidence and care. This is particularly impressive for some of the Year 1 pupils and shows good training in safe ways of handling large equipment.
107. Overall teaching is satisfactory, but very good teaching was observed. The teachers manage pupils well and this, together with the pupils' good attitudes, means that lessons flow and have a good pace. The start and end of lessons are particularly well managed. Where very good teaching was seen, in a Year 1 lesson on games skills, pupils were encouraged to evaluate their work, which, with additional guidance from the teacher ensured they made good progress. By the end of the lesson most pupils had made good gains in their ability to throw accurately or bat a ball back to their partner.
108. Management of the subject is sound. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and committed to improvement but is not yet influencing the overall quality of teaching. However, teachers are clear about the skills to be developed. Good tracking sheets have been introduced to record pupils' skills in gymnastics and the use of small apparatus as they move through the school. Resources are good and the very good range of extra-curricular activities gives pupils access to a range of different experiences, such as country dancing and high quality instruction from visiting professionals.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)**

109. There has been good improvement since the time of the last inspection. The school now meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils reach standards of work in line with those set out within this. The co-ordinator undertakes a regular audit of the time allocated to RE to ensure that all classes have an appropriate coverage of the subject.
110. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy learning about special celebrations within a range of different world faiths. They are fascinated when they make bread and learn about the Jewish Shabbat celebration and find out about the significance of various artefacts in connection with this. The pupils enjoy their visit to a local church and record the different features, such as the stained glass windows, font and pulpit, which they see there. They are interested in learning stories from the bible from both the Old and the New Testament and are encouraged to reflect upon beliefs and values. They learn about special books and artefacts within different world faiths. For example, children look at the Qur'an and find out about the use of prayer mats within Islam. Year 1 pupils

respectfully handled a large family bible during a lesson based on the story of Moses within the Christian tradition.

111. It was not possible to observe any lessons in Year 2 during the inspection, due to timetable arrangements but pupils' work, photographs, discussions and displays indicates that the overall quality of teaching is at least satisfactory. This represents a further improvement from the time of the last inspection. Good links are made with literacy and Year 2 pupils have opportunities to undertake extended writing linked, for example, to the Christian story of Christmas and family celebrations within Judaism. In a good lesson in Year 1, pupils were encouraged to consider the feelings of Miriam as she placed her brother Moses into a basket in the river. One child thoughtfully said that she would feel very, very sad all of her life.
112. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and well informed. Regular time is planned for monitoring and a good range of artefacts and resources have been purchased to support learning across a range of world faiths. Work undertaken in RE is recorded through a variety of different ways, including class books, photos of shared celebrations, art activities and written work and these are used for assessment purposes.