

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Bearnes Voluntary Primary School**

Newton Abbot

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113400

Headteacher: Mr Art Hewitt

Reporting inspector: Mrs Jane Morris  
18270

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> June 2003

Inspection number: 247362

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Voluntary Controlled

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Queen Street

Newton Abbot

Postcode: TQ12 2AU

Telephone number: 01626-353980

Fax number: 01626-353980

Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Hayley Treneary

Date of previous inspection: 30<sup>th</sup> April 2001

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18270	Mrs Jane Morris	Registered inspector	Science Art and design History Music Foundation Stage Equal Opportunities English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9756	Mr Ken Parsons	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21000	Mr Ken Sansom	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Religious education	The schools results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed?
31819	Mrs Shirley Duggins	Team inspector	English Geography Physical education Special educational needs	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**

Bearnes Voluntary Primary School is situated in the centre of the town of Newton Abbot. It is a unique, smaller than average school, based on a non-denominational trust dating back to 1798. Pupils are aged four to eleven. They are taught in four classes. All cater for mixed year groups and two have mixed key stages. There are currently 102 pupils on roll who are almost all from white British families. The number on roll has been falling. Pupils are admitted from the town and surrounding area but very few come from the school's designated catchment area. They live in a mixture of owner-occupied and local authority houses and flats. Attainment on entry to the school at the age of four varies from year to year. Currently it is below average, particularly in the area of communication, language and literacy. A very small number of pupils come from homes where English is an additional language but none requires support. Thirty nine pupils (38 per cent) are entitled to free school meals, well above the national average. Thirty pupils, 29 per cent, have special educational needs. Three pupils, 2.9 per cent, have Statements of Special Educational Need, higher than the national average. Their needs are varied and include visual impairment, speech and communication and learning difficulties. The school has a very significant number of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than those expected. Last year the figure was 40 per cent. Many pupils join the school from others in the area, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Stability has returned to the school after a period of staff changes and absences caused by unavoidable factors over a period of time.

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

Bearnes is a caring school. Pupils' enthusiasm for school is obvious. Teaching is always satisfactory and has some positive features. Standards are average at the end of Year 2 but are below average in English at the end of Year 6. Recently introduced procedures to improve leadership and management have been established. They reflect a commitment to improvement and are becoming productive. They are closely monitored by knowledgeable governors. There is now a clearly defined way forward. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Teachers know and manage their pupils well within a caring, and inclusive environment
- The teaching of swimming is of the highest standard
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and they make good progress
- Provision for personal development is a strength of the school, particularly moral and social education, ensuring pupils display positive attitudes. Their behaviour is good as are their relationships with one another
- Parents view the school positively and they and the community contribute well to pupils' learning
- Governors play a significant and productive role in shaping the direction of the school alongside staff who fulfil management responsibilities productively

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

- Standards in speaking and listening in all year groups and attainment in reading and writing by the end of Year 6 with increased use of literacy skills across the curriculum\*
- Standards in information and communication technology throughout the school\*
- Challenge in lessons to increase the number of pupils achieving higher standards\*
- Opportunities to promote pupils' independence and involvement in their own learning
- The use of and consistency of approach to homework
- Marking so that it guides pupils forward in their learning\*
- Standards of presentation

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

*\*denotes issues already identified by the school's improvement plan*

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

At the time of the previous inspection in April 2001, this school was deemed to have serious weaknesses, particularly in relation to leadership and management. The school has made satisfactory progress since that time and, with the help of focused and profitable support from the local education authority, it has taken significant steps to address the key issues raised. Although there is still work to be done, the headteacher, staff and governors share a commitment to continued development. There is an appropriate school improvement plan which guides a clear educational direction for the school. Staff have developed their subject co-ordinator roles which are beginning to contribute successfully to the overall monitoring of teaching and learning, especially in English, mathematics and science. All lessons are now satisfactory. Governors have a greater understanding of the work of the school. They make a good contribution to the school's effectiveness within their developing role. Standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science have risen at the end of Year 2. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are still below expectations. Staff training has taken place although the benefit of this has yet to make a significant impact. Curriculum and assessment issues have been tackled satisfactorily but not enough is done to challenge higher attaining pupils. Lessons and work scrutiny suggest there have been improvements in religious education (RE), art and geography. Attendance remains unsatisfactory even though the school has implemented strategies to encourage parents to make sure their children attend regularly. New physical education (PE) equipment has been installed so the school hall is now used more productively. It is also used by the community. Foundation Stage equipment and facilities have been, or are in the process of being, suitably upgraded.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

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

The significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the very high percentage of pupils joining and leaving the school, especially in the junior classes, make comparisons with the national averages unfavourable. Trends are difficult to interpret and it is not reasonable to comment on the school's targets. Inspection evidence suggests that standards are rising because pupils are being tracked and their progress carefully monitored. More needs to be done to challenge higher attainers. Good progress is made by pupils with identified special educational needs.

The attainment of children entering the school at the age of four varies. Currently it is below that found nationally. Children make satisfactory progress. When they enter full-time education at the beginning of Year 1 their attainment is still below the national average in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. It is in line with the expectations for personal, social and emotional, physical and creative development.

In the 2002 national tests for seven year olds, attainment was well below the national average and below similar schools in reading, writing and mathematics. In science standards were in the lowest 5 per cent nationally. The present Year 2 pupils have attainment which is better and is in line with that expected in reading, writing, mathematics and science but below in speaking and listening. They are making good progress in Years 1 and 2.



The 2002 national tests for eleven year olds show attainment well below the national average in English and science but in line with similar schools. In mathematics the results were below the national average but above similar schools. Inspection findings indicate that attainment in English is below that expected in all aspects. In mathematics and science it is broadly in line but in all three core subjects there are few pupils likely to achieve at the higher level. Pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall. Improvements in pupil attainment at the end of Year 2 have yet to impact on the standards at the end of Year 6.

Throughout the school, standards are below those expected in ICT. At the end of Year 2 standards are good in art and very high in swimming. At the end of Year 6 standards in art are also good.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Good: pupils enjoy coming to school. They are well motivated.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good: pupils behave well in class and in the playground. There are clear and consistent expectations that are understood by pupils.
Personal development and relationships	Good: this is a significant strength of the school. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are positive and productive.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory in comparison to that found nationally.

Pupils play and work happily together. This creates a positive atmosphere and they are enthusiastic about coming to school. The school works hard to promote better attendance rates but this still requires improvement.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Reception</b>	<b>Years 1 – 2</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Of the thirty lessons seen, two were excellent, one was very good, seven good and twenty satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Excellent swimming lessons were observed. Good or better lessons occurred throughout the school, characterised by teachers' good subject knowledge, pace and clear learning intentions. The teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory. Teachers have a sound understanding of the national strategies and usually use these productively. Literacy skills are not yet promoted sufficiently in other areas of the curriculum. ICT is not fully integrated into lessons. Tasks to complete on the computer are related to class work but they are not focused tightly enough on building on previously acquired skills.

Teachers know their pupils well. Pupils with special educational needs are identified and well supported by the co-ordinator and teaching assistants. They make good progress. Planning does not take sufficient account of the needs of higher attaining pupils. They are not challenged enough and there is a lack of independent learning with opportunities for research. Insufficient use is made of homework to support learning and teachers do not follow agreed marking procedures or demonstrate a shared determination to insist upon a consistently high quality of presentation.

### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory: The school provides a reasonably balanced curriculum with a strong focus on the development of literacy skills.

Aspect	Comment
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: Pupils are well supported. Activities are planned to match their needs. They make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Although a very small number of pupils come from homes where English is not the first language, they speak it fluently.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall, with strong provision for promoting moral and social areas within a commitment to personal development. Cultural awareness lacks attention to non-western societies.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory: The school provides a safe and caring environment for all its pupils. Procedures to monitor and assess pupils are secure.

The school's partnership with parents is strong. Parents are pleased with the relationships that they forge with staff. Curriculum opportunities do not develop sufficiently speaking and listening, ICT and pupils' independent learning and research skills. Community links enhance pupils' learning in a worthwhile way. There is a caring ethos that enables pupils to thrive. A number of older pupils were keen to express their pleasure at having moved to this school. They have regained confidence and feel secure.

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

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory: The school has established a clear educational direction focussed on raising standards that has been guided by the effective intervention of the local education authority. The school is now in a position to build on the progress it has made under the leadership of the headteacher.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good: Governors have made considerable strides in the development of their role during recent months. They are well informed and have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory: Actions taken to improve weaknesses are gradually becoming more productive as they become embedded in the work of the school.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory: Financial control is efficient and identified educational priorities are targeted clearly in the school's development plan.

Accommodation is satisfactory. Displays of pupils' work enhance the learning environment significantly. There is an appropriate level of staffing. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution. Resources are satisfactory. There is a shared commitment for continued development. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily.

#### 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>• Their children like coming to school and they are helped to become mature</li> <li>• The vast majority feel their children make good progress</li> <li>• Behaviour at the school is good</li> <li>• The quality of teaching is good</li> <li>• The school is very approachable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school's approach to homework</li> <li>• A number of parents feel the school could work more closely with them</li> <li>• Some parents have concerns about the leadership and management of the school</li> <li>• A significant number of parents feel the school could provide a greater range of</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views of the school. They feel the school does its utmost to work closely with them and applauds the 'open door' policy. Recent attention to the leadership and management strategies and structures is having a positive impact on the work of the school. Inspectors do share parents' concerns about homework, including the attention paid to reading diaries. This requires consideration and at present homework does not contribute satisfactorily to their children's education. The range of activities available to pupils is judged to be satisfactory overall.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The attainment of children entering the school at the age of four varies with different groups but overall it is generally below that found nationally. Within the Foundation Stage children make satisfactory progress. When they enter full-time education at the beginning of Year 1 pupils' attainment is still below the national average in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. It is broadly in line in other areas. Many pupils join the school at different times and for a variety of reasons. Often these pupils have had difficulties and interruptions in their learning and their attainment is below that expected for their age. Many year groups are small and changes in the attainment of individuals within these groups have a considerable impact in overall performance. The targets set for pupil performance at the end of Key Stage 2 have little relevance as the pupils within each year group have changed significantly.
2. In the 2002 national tests for seven year olds attainment was well below the national average and below similar schools in reading, writing and mathematics. Observations show that, for the pupils currently in Year 2, attainment is in line with that expected in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Speaking and listening skills remain below average. Recent changes in teaching staff within this age group are having a positive impact on the achievement of pupils. They make good progress.
3. The 2002 national tests for eleven year olds show attainment was well below the national average in English and science but in line with similar schools. In mathematics the results were below the national average but above similar schools. Inspection findings indicate that attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing is below that expected. In mathematics and science it is broadly in line but in all three core subjects there are few pupils likely to achieve at the highest level. Progress is satisfactory but improvements in pupil attainment at the age of seven have yet to impact positively on the standards by the age of eleven. Recently introduced systems to track pupil progress are set to enable the school to better match pupils' potential to their actual achievement. These, alongside the work of the school to promote and improve the effectiveness of teaching of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, are beginning to have an impact on standards, particularly in younger classes. The underdevelopment of the use of literacy skills across the curriculum has a negative impact on standards.
4. Despite improvements and attainment at the end of Year 2 being close to that expected overall standards in information and communication technology still remain unsatisfactory at the end of Year 6. This is mainly because improvements at Key Stage 1 have yet to filter through into Key Stage 2 and there are still some gaps in the knowledge and understanding of older pupils.

5. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good. They are well supported within their classes. The identification and challenge for more able or gifted and talented pupils still remains a weakness.
6. Standards in art are good. This is due to good teaching and pupils' enthusiasm. In history, geography and religious education attainment is broadly in line with that expected. There is insufficient evidence on which to judge standards in design and technology, music and physical education, although the children in Foundation Stage and pupils in Key Stage 1 attain very well in swimming. None of the foundation subjects has seen a fall in standards since the last inspection, indeed standards in geography have improved. Standards in the presentation of work are unsatisfactory throughout the school.

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

7. There is strong agreement amongst parents that their children like coming to school and discussions with the pupils themselves confirm this view. Pupils have good attitudes towards the school and their work; for some it provides a consistent pattern to their otherwise unstable lives; for all it is a place where they are listened to and valued. Pupils show this in the cheerful way they come into school in the morning and in the way that the younger children leave their parents without a fuss. Pupils of all ages are ready to work and to settle to their tasks at the start of the school day. During the day, they are interested and involved in what the school has to offer.
8. The vast majority of parents think that behaviour in the school is good and this positive picture is reflected in the inspection findings. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, trying hard to meet the school's expectations. In the majority of lessons, pupils work well, with the teacher not having to spend much time maintaining order. For example, in a Years 5 and 6 mathematics lesson, most pupils got on with their work independently producing charts to show weather patterns whilst the teacher was helping other pupils in the room. Good behaviour stems from the school's strong ethos which provides clear and consistent expectations throughout the school, coupled with the professionalism of staff in motivating pupils to behave well. The pupils are usually polite to each other and to staff. They are friendly and courteous to visitors. They move around the school sensibly, for instance, when going to assemblies. Pupils respect the property of the school and that of other pupils, for example, pupils bring in desirable game cards or electronic games safely. Play at both break- and lunchtimes is mainly good-natured, although there are occasional incidents of play fighting. No incidents of bullying were observed during the inspection and they are rare occurrences in the life of the school. Last year there were two very short fixed term exclusions.
9. Pupils' personal development and relationships are good. They often work together well in lessons in pairs or groups, encouraged by teaching that emphasises this aspect of their work. For example, in a Years 4 and 5 geography lesson, pupils worked well as teams to remember aspects of a map, dividing the big task up themselves so that each team member concentrated on just part of it. They respect the ideas of others, even when they are different from their own, encouraged by the school's RE provision. Pupils can empathise with the feelings of others. For example, at the start of one RE lesson, they reminded the teacher to allow a fellow pupil to withdraw from it. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are productive; pupils' desire to please their teachers encourages them to work hard. In the playground pupils generally play well together. They can organise their own games well, with several girls skipping over the same rope simultaneously or a group of boys playing with their 'monster' cards without arguments. Many pupils display good self-confidence and they talk naturally to adults; it is a pleasure to meet them, although a few can at times be silly and immature. Self-confidence

extends to pupils with special educational needs, who are able to address their learning problems with maturity. When given responsibility, for example, as members of the school council, pupils respond sensibly. However, there are missed opportunities for pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning and to foster their independence.

10. Pupils' attendance was a key issue at the time of the last inspection. The figures for 2001/02 show little improvement. However, the latest year's data shows attendance at 93.3 per cent, a significant increase, although still unsatisfactory. Within this figure unauthorised absence is at a very low level, consisting just of pupils arriving late after the registers have closed. The attendance registers show that most pupil absence is recorded as sickness, for which parents have provided valid reasons. Five pupils have attendance records of below 80 per cent (none below 70 per cent), all due to known medical problems. The school data for the year ending May 2003 show the two main reasons for absence are medical/dental at 4.7 per cent and holidays agreed by school at 1.2 per cent. It is likely that the high level of pupil absences is caused by a mix of factors, combining a genuinely higher than normal level of illness amongst these pupils with some parents not always valuing school attendance fully. There is further potential to persuade parents to reduce the number of holidays taken in term time. The unsatisfactory attendance remains an issue for the school.

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

11. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Of the total of thirty lessons seen, two were excellent, one was very good, seven good and twenty satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and some outstanding swimming teaching has been reported. The third of lessons that were good or better occurred throughout the school.
12. This small school has reception and Year 1 pupils in the first class, Years 2 and 3 in the second class, Years 4 and 5 in the third and Years 5 and 6 in the fourth. This means that two classes have mixed key stages in them. In a school such as this, any staffing changes have a very significant impact on the overall quality of teaching and the subjects of the curriculum because teachers have different fields of expertise. This is what has happened in this school as two new members of staff have been appointed to teach the younger pupils. They have brought different strengths and experiences to the quality of teaching. This is having a positive impact on pupils' progress and standards, particularly with the teaching of basic skills.
13. Monitoring of teaching by the headteacher, subject co-ordinators and representatives from the local education authority has helped to provide some useful feedback to teachers about their lessons, particularly in the core subjects. There is, however, still more to be done to improve the overall quality of teaching which is predominantly satisfactory. The last inspection reported that teachers were not always successful in ensuring that pupils built on their previous knowledge in a systematic way. This issue has been addressed by the school. Recently-introduced assessment systems, such as targets for writing, are poised to help this element of the school's practice. At present there is still insufficient use made of assessment to make sure that the most able pupils are identified by teachers and challenged to enable them to fulfil their potential. Inadequate attention is paid to promoting additional challenge and expectation in lessons. This is apparent throughout the school but especially evident with older pupils.
14. The teaching of the reception children is satisfactory because the teacher plans appropriate activities for this small group of eight children and the tasks set are purposeful and match their learning needs. However, on occasions, the pace of lessons is too slow meaning that these very young children have to sit and listen for too long before they get going on their activities. The teaching assistant follows the teacher's

planning closely and provides good support to these young children, especially those who require additional help with their language development. The classroom is bright and well organised by the teacher. Improvements to the building are on schedule and the teacher is planning appropriately so that she can develop children's learning experiences even further. She ensures that children feel safe and secure, enabling them to make sound progress as they build on their successes. A great strength of teaching for this age group is the access they have to swimming lessons. The expertise of a very highly qualified member of staff makes a significant contribution to children's learning, both socially and with their physical development.

15. The teaching of the Year 1 and 2 pupils is always satisfactory and sometimes good because teachers are well planned. These pupils share the excellent swimming lessons mentioned above. Teaching is better than satisfactory in lessons when teachers have clearly defined objectives that are shared with the pupils and then recapped at the end to ensure pupils have really grasped the learning intention. This was apparent in a literacy lesson when pupils were finding out about rhyming words. It was also seen after a lesson on forces when pupils suggested ideas for the next investigation they would like to undertake in order to find out more about how the height of a ramp affects the distance a toy car can travel along a surface.
16. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 usually benefit from lessons that have clear introductions and thorough preparation. Teachers make sure new vocabulary is introduced and explained at the start of sessions. For example, in a science lesson with the oldest pupils, the names of parts of the ear were illustrated on an overhead projector so that pupils could refer to them in their recorded work about how sound reaches our ears and how we hear. The pace of lessons is variable as is the use teachers make of pupils evaluating and planning their own work. Both these elements were very profitably employed in an art lesson with Years 4 and 5 pupils who were quickly introduced to new skills. They produced very high quality watercolours of landscapes which were appraised by their classmates. Teacher's subject expertise came successfully to the fore in this lesson. In Years 5 and 6 after a snappy and profitable introduction to a mathematics lesson, pupils' graph work exhibited their enthusiasm for the task. There was, however, missed challenge as they did not select the type of graph to produce for themselves. At the end there was a review of the lesson but it lacked sufficient follow up discussion to take learning forward.
17. Throughout the school teachers enjoy productive relationships with their pupils. They do their best to encourage positive attitudes and expend considerable effort and energy in promoting good standards of behaviour. Their management of the pupils is a strength of their teaching. If pupils make mistakes teachers try to make good use of their errors to help them and their classmates gain a greater understanding as in a Years 4 and 5 lesson on angles.
18. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught satisfactorily. Teachers have implemented the national strategies with some worthwhile results, particularly with Years 1, 2 and 3. The structures of these sessions are productive. It is too soon for these lessons to have impacted on standards further up the school. Introductions to numeracy lessons are usually lively and pupils respond positively to the quick-fire question-and-answer parts of the lessons. Teachers are committed to raising standards in reading and writing, and they look for opportunities to promote these skills in the main part of literacy lessons. The work they do with groups of pupils, such as guiding readers through a text, is valuable, as is the support given by teaching assistants when they help pupils in small groups. Literacy skills are not yet sufficiently well promoted across other areas of the curriculum and this weakness, highlighted by the previous report, still requires attention.

19. In less productive but still satisfactory lessons there are some missed opportunities for pupils to be independent. Teachers do not always recognise how pupils could be actively involved in their learning, as when they want to discuss information with their classmates rather than listening to the teacher, so that they find out for themselves what they know already. This happened in an RE lesson on Hinduism when pupils listened to an introduction which gave them information rather than allowing them to access this for themselves from a variety of sources.
20. Teachers try to integrate ICT into their lessons and achieve this with varying degrees of success. For example, the use of ICT to support a science lesson about healthy food was commendable. Pupils independently entered data about the fat content of different brands of sausages on to a spreadsheet and then presented their information graphically. Year 1 pupils used a programmable toy successfully. They entered data that made it turn left and right. Planning, however, needs more detail to ensure the teacher is confident in the next steps to take in preparation for pupils' new learning. Teachers have attended the nationally-promoted programme for subject development and they are gaining greater confidence in using ICT in their lessons.
21. Teachers in the younger classes have been placing a greater emphasis on developing pupils' handwriting by introducing joined script. The effect of this work has not had sufficient time to impact on the presentation of work in books which is unsatisfactory throughout the school. A whole school focus on this aspect of pupils' learning is necessary in order to develop a consistent approach. There are some rare examples of marking in pupils' books when teachers refer back to the aims of the piece of work so that pupils know how well they are doing but, overall, this aspect of the school's work is not good enough. Many books are left without any constructive comments.
22. Teachers do not use homework to support learning productively. They encourage pupils to take their reading books home and parents make some useful observations in 'home to school diaries'. This information helps teachers, parents and carers work together to support children with reading. However, the use of these diaries is inconsistent and relatively new for some pupils. Inspection evidence supports parents' views that this element of teaching requires attention.
23. Teachers and support staff work well together. This collaboration is a strong feature of many lessons and ensures that pupils with special educational needs are included and make good progress. Teaching assistants are briefed by teachers and know how they can contribute to pupils' learning but there are times when this is not successful with the oldest pupils. Sometimes these pupils are helped too much and opportunities to develop their independence are missed. Parent helpers visit school and assist productively with pupils' learning. This is especially noticeable when teachers, parents, teaching assistants and helpers work together to provide visits to interesting places and events away from the school, such as an 'energy centre' in Cornwall.

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

24. Since the last inspection the school has made appropriate adjustments to the length of the school day to allow sufficient time to teach all the non-core subjects. The headteacher monitors all teachers' plans and, with support from subject co-ordinators, checks for coverage of the National Curriculum requirements. Although there remains an emphasis on teaching of literacy in order to raise pupils' standards the breadth and balance of the curriculum overall is satisfactory. Planning does not always focus sufficiently on ensuring that there is real challenge in the learning of pupils of different abilities, particularly those more able. There is an appropriately structured curriculum for

children in the reception class that provides suitable practical experiences reflecting the Early Learning Goals. The quality and range of learning opportunities for all pupils are satisfactory and all statutory requirements, including the teaching of religious education, are met. The school demonstrates a determination to be fully inclusive. It does this well.

25. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall and fully complies with the Code of Practice. Pupils benefit from being fully involved in all that the school does. They are well supported by teaching assistants and fellow pupils. In the best practice and where adult support is available, pupils' individual education plans form the basis of realistic objectives in lessons. This was evident in Years 4 and 5 where the teaching assistant was very clear on the expectations of the teacher and successfully supported a pupil to develop his ideas for a leaflet while extending his skills in writing and spelling. However, more needs to be done to ensure that individual education plans consistently form the basis of realistic objectives across the curriculum for these pupils.
26. The school has introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies successfully although they are not yet securely embedded across the school. These strategies have positive results in enhancing pupils' skills and interest but work is not always planned to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly the needs of higher attaining pupils. Writing skills across the curriculum are under developed. Identification of cross-curricular links and themes in teachers' planning is limited and there are missed opportunities to develop and apply pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills through organised debates or drama, or by producing extended writing on a regular basis in history, geography and religious education are missed. There is no consistent approach to handwriting or presentation. Generally, letter formation in pupils' handwriting is not well-formed and presentation of work is unsatisfactory. The school has already identified the need to develop opportunities to use literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills across the curriculum.
27. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is sound and pupils gain much from visits from the police liaison officer and the 'Life Bus' to promote an awareness of drug related issues. Personal development, including sex education and awareness of drugs, is also supported successfully through the science curriculum. The use of a teacher's expertise for swimming is having a beneficial effect on raising standards throughout the school. The more recently introduced skipping programme is successful in promoting a healthy playground activity where pupils have fun supporting each other to develop their skipping skills.
28. There are reasonable opportunities for pupils to take part in a suitable range of extra curricular activities and pupils respond enthusiastically to sports such as skipping, netball and football. There are no opportunities for pupils to play musical instruments taught by peripatetic tutors. Pupils have appropriate opportunity to take part in musical performances at Christmas and end of the school year.
29. The overall provision for pupils' personal development is good. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Acts of collective worship are suitably planned with moral or mainly Christian themes and prayers are appropriately offered to pupils. Pupils are encouraged to reflect and comment upon issues and personal qualities during 'circle time' sessions. These times give pupils opportunities to share their thoughts and experiences in a supportive atmosphere. These help to lead them towards greater self-knowledge and spiritual enquiry. The warm and caring atmosphere in the school encourages pupils' spiritual growth.



30. Provision for moral and social development is good. The school has a suitable policy for promoting high standards of behaviour and a structured framework for dealing with unacceptable behaviour. Pupils are well aware of the expectations of teachers and other staff. They respond positively to achievement certificates in recognition of their efforts to help others, behave well and work hard. The whole school ethos and relationships around the school provide good opportunities to develop their moral and social skills. During the inspection Years 4 and 5 pupils made very good progress in establishing their team spirit in a geography game where each member remembered a specific part of a map until the team had successfully completed maps of different scales. The teams came to amicable decisions on which part of the map the next team member should focus on. At present, there are no opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills through residential visits. It is planned to resume these during 2003/2004.
31. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. The school welcomes visitors to support pupils' learning. For example, a Hindu met older pupils to share the beliefs and values, as well as the traditional dress, of the Hindu religion. Pupils also study their own culture constructively through history topics and visits to places of interest. They participate in the local Victorian Evening at Christmas and ceremonies such as the 'Beating of the Bounds' and the 'Cheese and Onion Fair'. The religious education scheme provides pupils with knowledge about other religions with music and art providing satisfactory opportunities for cultural development. There is appropriate planned provision in geography and literacy to open up and extend multicultural dimensions.
32. Good links are established with the local community which offer pupils a suitable and wide variety of experiences outside their daily lives and from which they derive great benefit. Visits from representatives of the police, visits to places of interest such as the 'Alternative Energy Centre' and Christmas carol singing at the local home for the elderly successfully promote pupils' interest in the wider world.
33. The school has established satisfactory links with partner institutions. The teacher in the reception class is developing links with local pre-school groups and has established good home/school links. Arrangements with other primary schools within the academic council are effectively developed to help discussions on curriculum and assessment issues. The school has established good links with the receiving secondary schools that enable Year 6 pupils to experience a smooth transition to the next phase of their education. There have been improvements in this area of the school's work since the previous inspection.

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

34. Procedures for child protection and welfare are sound. The headteacher ensures that other staff are aware of their child protection responsibilities and that proper records are kept, although, as he is aware, he needs further training to cover recent changes in procedures. Local guidelines are followed and he liaises with social services as required. Pupils are helped to keep themselves safe through the school's PSHE programme, whilst their good relationships with staff mean that they are confident enough to approach them should the need arise. Routine health and safety procedures are in place. The governors' site and buildings sub committee is particularly active in monitoring the school buildings and grounds for safety. All routine checks and procedures are in place, with one exception; no formal risk assessment documentation is completed in connection with the school visits by pupils off-site. Although there is no implication that safety has been compromised, this procedure needs to be completed in future.

35. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are satisfactory. The school provides a caring environment in which pupils feel safe and valued, allowing them to develop as individuals. There are opportunities in PSHE, including circle time sessions, to deal with any general issues that are raised. However, in the main the school's provision is quite informal, as it can be in a small school, with teachers keeping their own notes as they think fit and problems being aired in the staffroom as necessary. All teachers are concerned about the pastoral care of their own pupils and try to support the welfare of these individuals when they need it. On occasion, the deputy headteacher, who is a trained counsellor, provides one-to-one support to pupils experiencing particular difficulties. Outside agencies are called in as required.
36. The school has good procedures to monitor and support attendance. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, although it is not yet fully reflected in the pupils' rates of attendance. Registers are properly completed and data is collated using an appropriate computer system. The school is active in encouraging parents to contact the school to provide reasons for their child's absence when necessary. When this does not happen, staff telephone parents to obtain reasons on the first day of absence. Pupils are encouraged to come to school through the award of certificates for good attendance. The headteacher monitors the registers regularly and the educational welfare officer is involved as necessary.
37. The procedures to monitor and promote pupils' behaviour are good. In this small school, teachers know the pupils well. Pupils want to please their teachers and this is a key motivation for good behaviour: this is encouraged by the school's strong social and moral provision. The school's behaviour policy includes guidelines for behaviour management, including the system of rewards and sanctions, although they are somewhat complex and there is limited guidance to teachers as to when to apply them. The strong ethos of pupils conforming to the school's expectations means that serious formal sanctions are only rarely invoked. Pupils appreciate the rewards on offer. For example, in an awards assembly, pupils were pleased to receive certificates recognising their achievements. Procedures for dealing with oppressive behaviour are good. The school's bullying policy is successful and pupils believe that any concerns that they may have will be taken seriously and that they will be dealt with quickly. Pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe, a message reinforced by visiting agencies. Lunchtime assistants provide productive and supportive supervision, encouraging active and productive play.
38. The school has established good procedures for assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic performance. This is an improvement on the previous inspection where they were found to be unsatisfactory. The whole school focus on assessment is sufficiently rigorous but using assessment to raise pupils' levels of attainment is not yet securely embedded across the school to be sufficiently effective particularly for higher attainers.
39. Results of annual tests in reading and mathematics are thoroughly analysed to identify common weaknesses and these become the curricular targets for each year group. Analysis of the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standard assessment tests and optional tests for Years 3, 4 and 5 show areas where relative weaknesses occur. The outcome informs adjustments to teaching plans and curriculum targets. Mid-year assessments in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and ongoing assessments in non-core subjects are used for evidence of pupils' interim progress towards the set targets. Termly targets are set and shared with pupils and parents. Their use is more recent and requires development to identify ways forward for individual pupils to reach their full potential.

40. The good ongoing support and assessment that pupils with special educational needs receive ensures that, as they move through the school, these pupils make good progress in achieving their individual targets and in their learning.
41. Marking of pupils work is not used as a productive assessment tool or as an integral part of teaching and learning. During the majority of lessons teachers have quality interaction with pupils that effectively guides their learning. However, marking of pupils' work is more often a cursory tick with use of remarks to encourage and praise pupils' efforts. Marking does not reflect the learning purpose of the lesson or guide pupils towards improving and extending their learning by setting short-term, achievable yet challenging targets. Teachers rely on and use productively their good knowledge of the pupils they teach.

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

42. Based on the minority of those who took the opportunity to express their views, parents hold positive views about the school. The school draws a majority of its pupils from outside its designated catchment area; parents have in many cases made a conscious decision to send their children to Bearnas. Many like its small and friendly ethos. The headteacher and his staff have the confidence of a large proportion of the parent body and this provides a strong foundation for their work. Parents are very supportive of the way the school is being run and the provision the school makes for the education of their children. Parents believe the school is well led and managed. They are satisfied with the progress their children are making, the quality of teaching, information from the school, and pupil behaviour. Inspection findings support the positive views held by parents. A minority of parents would like to see a more interesting range of activities outside of lessons and do not believe the school works closely enough with them. Inspection findings would indicate that the range of extra curricular activities is satisfactory bearing in mind the small size of the school and that the school does try to work closely with parents in key areas.
43. The school provides sound information for parents. There are regular letters home to let parents know about the life of the school. The school also uses homework diaries to provide two-way communication with teachers. Their use is inconsistent and the school is currently reviewing this. The annual reports to parents on their child's progress are satisfactory, providing reasonable information to parents on core subjects but only a few brief lines on other subjects. Target booklets are in use, but many of the examples seen were not being used well, with few entries being recorded. The school provides three formal opportunities per year for parents to talk to staff about children's progress. The prospectus and the governors' report both meet legal requirements, although neither really gives a flavour of the school. Parents are, however, given information on the homework timetable and the topics their child will cover. These give more of a sense of the school's purpose and ethos.
44. It is apparent that parents feel welcome in the school. Significant numbers of them accompany younger children into school and they are clearly comfortable doing so. A good number of parents help in school, for example, hearing readers, helping with art lessons, supervising children going to swimming lessons, or even creating the flower beds in the grounds. Many parents contribute usefully to children's learning at home. Most have signed the home-school agreement. The parent governors are active members of the governing body, particularly on the communications committee, whilst there is also an active parent, teachers and friends association that organises fundraising and social events, raising significant sums of money for the benefit of the school. Overall, the contribution of parents to their children's learning is good and has improved over the last two years.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. At the time of the previous inspection leadership and management presented a serious weakness, particularly in relation to the educational direction provided by the headteacher. Satisfactory progress has been made in addressing this area of concern, despite the long term absence of the headteacher. Both the headteacher and deputy headteacher have played their part in keeping the school moving forward over the last two years. The headteacher is working hard to ensure that his vision for the future development of the school is not only understood but is also contributed to by the rest of the staff.
46. The staff have taken on the responsibility for a number of subjects. There is an obvious and correct order of priority in dealing with these areas; English, mathematics, science and ICT have taken up much of the co-ordinators' time. There is a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in these subjects. As with the co-ordination of all the other subjects staff have worked hard and very good progress has been made in the identification of and subsequent remedial action taken in areas of weakness. For many subjects there are action plans which set out what needs to be done, the resources needed and the timescale.
47. In general the aims of the school are met well. There are indications that standards are beginning to rise and, in particular, the school is successful in providing a caring and happy environment where 'every individual matters'.
48. Following the last inspection the governing body, with especially successful local education authority support, has continued to improve its role in understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the school. As a group they now have a good grasp of what is needed to move the school forward. Under the enthusiastic leadership of a new chair the committee structure has enabled them to work much more efficiently and, therefore, effectively. They fulfil their statutory duties well. Links, such as those between subject governor and co-ordinator, are beginning to extend the governors' understanding so that they can fulfil their roles even better in holding the school to account and shaping the future direction of the school.
49. Performance management is satisfactory. The school has been monitored many times by the local education authority over the last two years, as well as developing its own internal systems to observe classroom practice and carry out work sampling. There is a great deal of information about the quality of teaching. This is now being used more productively to support teachers in improving their own practice. However, the impact of this needs to be more closely monitored to ensure that teachers receive clear focused advice to help them eliminate the areas of weakness in teaching and raise the overall quality to good. It is essential that these new systems are embedded and their impact can be assured. The procedures for the induction of staff have been mostly informal. New staff to the school have not always received adequate support.
50. The school improvement plan is a valuable document. All priorities are entirely appropriate; they are clearly focused on many of the areas of concern raised in the previous inspection. The school's own plan has also been supported by members of the local education authority to ensure that the actions address the main priorities. The resource implications of the plan have been carefully considered and allocations made.
51. All monies, including those for specific purposes, are used appropriately. The school has a clear indication of the potential budget over the next two years and the headteacher and governing body are able to consider possible difficulties well in advance. The school administrator carries out her role discreetly and purposefully. A

very recent audit, indicating no major problems, has taken place and the school is considering how best to address the findings. The governors have a satisfactory understanding of 'best value'. They are beginning to apply the principles. New technology is used satisfactorily: attendance is recorded and systems to develop better use of pupil performance data have been introduced.

52. There are sufficient, suitably qualified teachers on the staff. The headteacher currently does not have a class commitment but teaches according to a timetable agreed with other staff. There is an appropriate number of support staff to help teachers with general duties and assist pupils with special educational needs.
53. Although satisfactory overall there are some deficiencies in the building, as identified in the previous report. Two of the classrooms in the original school are long and narrow which makes teaching the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies difficult on occasions. The classroom containing the Year 2 and Year 3 class is small for the number of children and range of activities. However, because the building is old potential changes are often expensive. There are plans to address the lack of an outside play area for the Foundation Stage, identified in the previous report. Some recent re-decoration and new carpets have improved the learning environment. Overall there are sufficient resources in each subject.

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

54. In order to promote a higher quality of teaching and learning and higher standards, recently introduced systems and strategies to support self evaluation should be rigorously applied to:
  - (1) Improve speaking and listening skills throughout the school and raise standards in reading and writing by the end of Year 6 by increasing the opportunities for the development of literacy skills across the curriculum (Paragraphs: 3, 18, 63, 65, 69, 102, 104, 108, 126) \*
  - (2) Raise standards in information and communication technology, building on recent progress, by concentrating on developing pupils' skills systematically (Paragraphs: 20, 81, 82, 90, 110, 112, 114) \*
  - (3) Ensure lessons promote:
    - greater challenge for higher attaining pupils (Paragraphs: 13, 16, 26, 69, 78, 83, 87, 89, 108) \*
    - more independence and involvement of pupils in their own learning (Paragraphs: 9, 19, 23, 81, 82, 87, 108, 112)
    - the use of homework to support learning (Paragraphs: 22, 73, 83, 89)
  - (4) Review the marking policy so that it is understood and consistently applied by all staff to help pupils recognise what they do well and what they need to do to improve further (Paragraphs: 21, 41, 72, 74, 83, 89, 108) \*
  - (5) Improve the presentation of pupils' work (Paragraphs: 6, 26, 70, 101, 126, 129)

\* *Denotes issues already identified by the school's improvement plan.*

The school may also wish to take account of the following additional points:

- Ensure newly appointed members of staff are inducted to the work of the school effectively (Paragraph: 49)
- Investigate additional ways of working with parents to improve attendance (Paragraph: 10)
- Develop the contribution of non-European art to the curriculum to raise pupils' cultural awareness further (Paragraph: 96)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	30
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	2	1	7	20	0	0	0
Percentage	7	3	23	67	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. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than three percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	102
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	39

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	30

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	30
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.8
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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	9	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	12	12	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (78)	80 (78)	87 (78)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	11	13	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73 (89)	87 (89)	67 (89)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	12	8	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Total	13	13	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	65 (62)	65 (50)	85 (81)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Total	14	9	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (50)	45 (69)	85 (81)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. Numbers have been omitted when there were fewer than ten boys or girls.

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	97	2	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	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	1	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 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	26

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	100

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	256,728
Total expenditure	255,472
Expenditure per pupil	2,301
Balance brought forward from previous year	21,625
Balance carried forward to next year	22,881

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.2
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	102
Number of questionnaires returned	28

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	39	4	0	4
My child is making good progress in school.	54	39	4	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	21	75	4	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	39	14	7	0
The teaching is good.	64	32	4	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	32	7	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	82	14	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	29	0	4	0
The school works closely with parents.	39	32	25	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	43	39	18	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	39	4	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	36	36	4	0

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

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

55. Children are admitted into the combined reception and Year 1 class in September or January according to their birth date. The number of children that join the school as reception children is usually relatively small. There are eight at present. These children are assessed when they are admitted to the class to find out what they can do. The results of these assessments show a range of attainment that changes from year to year. The current group of children has varying ability but, overall, their attainment is below average. Although their progress has been satisfactory, the teacher's detailed information about their achievements and inspection evidence indicates that the majority of them will not reach the expected levels of the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy, numeracy and knowledge and understanding of the world. They are on course to achieve the anticipated level in the areas of personal and social education, physical and creative development. Progress books and Foundation Stage profiles successfully track how well children are doing. Children who are identified as having special educational needs are well supported and thrive in these caring surroundings.
56. Since the previous inspection there have been improvements in the resources available to these young children. These are now sufficient and of a good quality. They are very well organised. Bikes and trikes have been ordered and are in transit. The accommodation is in the process of being upgraded to provide a sink in the classroom and a covered outside play area. The teacher visits children in their homes before they start school and this helps to provide a smooth entry to the class. She has produced an informative booklet for parents of children about to start school. Some, but certainly not the majority of children, attend pre-school settings. As children arrive at the school from all areas of the town and different pre-school groups the links between them and the school are yet to be firmly established. This is an area the school, with the support of the chair of governors, is working on at present.

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

57. Teaching in this area is particularly worthwhile as the teacher and her assistant create a very calm and relaxed environment in which children are safe and secure. They respond to this atmosphere positively. Children are set to reach the Early Learning Goal in this area because they are given opportunities to make choices and take decisions for themselves. During discussion times they wait for their turn without fuss and when the register is called they listen quietly for their name before responding appropriately. As there are also Year 1 pupils in the class these older and established members of the class provide good role models for the youngest children to follow. Children's behaviour is usually good and they can resolve squabbles for themselves as they did when sharing out the money in the 'class café' in a role play situation. When preparing for a class tea-party the children learnt well as they discussed how to invite people to a special event. During the tea party a very sociable atmosphere was created as children chatted about choosing the contents of their sandwiches. The importance of washing their hands before starting the activity also helped to develop productively their awareness of healthy lifestyles. When changing for PE children were able to undress themselves and then put on their kit without any help. In speaking and listening sessions these young children are able to sustain their concentration for a reasonable length of time.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

58. Teaching in this area is satisfactory and ensures children make sound progress. Much work is needed to help the majority of children acquire language skills which are below average when they start school. They are still lower than the national expectations when they start Year 1. Their word recognition skills are limited and they find expressing themselves difficult. The teacher meets their needs by planning and preparing relevant tasks. They are given many opportunities to listen and offer contributions to discussions although there are occasions when they have to sit still for too long. In the most productive sessions they take part in well-planned activities, sometimes with the teaching assistant. For example, she encourages them to re-enact the story of 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' by taking a route out of the classroom, chanting the rhyme as they go. This activity also reinforces the work they had been doing on 'left' and 'right'. Role play activities are used well to stimulate language and give the children opportunities to have a go at writing lists as they write out menus in the 'café'. Although the majority of children lack pre-reading skills when they start school they learn to handle books carefully and understand that print conveys meaning. They show interest in books and have a go at recognising and saying letter sounds. Children who show more ability are encouraged to read and this they do with growing confidence and improving skills. They can sound out words and have a go at reading unfamiliar words. This small minority of children are also encouraged to commit their ideas to paper and they can write simple sentences. Others are well supported so that they can 'have a go' at writing their name and they gradually develop their pencil control. A 'listening centre' provides additional opportunities for children to enjoy story tapes.

## **Mathematical development**

59. Although the majority of the children have difficulty in counting and recognising numbers when they start school, successful teaching means that they soon begin to develop an awareness of the value of numbers and they make satisfactory progress. However, the majority are unlikely to reach the Early Learning Goal in this area. During a class discussion children found it difficult to recognise the number 2 and could not count beyond 5. Once again role-play situations play an important part in enabling children to achieve appropriately. It encourages them to use mathematical language and they discuss the value of the coins that they play with as they buy items in the 'café' and they also count the number of 'cream cakes' on sale. Children learn number rhymes and play games that go a long way to supporting their learning about number language. They take part in fun games to help them learn positional and directional words. Some are aware of the concept of fractions and talk about cutting sandwiches in halves and quarters. Good quality displays around the classroom provide additional opportunities for children to become familiar with numbers and their values.

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

60. Although teaching in this area is satisfactory, children are not reaching the anticipated levels of the Early Learning Goal in this aspect. The activities relating to this area are often closely linked to the work that Year 1 pupils are doing and the teacher does well to incorporate some specific activities relevant to these young children. However, there are times when lessons do not get them involved in tasks quickly enough. Their learning is well supported by the teaching assistant as they discuss how plants grow and they consider how vegetables are grown and then used in stews. Historically based lessons encourage the children to understand how things have changed over time. They contribute to the questions that are posed to a grandmother who comes to talk to the children about her childhood holidays. Children are given ample opportunities to use the computer and they have access to a number of recently purchased programs that

support their learning in many areas. Designing and making tasks are well-planned and the children are able to use a wide variety of very good quality construction sets as well as taking part in food technology. A tea-party scenario gave the children the freedom to experiment with different tastes and textures as they decided which fillings to put in their sandwiches. Their involvement in the task was clear to see and they thoroughly enjoyed buttering bread and adding their chosen filling. These children have also taken part in work that allows them to express opinions about places they have visited thereby developing their geographical awareness. They have route maps on the classroom floor and these help to develop their understanding of place.

### **Physical development**

61. Teaching in this area is sound overall but it has a particularly strong feature because these young children go swimming. They travel to the swimming pool each week during the summer term and receive expert tuition from the fully qualified teacher who teaches the Years 2 and 3 class. Additional instructors at the pool also enable all these young children to make very good progress in this aspect. During the lesson seen by the inspector children's confidence increased visibly and by the end of the lesson even the most reluctant youngster was splashing around happily and attempting to 'swim' across the beginners pool supported by buoyancy aids. Back in the school environment the class teacher makes sure children have opportunities to engage in activities requiring hand-eye co-ordination. They cut out, stick and manipulate other tools and equipment so that they develop their hand control. Satisfactory teaching provides opportunities for children to take part in movement lessons in the hall. Children can manipulate small objects as when they designed a desert scene when playing at the sand tray. This area has improved significantly since the previous inspection.

### **Creative development**

62. Displays of children's work indicate that this area of development is taught satisfactorily and that children can produce colourful and imaginative work of an appropriate standard. Children are given time to draw, paint, print, model in clay and use construction sets to build. They have learnt how to colour mix, using a prescribed recipe for the strength of colour and then compared it with different mixtures. Large scale and interesting collages, such as one to illustrate the life cycle of a frog, enable them to contribute to a corporate piece of work. They look at the work of famous artists such as Cezanne. They take part in music lessons when they sing to the accompaniment of a guitar and have a go at playing different musical instruments. They join in enthusiastically to the singing of 'The Grand Old Duke of York'. Children are given numerous chances to take part in imaginary play in the class café.

### **ENGLISH**

63. Standards in English have improved marginally since the last inspection. Although different groups have varying attainment on entry, many children start school with below average communication, language and literacy skills. Inspection evidence shows that by the time pupils are seven years old standards in reading and writing are in line with the national average. This is an improvement from the 2002 national test results when standards in reading and writing were well below the national average and below those in similar schools. Due to small cohorts there is considerable variation year to year. No pupils are successful in achieving the higher Level 3. Standards in speaking and listening remain below the national average across the school. At the age of eleven, pupils achieve standards that are below the national average in reading and writing. In the national tests in 2002 pupils' performance was well below the national average but in line with schools in similar contexts. Comparisons made of improvements since the

pupils were tested at the age of seven show below average progress. This is affected by the large number of pupils who start in this school at different times other than in the reception class. Boys and girls achieve similar standards.

64. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has improved teachers' subject knowledge and understanding but needs to be firmly embedded throughout the school, particularly with older pupils. Lessons are appropriately planned with lesson objectives that are, at times, not sufficiently clear and succinct to focus teaching and learning. Where the strategy is firmly in place pupils make good progress. For example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 made good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the main features of persuasive writing. Pupils were eager to share what they had produced with the remainder of the class, demonstrating their growing confidence and enjoyment in their work. As a result of good teaching pupils clearly understood what was expected.
65. When pupils enter the school they gain confidence in their speaking and listening skills. These skills are not sufficiently promoted as pupils move through the school. In the most productive lessons pupils benefit from well-planned opportunities for offering opinions or explanations. Limited vocabulary reduces pupils' ability to put forward arguments, offer opinions, present information in English and other subjects. By 11, attainment in speaking remains below average. The school has recognised the need to provide greater opportunities to develop and extend speaking skills in all lessons. Most pupils attend well when listening in small and class groups and seem to be interested in what is being said.
66. Many seven year olds read with fluency and accuracy and with appropriate expression, using phonic recognition, word building and picture clues to help them decode unfamiliar words. Pupils develop basic library skills through their use of the non-fiction library and, as observed in Years 2 and 3, use reference books to locate captions and labels. They demonstrate an understanding of how to use the contents and index in order to locate information from books. The provision of well-managed, daily group reading sessions helps good progress by giving pupils the opportunity to practise and consolidate their reading. The individual support for lower attaining readers is well focused on pupils' weaknesses to help them get the best from these sessions.
67. Eleven year olds demonstrate a growing confidence to read from a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. The most able pupils talk appropriately about the books they are reading. They can discuss characters and other features that they like or dislike. Although pupils make satisfactory progress and have a much firmer knowledge of basic reading skills by 11, standards remain below average. Pupils read words more accurately but use limited expression or inflection. Despite thoughtful, well-focused questions by class teachers, limited language restricts pupils' comprehension skills and consequently their ability to use inference and deduction when using texts. Library provision has improved since the previous inspection with a suitable range of books in each class as well as library areas. The school has plans to improve the school library facility to a more permanent location. The higher attaining pupils have read most of the books the school has to offer and bring books from home, indicating that there are still some shortcomings.
68. Seven year olds reach average standards in writing because of consistently good teaching. Pupils in Year 2 make good progress appropriately acquiring new skills, knowledge and understanding. Many pupils write simple sentences, spell common words correctly and use capital letters and full stops with increasing accuracy. Spelling is carefully taught through structured phonic work that emphasises the link between reading and writing. Pupils demonstrate growing knowledge of words that rhyme and words that sound the same but have different meanings. Year 2 pupils show sound



spelling and punctuation skills in their letters to the headteacher portraying their likes and dislikes of the school environment. They identify confidently rhyming words and make good progress summarising in writing the content of a text, successfully keeping the main points the text is making. Within the literacy hour grammar and punctuation are taught systematically and pupils extend their range of writing.

69. Eleven year olds' standards in writing are below average because improvements in the younger age groups have yet to impact on standards further up the school. Progress is currently satisfactory based on pupils' prior attainment. Punctuation and sentence construction is satisfactory overall. More able pupils use punctuation, including speech marks, appropriately and sentences are suitably structured but with limited use of extended sentences. Challenge for these pupils is inadequate. Pupils are beginning to develop ideas logically and organise their work into paragraphs. Limited vocabulary skills restrict the ability of pupils to write creatively. A significant number of pupils do not make effort to produce work of good quality; there is evidence that time is not well used to complete tasks appropriately and some examples of written work indicate only sparsely developed points. In general, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy skills by writing creatively, for a range of purposes or to any length in other areas of the curriculum. The school has recognised this need and priority is given in the school action plan.
70. The quality of pupils' handwriting varies greatly and overall is unsatisfactory. Letters are not well formed and pupils take little care in the presentation of their work. The analysis of pupils' work shows that presentation overall is not good enough. Information and communication technology is sometimes used appropriately for word processing but this skill is not used regularly enough for pupils to be confident in what they do.
71. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of knowledgeable teaching and skilled support. The targeting of pupils with carefully structured phonic work has a positive impact on the standards they achieve.
72. Generally pupils' attitudes to English and behaviour in lessons are good throughout the school. Many pupils enjoy their lessons and respond well to the structure and organisation of the literacy hour. The majority of pupils take part enthusiastically in the shared aspects and are prepared to discuss their work with adults but a significant number show difficulty with written work. Marking does not help pupils recognise what they are doing well and what they need to do next to improve.
73. Overall the quality of teaching is good and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. In the best lessons, teachers have a secure knowledge of the content and requirements of the English curriculum and of the National Literacy Strategy. This enables them to make good use of questioning to develop understanding and extend learning. Teachers plan carefully and pay good attention to subject specific vocabulary such as 'text', 'contents', 'root words' and 'suffixes'. They show an enthusiasm for English. This has a positive effect on pupils' confidence and interest. These teachers use praise well to reward pupils' efforts and to encourage pupils to achieve as well as they are able. This has a positive impact on learning and progress. Homework is not used well to support learning in school and reading records are used inconsistently.
74. The co-ordinator has worked extremely hard to ensure that she is well informed about the needs of the literacy hour and has attended many courses. She works successfully alongside support from the local authority to develop coherent planning, assessment and resourcing of English. The subject is managed well and this is beginning to have a significant impact on teaching and learning as strategies become well-established throughout the school. Monitoring procedures include the scrutiny of teachers' planning,

of pupils' written work and observations of the quality of teaching and learning in the classrooms to identify strengths and weaknesses that need to be addressed. The detailed analysis of school based and national tests guides the long and medium-term planning to meet the needs of teaching and learning in order to raise pupils' standards. Use of day-to-day assessment through marking is not used effectively to set short-term, achievable but challenging targets for individual pupils.

75. Resources for English are of satisfactory quality and quantity. Appropriate materials have been purchased to deliver the literacy scheme and there is an adequate range of literature to represent the major genres of written English. Library resources are suitable and improving and pupils have appropriate access to them. They contribute successfully to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **MATHEMATICS**

76. The 2002 national tests for seven year olds in mathematics show that pupils performed well below most schools nationally and below those in similar schools. This is broadly the same as the last inspection. Over time these results vary from year to year, mainly due to the small size of the year groups.
77. Results in the national tests for eleven year olds in 2002 showed pupils' performance was below most schools nationally, similar to the situation at the last inspection. The results, however, were better than many schools in similar circumstances. Progress for those pupils was in line with that found nationally. Trends in these results over time, although difficult to track, suggest that they are improving at a rate similar to that found nationally. The attainment of pupils throughout the school is affected by small year groups and considerable changes in those year groups.
78. Pupils enter the school with attainment in mathematics that is below average. Pupils currently in Key Stage 1 are making good progress ensuring that by the end of Year 2 their standards are in line with expectations. Standards in this key stage are improving. Throughout Key Stage 2 pupils make satisfactory progress and currently Year 6 pupils' standards are broadly in line with those expected. Improvements in standards for the younger pupils have not had time to impact in Key Stage 2, and overall attainment for these pupils is still not high enough, particularly in the number of pupils achieving higher standards.
79. Pupils in both key stages with special educational needs are supported well and they make good progress. A new system has recently been introduced to focus specifically on pupils who have mathematical rather than language needs.
80. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in all areas of mathematics. They are beginning to use and apply their knowledge across a range of mathematical experiences. They understand the basic operations of number. Pupils in both infant classes develop their knowledge and use of directional vocabulary. They make effective use of ICT to support their understanding, using terms such as forward, right and left. This use of new technology adds to the fun of mathematics. In the youngest class some of the pupils also enjoy developing their understanding of over, under and through by going on a 'bear hunt' with a classroom assistant, following the reading of the story by the class teacher.
81. In Years 4 and 5 pupils move on quickly with a practical lesson using protractors to measure right angles. The class teacher successfully intervenes to ensure that any misunderstandings are quickly addressed. Some pupils make good use of computers using a 'logo' program to draw shapes and follow directions. In Year 6 pupils continue to

make appropriate use of the computers to retrieve data stored in a database of weather information. They also produce charts and graphs using this data. Whilst mathematics learning benefits from the use of computers pupils are not entirely confident in using it independently; they are often reliant on adult guidance to ensure it is used effectively.

82. The quality of the teaching of mathematics is at least satisfactory with some good features. Techniques promoted by the National Numeracy Strategy are taught with varying degrees of success. Teachers offer good quality direct teaching during the introduction and main activity. This leads to good progress being made by a large number of pupils. Teachers are quick to use pupils' answers either to address misunderstandings or to extend the work. ICT is planned well into lessons, an improvement since the last inspection. Insufficient opportunities are taken to allow older pupils to take responsibility for its use. Behaviour is managed well, often because the enthusiasm of teachers is infectious.
83. The use of marking is not always used well to guide pupils on to what they need to do to improve. On too many occasions pupils' presentation of mathematics work does not do justice to their understanding; teachers do not always emphasise the importance of neatness of working. The ends of lessons are not used constructively to allow opportunities to reinforce learning and assess how well pupils have understood what they have done. Work is sometimes not planned to take account of different abilities, particularly to challenge those pupils with good mathematical knowledge and understanding. Evidence from lessons and pupils' books suggests that homework is not integrated into class work and it is not used consistently as an effective tool to support learning.
84. Pupils are eager and enthusiastic. They enjoy mathematics, even when it is taught at the end of a long, tiring day. They were often disappointed when lessons ended.
85. The mathematics co-ordinator understands the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. Since the last inspection improvements have taken place. Teachers are observed and work sampling undertaken. This has produced a wealth of information. The use of this information is not yet fully exploited to ensure that good practice is disseminated and areas of weakness are clearly identified and addressed. On occasions, there are missed opportunities for the promotion of numeracy skills across the curriculum. There is a good set of pupil performance data, but some of this is incomplete as it is not always passed on from pupils' previous schools. The use of this data to set individual and group targets is in its early stages.

## **SCIENCE**

86. In 2002, at the end of Year 6, pupils achieved standards that were well below those reached nationally. Their results, however, were in line with those of similar schools. Figures showed a decline on the previous year's results. This 'dip' in results relates to the number of pupils with special educational needs who took the tests and it is worth noting that, overall, satisfactory progress had been made since their assessments at the end of Year 2. The Year 2 results for 2002, based on teacher assessments, were well below average, indeed they were in the lowest five per cent nationally and no pupils achieved above the expected level. The results reflected this group of pupils' low attainment on entry to the school. Younger girls did not do as well as boys.
87. Currently, the majority of Year 6 pupils are working broadly in line with the standards expected. For example, they have a sound grasp of how to separate materials and they can describe pollination and the life-cycles of flowering plants. They know that it takes the earth a year to travel around the sun. In lessons they can describe the function of the

ear and explain how sounds travel. When conducting experiments into changes in pitch, pupils are able to measure quantities of water carefully and make observations which they explain. They talk about how the amount of water in a test-tube affects the pitch of the sound produced by hitting the tube. However, there are missed opportunities for ideas and predictions to be recorded and pupils do not pose an initial question to give purpose to their research. There is a lack of attention to planning for the detail of science investigations and this means that there is insufficient challenge. Independence is not promoted sufficiently. More able pupils are not given enough opportunity to reach higher levels of science enquiry which impacts on the standards they achieve. This is a very similar picture to that presented in the previous inspection.

88. Year 2 pupils have developed better standards than those reported in the previous inspection and the current teacher assessments and inspection evidence support this. There have been improvements to the investigative work that younger pupils undertake and this has led to better understanding. The concentration on this aspect of science has yet to have an impact on pupils' work and standards further up the school. Generally, pupils make good progress in their lessons at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory progress at Key Stage 2. Girls and boys are now achieving similar standards. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported, totally included, and achieve well throughout the school.
89. Teaching is satisfactory. In a successful Years 2 and 3 lesson on forces pupils investigated which surface is the best to push a car along and which vehicle travels the furthest off a ramp. The teacher had clear objectives for the lesson which included specific aims relating to recording observations and transferring information onto a block graph to record and illustrate pupils' findings. In this way the teacher ensured that science enquiry skills were taught effectively. In a lesson about healthy foods with Years 4 and 5 pupils the support of the teaching assistant meant that higher attaining pupils could compare and contrast the contents of different foods bought from supermarkets. They described and recorded the amount of fat, carbohydrate, protein, salt and fibre found in these foods. The school would do well to encourage this example of teacher's planning that ensured there was sufficient challenge for the more able as this is not promoted consistently. The marking of science books is, however, unsatisfactory. Homework is not being used to support general class work although it is used successfully to help pupils learn specific vocabulary.
90. Pupils behave well in lessons. Their attitudes are positive and they are willing to explore and find out. They can apply themselves to their work and contribute productively to discussions. For example, Year 1 pupils suggest that plants need sun and water to 'live'. They can offer ideas about how to set up investigations to show that water travels up the stem of a plant. However, there is insufficient attention paid to their finished work. Presentation is unsatisfactory and shows inadequate care. ICT features in some science lessons as a means of recording information and observations and pupils can work on this aspect with some independence. The use of data logging equipment as a means of collecting information to support investigations is underdeveloped. Additional opportunities for this subject are presented to pupils in the science club that the co-ordinator runs during the spring term. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about this activity.
91. The science co-ordinator provides good leadership for the subject. The action plan for the subject is appropriate. Good progress has been made in this element of the school's work and the relevant key issue has been addressed with some success as standards have risen at Key Stage 1. The co-ordinator has held discussions with pupils and those with Year 2 pupils suggest that there has been a significant improvement in the number on course to reach higher levels this year. Inspection evidence supports this. The co-ordinator has monitored lessons and is aware of the work still to be done to

build on the progress made so far in improving scientific enquiry. Pupils' progress and assessment data have been thoroughly monitored, recorded and evaluated. Curriculum planning has been reviewed and adapted so that teachers are targeting identified areas of weakness in order to ensure standards rise. Work scrutiny procedures contribute helpfully to this process as well. Governors are given reports so they are fully informed of the progress being made. They have also been working alongside the pupils in their lessons so that they understand the demands of the subject. Science supports pupils' personal development well.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

92. There were very few opportunities to observe art lessons during the inspection because of time-table arrangements. However, from the evidence provided by the school, standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are judged to be above national expectations and pupils make good progress. There has been improvement since the last inspection as standards reached by the oldest pupils are higher. This is because the time allocated to the teaching of art has increased and the school has adopted government schemes of work to aid the development of skills in a progressive way. The co-ordinator has also started monitoring planning and is tracking pupils' work to ensure that standards are evaluated productively.
93. A scrutiny of wall displays and photographs of work indicate that pupils make good progress. A wide range of media is being used. Pupils employ a range of paints, pencils, crayons, assorted paper, clay and fabrics. There is evidence of quality work from older pupils in the examples of observational drawings of a pupil's pencil case and other associated items. The strong awareness of the use of line, tone and perspective was clearly apparent in their finished drawings. In Years 5 and 6 sketches of globe artichokes indicate close attention to detail. In the Years 2 and 3 class there was a colourful display of work on patterns including those made by employing block printing techniques to good effect. Teachers sometimes incorporate the use of computer software programs into their lessons as illustrated by the symmetrical patterns on display in the reception and Year 1 class.
94. Two lessons were seen during the inspection. In a Years 2 and 3 lesson all pupils made progress as they created stencil cut outs so they could produce colourful, repeating patterns. The teacher showed pupils how to develop stencilling techniques, building on their previous knowledge and experiences. Pupils were able to practise different methods of using paint. They organised the layout of their patterns before committing their ideas to a finished product. They had well organised, appropriate and stimulating resources available to them.
95. In Years 4 and 5 very high-quality learning was apparent as pupils created colour washes for the back grounds to landscape paintings. They responded to advice from the teacher as he interacted successfully with them, coaxing them to improve the outcomes of their careful work. His attention to the acquisition of skills, prompted by his thorough subject knowledge, was clearly seen. Pupils were very enthusiastic about their work and concentrated well. Those with special educational needs were fully included in the activity and their results were commendable. They were very ably supported by a teaching assistant whose unobtrusive contribution played a major part in helping all the pupils. Pupils mounted successfully their finished paintings into pre-prepared frames so that their work was presented very stylishly. The pride in their work was obvious.
96. The art co-ordinator has made considerable progress in developing the subject. There is an appropriate action plan and the way forward is clearly identified. The use of art across other areas of the curriculum is in evidence. In Years 2 and 3 colourful, block

printed fabrics were used to illustrate Joseph's coat of many colours for an RE topic and Years 5 and 6 pupils produce impressive illustrations of Egyptian hieroglyphics on papyrus. However, there is a lack of non-European art represented around the school and this aspect of the school's work requires improvement. Governors have helped pupils to design and contribute to a high quality stained glass plaque on display in the corridor. After school clubs feature art within a rolling programme of additional opportunities and these contribute usefully to pupils' experiences.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

97. Only one design and technology lesson was observed during the inspection because of time-table arrangements. Insufficient evidence was available to form overall judgements about standards or teaching. There were, however, some examples of pupils' finished products on display around the school. These provided little indication that, as yet, the design process is systematically developed.
98. Pupils in both key stages have made a variety of models, often linking this work to their scientific understanding. For example, pupils in Year 6 have produced balsa wood models driven by a propeller attached to an electric motor. Pupils in Year 1 prepared sandwiches, choosing from a variety of fillings. They were able to experiment with flavours and practised their skills of spreading and cutting. Younger pupils have access to a wide variety of construction sets and they use these and clay to design and make different types of bridges successfully.
99. There is a clear whole school programme for the teaching of design and technology to be followed by all staff. Despite being relatively new to the post the co-ordinator has a good overview of the subject. He is fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. An action plan of future development has been written and is included in the School Improvement Plan. Appropriate links have been made with subjects such as science but there are currently less opportunities to use design and technology in the other core subjects of English and mathematics.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

100. Standards are in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. This is an improvement in Key Stage 2 where standards were found to be below national expectations at the time of the previous inspection. The scheme of work and teachers' planning are appropriately focused on the development of the essential geographical skills.
101. Although no geography lessons were observed in the infant phase during the time of the inspection, from scrutiny of work and displays, teachers' planning and talking to pupils it is clear that pupils make satisfactory progress in the development of knowledge, skills and understanding. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Six and seven year old pupils are introduced to the use and interpretation of plans, simple maps and symbols. There is appropriate use of the school and local environment to help them develop a secure sense of direction and scale. They extend their skills to discuss improvements to the school environment. Pupils can identify similarities and differences between their locality and one of a contrasting nature and how transport affects these environments. Pupils' written work is very variable in quality; standards of presentation are unsatisfactory.
102. Since the last inspection geography is now given the appropriate time and junior pupils make sound progress. Nine and ten year old pupils are encouraged to work with maps of different scales and show appropriate teamwork in collecting information. They are

familiar with different climatic regions around the world and physical geographical features. Pupils make valid comparisons between the lifestyles and values of people in Indian villages and those they find in their own community. By the time pupils are eleven they have sound knowledge of the features of a tropical rainforest and where rainforests can be located around the world. They can use co-ordinates to locate features on a map. The majority of pupils have good knowledge of the water cycle and use specific vocabulary to describe its effect on the weather. They make good progress in identifying the features of a river. In this lesson with the oldest pupils the teacher used his secure knowledge and understanding effectively to challenge pupils by introducing a wide range of vocabulary such as 'interlocking spurs'. Pupils develop a suitable range of mapping and information seeking skills but presentation and written work is inconsistent in quality. Suitable use is made of prepared worksheets but written work overall is unsatisfactory. Insufficient opportunities are planned for pupils to further develop their literacy skills of speaking, listening and writing.

103. The quantity and quality of work produced during the year indicates that the quality of teaching is generally satisfactory. Higher attaining pupils are not always given suitably challenging work to enable them to make enough progress. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs have good support which enables them to make appropriate progress but work is not always set to support these pupils sufficiently. However, in the two lessons observed with junior classes the quality of teaching was good. Teachers showed good knowledge and understanding, reinforced and extended pupils' learning and successfully motivated the interest of their pupils.
104. Curriculum planning has improved since the previous inspection, with a two-year cycle that caters satisfactorily for the mixed age classes. The headteacher has the overview role at present and has identified appropriate priorities to take the subject further, such as the development of literacy and numeracy skills through geography. The monitoring and evaluation of provision and pupils' work is not firmly established in order to identify the way to raise pupils' standards.
105. Resources in geography are adequate. Information and communication technology is not used effectively to encourage the development of pupils' investigative skills and learn to communicate successfully with other parts of the world. The school is on course to re-establish residential links that give pupils the opportunity of applying their geographical skills and extending their knowledge and understanding. Cultural awareness is promoted successfully through topics that pupils' study.

## **HISTORY**

106. Due to time-table arrangements it was not possible to observe any history lessons during the inspection. Judgements are based on an analysis of teachers' planning, display and a scrutiny of pupils' work. Standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly in line with national expectations and pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and they do well. This is a similar position to that reported in the previous inspection.
107. In Year 1 pupils have studied the differences between seaside holidays in the past and the present. Their understanding of the past is enhanced successfully by the contributions made by a pupil's grandmother who came to school and responded to the questions the pupils had posed. A record of the responses to the pupils' questions provides a useful and informative class book for pupils to refer to as does a time-line of photographs depicting the changes in clothes and behaviour through the twentieth century. Years 2 and 3 pupils' books show that pupils have studied Isambard Kingdom Brunel. They find out about this famous person's contribution to society and they record

their findings. They have also considered the impact the Second World War had on the lives of children.

108. Older pupils' books indicate an appropriate coverage of the units of work in history. The depth of study varies according to the individual units and their subject matter. Years 4 and 5 pupils find out about 'Invaders and Settlers'. Although they can, for example, order pictures portraying the events of Viking invasions, some of the elements of this work are too superficial. When studying the Tudors, the oldest pupils produce interesting comparisons between the lives of the rich and the poor. They look at the voyages of Sir Francis Drake, finding out about life on board ship at the time. Work produced by the classes with older pupils indicates a lack of challenge for the more able. This is because pupils in both the mixed year group classes are all given the same tasks to do. They are also completing many photo-copied worksheet based activities which limit the development of their literacy skills and inhibit the promotion of research skills. There are too few opportunities to tackle independent tasks. The marking of pupils' work is unsatisfactory throughout the classes as there is very little indication of where pupils have succeeded and what they need to do to improve.
109. The subject co-ordinator has recently taken up the responsibility for the subject. Time allocations and coverage of the subject have been addressed since the previous inspection when they were found wanting. The established action plan takes account of appropriate priorities for the subject but the monitoring of the subject is still underdeveloped. This means that, as yet, this subject is not receiving sufficient focused attention for standards to rise beyond satisfactory.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

110. Although standards at the end of Year 6 are still below national expectations satisfactory progress has been made in addressing this key issue from the last inspection. By the end of Year 2 standards are closer to those expected.
111. Opportunities are taken to include the use of computers across the curriculum, particularly in mathematics. At present some of this use is 'ad hoc' in terms of the development of pupils' skills and their progress, although satisfactory, reflects this. Younger pupils work with a programmable toy to make it move forward and turn. They also use computers to programme a set of instructions. This work is continued into Years 4 and 5 where pupils extend their understanding of shape and space by using a set of instructions to draw different shapes. Within a science lesson they successfully enter data and produce a graph. In Year 6 pupils develop their use and understanding of databases. They are able to use a spreadsheet to enter a set of information and produce a graph of the information. Evidence of previous work shows that pupils are using word processing and drawing packages productively.
112. Teachers take reasonable opportunities to teach skills as part of a short introduction to activities. The productiveness of this teaching is restricted because the whole class has to gather round a small screen. Teachers have a satisfactory understanding of the possibilities of ICT within other subjects. At present, however, the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding is dependent upon teacher direction and guidance. Few opportunities are given for pupils to either assess their own performance or select a program for a particular task.
113. Keyboard skills are satisfactory, although some pupils still have difficulties. Pupils are confident when using computers. They enjoy using them. They have access to the Internet and this gives them opportunities to broaden their experiences and usefully



promotes understanding of other parts of the world although opportunities to communicate with pupils in other countries are underdeveloped.

114. The leadership and management of information and communication technology is satisfactory, an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers are encouraged and well supported in their use of computers. Appropriate training continues to be undertaken by teachers. Pupils are receiving their entitlement to the use of computers. However, there are insufficient systems in place to ensure pupils' use of ICT matches their capability and progression between year groups.

## **MUSIC**

115. Timetable arrangements during the inspection meant it was not possible to observe sufficient music lessons to make secure, overall judgements on either the standards achieved by pupils or the quality of teaching. However, evidence of pupils' work in music was collected from a variety of sources including teachers' planning, listening to examples of singing in a variety of contexts and talking with Year 6 pupils. Since the previous inspection there have been changes to arrangements for the teaching of music. Teachers now have responsibility for their own music lessons rather than one teacher taking music throughout the school.

116. During assemblies pupils are introduced to an assortment of types and moods of music. They respond to a version of 'Somewhere, Over the Rainbow' by Eva Cassidy in a sensitive way. One pupil was able to identify that the song was originally written for 'The Wizard of Oz'. Pupils sing hymns satisfactorily with both guitar and piano accompaniment. Older pupils are able to sing with clear diction, tunefully and with appropriate dynamics.

117. In a lesson with the reception and Year 1 class pupils sang 'The Grand Old Duke of York' enthusiastically as they were prompted to follow the beat. They were encouraged to identify and then repeat short rhythmic patterns which they achieved with some success. These young pupils were also able to successfully introduce the beat of the 'trip trap' interlude in the story of 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff'. An appropriate range of musical instruments was available to them and they handled them with care.

118. When talking with Year 6 pupils it was clear that they enjoy music and they are enthusiastic about the productions in which they have been involved. Currently they are preparing for 'Yanamamo'. When practising their songs to contribute to this entertainment they sang along with a CD backing track and had a go at introducing different instruments as an accompaniment with reasonable success. This work linked effectively with their work on the Amazonian rainforests and it contributes to raising their awareness of different parts of the world and their cultures. Visiting groups have also given pupils an opportunity to take part in African drumming. Pupils have access to guitar and recorder clubs. These make a satisfactory contribution to the curriculum. There is no additional music tuition available to the pupils.

119. The co-ordinator has developed an appropriate action plan to raise teachers' confidence in teaching the subject. The government produced scheme of work for music has been adopted. This is being supported by a recently purchased, published resource which has been introduced to enable teachers to plan their lessons and assess pupils more productively. In-service has also been provided to develop profitably individual teacher's expertise.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

120. Insufficient evidence was available during the inspection to give a secure judgement on pupils' standards or teaching and learning.
121. The co-ordinator has taken on the responsibility over the last twelve months and has made positive moves towards raising teacher expectations and pupil standards. Physical education is used successfully as a vehicle to promote expectation of pupil behaviour and build their self-esteem, particularly through swimming. During the inspection pupils from four to seven years old were taken to the local leisure centre for swimming. The time spent at this activity is well structured to ensure that all pupils make the very best of their time in the pool. The subject expertise of the teacher and three other group leaders ensure that all pupils make very good progress. The equipment provided by the school and the pool is of the highest quality and the facilities outstanding. The very skilled input and excellent understanding of the needs and awareness of each pupil ensures that they are all challenged and build upon acquired skills very successfully. More able pupils are encouraged and tutored in the style and technique of the front crawl style. The confidence of pupils is such that during this lesson some pupils swam without the aid of armbands for the very first time.
122. Skipping club and the opportunity to develop skipping techniques at break-times has been introduced recently. This is a very successful project with pupils playing together with large ropes or individually to develop their techniques. Most pupils can skip and show an awareness of the contribution this form of exercise gives to healthy living. Skipping has promoted successfully co-operation and enthusiasm for the activity.
123. In the one lesson observed, pupils of eleven years showed sound control of a ball when practising their bat and ball skills. The teacher successfully challenges pupils with a range of activities that promote hand eye co-ordination when using a bat. Pupils demonstrate the ability to work productively as team members, developing a suitable competitive spirit in team games.
124. The curriculum is suitably arranged to cover dance, gymnastics, swimming and games. The co-ordinator has not had sufficient time, due to her responsibility for literacy, to ensure that there is suitable progression in pupils' skills as they move through the school, particularly in the junior phase. Although the school has no field within its grounds, it does have access to a grassed area within close proximity. Sporting activities are part of extra curricular provision. Pupils have the opportunity to compete with other schools in matches such as football.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

125. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. An appropriate amount of time is given to the subject in Key Stage 2, an improvement since the last inspection.
126. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2 but pupils' books show that they cover a range of topics throughout the school, including Christianity, Islam and the Old Testament and they indicate that pupils' progress is satisfactory overall. RE is not always used effectively as a vehicle for other subjects, particularly literacy. The presentation of work is often unsatisfactory and there are few examples of extended writing. Displays of religious artefacts make a worthwhile contribution to pupils' learning as they raise pupils' awareness of different beliefs.

127. Two lessons were observed in Key Stage 2. In one lesson with pupils in Years 4 and 5 they explored the links between beliefs and feelings. During the lesson pupils contributed well to a discussion about how the various characters in the story of Jairus' daughter would have felt. This included quite a profound interaction about the death of the daughter. Pupils in Year 6 considered effectively symbols within the Hindu faith.
128. The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory. The strengths in teaching include good preparation. When discussion took place it did so within an atmosphere that supported pupils. They were encouraged to offer thoughts and ideas. They responded well. The intended learning was not always explained to pupils; this made judging progress and assessing understanding difficult.
129. Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons. Relationships between pupils are good. They are able to work individually or contribute to whole class discussion. They listen well to other points of view. They work productively, although the quality of work is not always good enough.
130. The co-ordinator has only recently taken over the subject. At present there are no files of evidence to show what work has been covered in each year or to help monitor standards. Classroom observations have not taken place because of the emphasis on other subjects.