

INSPECTION REPORT

DOWNS INFANT SCHOOL

Brighton

LEA area: Brighton and Hove

Unique reference number: 114367

Headteacher: Ms R Kruger

Reporting inspector: Mrs A Johns
18579

Dates of inspection: 25 - 28 November 2002

Inspection number: 247446

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ditchling Road Brighton East Sussex
Postcode:	BN1 6JA
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Marlow
Date of previous inspection:	10 - 13 November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18579	Mrs Anne Johns	Registered inspector	Science Religious Education The Foundation Stage English as an additional language	How high are standards? How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9519	Mrs Sue Pritchard	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
24528	Mr Garth Muton	Team inspector	Mathematics History Geography Physical education Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22778	Mrs Anne Shannon	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Art Design and technology Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Downs Infant School is larger in size than most schools of its type with 354 pupils on roll, including some younger children who currently attend part-time. There are more boys than girls, particularly in Year 2. There are four classes for each year group. The school is situated north of the centre of Brighton and serves an area which comprises owner occupied, rented and local authority housing. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is about average. Pupils join the school with a wide range of ability, but overall their attainment on entry is typical of that found nationally. Most children have had some pre-school education. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average. The number of pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Need is similar to the national figure. The percentage of pupils whose mother tongue is not believed to be English is higher than in most schools and the percentage of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is about average. The school is very popular with parents and is almost full. Since the previous inspection, the school has been through an unsettled period, but there is now a much more stable situation. The headteacher has been in post for just over a year and the deputy headteacher was appointed at the beginning of the current term.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Downs Infant School is a good school with many very good features. Effective teaching and very good relationships support the pupils' learning very well. The very good leadership and management have ensured that pupils achieve well in a stimulating and effective learning environment where each individual is valued. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are above average in science and music and well above average in art.
- The headteacher provides very effective leadership and is very well supported by the staff, parents and governors.
- Teaching is good with very effective management of pupils.
- There is a very strong staff team with a clear commitment to further improvement.
- There are very good relationships in the school. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and provision for personal, social and health education is very good.
- There is very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs.

What could be improved

- Standards in history and geography are slightly below expectations.
- The monitoring of teaching, learning and the curriculum is not sufficiently regular or consistent.
- Time is not always used as effectively as it could be. In mathematics, there is not always enough time for pupils to develop practical tasks and their independent recording skills. Classroom assistants are not always used to full effect.
- There are important health and safety issues, related to the accommodation, which need to be dealt with as soon as possible. The size of the outdoor area for reception children limits the activities.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in November 1997, there has been good improvement. Standards have improved over time in English, mathematics, science and religious education. In the previous inspection, more able pupils did not make enough progress; their progress is now generally good. The quality of teaching has improved and is now good with a substantial amount of excellent and very good teaching. Leadership and management are now very good and have been a key factor in moving the school forward in the past year, and improving financial procedures. In relation to the key issues identified at the time of the last inspection, there has been good improvement, overall.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

The school does well for its pupils by the time they leave at the end of Year 2. In the national tests in 2002 pupils achieved above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared with those in similar schools, they also achieved above average results. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels was in line with the national average in reading and writing, but it was above average in mathematics and well above average in science. In science the results were also above average and the percentage of pupils achieving higher levels was well above average. The trend of improvement over time in each subject is above the national trend. Children have a good start in reception and they achieve well.

Standards in the current Year 2 are not as high as in 2002 national tests. Current standards in English and mathematics are broadly in line with the national average. Pupils are still making good progress because their assessment on entry to the school indicated that a significant number of pupils in this cohort entered school with below average levels, especially with regard to English and mathematics. Current standards in science are above average; pupils enjoy the challenge of investigation and can provide clear reasons for their findings. Standards in music are also above average and are well above average in art. In Year 1, many children are working at above the level expected at this stage in English, mathematics and science. In physical education, information and communication technology and design and technology, standards are in line with expectations. In religious education they are in line with the locally agreed syllabus. Statutory requirements are met. In history and geography standards are slightly below expectations at the age of seven. In reception most children are in line to achieve the standards expected at the end of the reception year, with a significant number achieving beyond this in communication, language and literacy, personal, social and emotional development and creative development. Their art work is of a particularly high standard. Pupils identified as having special educational needs make good progress because of the very effective support that they receive. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in group lessons and in class.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are very interested in their work and their attitudes in lessons are mostly very good. They are keen to come to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good overall and often very good in lessons. There have been no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good and pupils show respect for each other and for adults. Pupils from different backgrounds relate well to each other. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop independence and responsibility.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. The school works hard to ensure there is good attendance and punctuality but there are a minority of latecomers

	who disrupt the learning for others.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Throughout the school most teachers plan their lessons well and manage the pupils very effectively, which has a very positive impact on the learning. Most teaching in reception was good, with activities that were pitched at an appropriate level for the children. The teaching in art is very good. In Years 1-2 most teaching was good, with a significant amount of very good teaching, and some excellent teaching in Year 1. The most successful teaching was when teachers had high expectations of what pupils could achieve and ensured that everyone was sufficiently challenged. Teachers were confident about the subject they were teaching and put it across in a lively and stimulating way. In a few lessons where the teaching was less successful, although not unsatisfactory, the class management was less effective and pupils lost interest because they did not fully understand the task. Teaching in literacy and numeracy is good, overall, although in some numeracy lessons there is not always sufficient time for pupils to record their findings independently. In science and physical education the teaching is good. Teaching in music and art is very good and pupils make very good progress in these subjects. No judgement was made about the teaching of history and geography as not enough was seen to make an overall judgement. Teaching in religious education and design and technology is satisfactory. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good and has a very positive impact on the progress which the pupils make. The school meets the needs of all children, including the more able. There is good teaching for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Teachers do not always make the most effective use of classroom assistants, which hampers the progress some pupils make.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	There is a very good range of activities both in and out of school, which broaden pupils' education. Art and music are exciting and vibrant parts of the curriculum. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well balanced and provides the reception children with a good start to school. The school has not identified clear links across the curriculum where learning in skills such as writing, problem solving and in information technology can be extended.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils with learning difficulties receive very good support which helps them learn effectively.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils receive good individual support when needed and are also well supported in class.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The provision for social and moral development is very good. Provision for cultural and spiritual development is good. Pupils have a very clear understanding of right from wrong.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Well. Pupils receive a high level of pastoral care. The school provides a very supportive, caring environment in which each individual is valued. The accommodation gives rise to serious concerns about health and safety, which require immediate attention. Assessment of pupils' work is good.

The school promotes effective links with the parents and the community, which has a positive impact on the pupils' learning. Collective worship does not always meet statutory requirements. An interesting range of educational visits and visitors to the school enhances the curriculum. Personal, health, social and emotional development is a strength of the school and has a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	There is good leadership and management. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is very well supported by the strong staff team. The monitoring of teaching, learning and the curriculum is not sufficiently regular or structured.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. Many governors are relatively new, but they are already very well informed about the strengths and areas for improvement. They fulfil their role as critical friend very well, by asking searching questions about what is happening in the school. Procedures for risk assessment and health and safety are not rigorous enough.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school makes use of data to allocate extra support and resources, to identify what it does well and where improvement is needed.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes satisfactory use of strategic resources. The use of classroom support assistants varies; they do not always provide enough support in lessons. The principles of best value are applied appropriately.

Some aspects of the accommodation are poor and give rise to health and safety concerns. The school makes the best use of available accommodation, which is greatly enhanced by interesting and attractive displays of work. Classrooms are bright and attractive. There is only a very small outside area for the reception classes to use, which limits the amount of time they can spend outdoors.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a rich, broad and balanced curriculum enhanced by creative arts. • Parents feel valued and very welcome in school. • Standards are good. It is a very caring school where children are valued and very much enjoy school. • Staff are approachable, hardworking and friendly and teaching is good. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The layout of the building causes difficulties, as do the toilet and cloakroom areas in Year 1. • Some parents would like more information about how their children are getting on and general information about homework and the curriculum. • Parents would like a more interesting range of activities outside school.

Several parents wrote to the Registered Inspector. The vast majority were very supportive of the school and their views were related to the areas indicated above. The inspection team agrees with the positive views of the parents and with concerns about the accommodation. The school has identified the problems, but action has been limited because the school has not had funds available to deal with them. The range of extra activities provided is in line with that in most schools for pupils of this age. The inspection team judged information for parents to be satisfactory overall, although information in pupils' reports on how parents can help their children to learn is more limited.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school has made good progress in improving standards and teaching since the previous inspection. Trends over the past few years indicate overall improvement in core subjects, with more pupils achieving higher than expected levels. Over the last three years the performance of both boys and girls has exceeded the national average for their age group in reading and writing. The school has set challenging targets in reading, writing and mathematics and made good progress in achieving them.
2. In the 2002 national tests for reading, the results were above both the national average and that of schools in a similar context. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level was just above the national average at 33 per cent. In writing, standards were above average when compared to all schools nationally and schools in a similar context. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels was below average. The school believes that this may be partly due to rigorous assessment of the higher-level work by the local education authority. Standards in speaking and listening were assessed as being in line with expectations, but with a well above average proportion of pupils achieving the higher level.
3. In the national tests in mathematics in 2002 at the end of Year 2, the results were above both the national average and that of schools in a similar context. Teacher assessments of pupils using and applying mathematics were well below the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels was above average overall. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level was above average at 41 per cent. In the national tests in science, the results were above average, with a well above percentage of pupils achieving the higher level.
4. The school has begun to track results to provide useful information for target setting, and allocating extra support. During the inspection, no differences in performance were observed between boys and girls in any subject. There are more boys than girls, especially in Year 2, but teachers ensure that both groups are given equal attention.
5. Most pupils enter school with broadly average attainment and most have had some pre-school experience. There is a wide range of ability, with several more-able pupils. For example, in the current cohort in Year 2, there are more pupils with special educational needs and some with behaviour problems. The assessment on entry for this cohort indicated more pupils with below average attainment on entry. However, many pupils in Year 1 are already working at levels above those expected for their age.
6. During reception most children make at least satisfactory progress in their learning and are in line to achieve the standards expected in communication, language and literacy, personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. Standards have improved since the previous inspection, especially in knowledge and understanding of the world. A significant number of children are on target to achieve beyond expectations, particularly in communication, language and literacy, personal, social and emotional development and creative development.
7. Standards of work achieved in English, according to current inspection findings, are average in Year 2. This shows that most pupils in the current Year 2 are making good progress, overall, in relation to their assessment on entry to school. Most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional

language, make good progress in their learning. In Year 1, standards in reading and writing are above average. Many pupils can already read fluently with good expression and their written work is interesting and well constructed.

8. Current standards in mathematics at the age of seven are in line with expectations for this age. In Year 2, pupils add and subtract numbers up to 20, are familiar with doubling and halving numbers, extend number sequences, know about odd and even numbers and are beginning to understand the place value of two digit numbers. In Year 1 many pupils are working above the levels expected; they are already beginning to understand place value with two-digit numbers.
9. On the basis of evidence collected during the inspection, standards in science in Year 2 are above average. The pupils are keen scientists and enjoy investigating and exploring. In Year 1 pupils can record their findings in table form. In Year 2, pupils realise that a bulb will not light because a circuit is incomplete. Standards have improved since the previous inspection.
10. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with national expectations, which was the finding of the previous inspection. In religious education the standards were judged to be below expectations in the previous inspection, but they are now in line. Standards in art have improved and are well above average. Work is of a very good quality and shows the very effective use of a wide range of techniques and media. Standards in music remain above expectations. Pupils sing tunefully and enthusiastically and enjoy playing instruments. Art and music play a vibrant and important part in the life of the school. Standards in design and technology are in line with expectations; pupils develop careful designs into working models. Standards in physical education remain in line with expectations. History and geography have had less emphasis over the past few years and consequently standards are slightly below expectations. The school has already begun to address this situation and pupils are quickly catching up.
11. In the previous inspection more-able pupils did not make enough progress. The school has improved this situation and the more able pupils now make at least satisfactory progress. In most lessons the work is well matched to the pupils' different abilities and they have enough challenge. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because of the effective support which they receive on an individual basis and also in class.
12. All children with special educational needs make good progress in relation to the targets set for them in their individual education plans and some make very good progress. They have good attitudes to the school and work hard during lessons.
13. In most lessons during the inspection, the progress was good because most of the teaching was of a good standard and teachers had high expectations of what the pupils could achieve. The regular and consistent monitoring of teaching, learning and the curriculum is underdeveloped. The very good teaching is not sufficiently shared with colleagues, in order to maintain improvement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. The pupils show a high level of respect for their teachers, enjoy very good relationships, behave well and work hard. This is an area of improvement since the time of the previous inspection. The improved provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has helped them explore their feelings, attitudes and interests and

learn to value themselves and others in a culturally diverse community. The good behaviour, very good attitudes and good quality teaching combine to create a very effective environment in which pupils can learn and flourish.

15. Pupils have made significant gains in their personal development, which is now very good. Their capacity for independence and initiative is encouraged through educational visits, lesson activities, the school council and charitable work. Over time they gain in maturity and move on from requiring imposed control to becoming relatively self-disciplined members of a school community. In a merit-award assembly, for example, it was clear that the older the child, the more confident they were in recognising and talking about their personal achievements. Parents have noted this and comment on how well the school helps their children to become mature and responsible.
16. Many pupils develop their personal study skills by carefully completing the homework activities they are set. All respond well to the efforts teachers make to hold their interests during discussions and promote their listening and thinking skills. This helps even the youngest children become self-motivated learners. In the reception class, for example, two children determinedly sought out the objects from around the classroom likely to be of the correct weight to balance up their scales, not giving up until they found exactly what they wanted. However, a few lessons do not develop pupils' independence in terms of research and investigative skills as much as they could. The lack of a central and adequate school library makes the learning more difficult.
17. By following the democratic process of school council, the older pupils develop a sense of pride and achievement in seeing their own suggestions taken up and developed in school. Pupils acting as 'playground buddies' draw on the personal qualities of tact and persuasion to encourage friendly relationships and conduct in the playground. These experiences result in pupils knowing the right thing to do and learning how to resolve difficulties.
18. Pupils' attitudes to work and relationships with others in school are very good. They enter into friendly conversation spontaneously and find much about themselves and their school to be proud of. There are frequent instances in lessons where supportive and constructive relationships allow pupils to work at their own level without fear of failure. Pupils feel secure and able to speak out, knowing that they will be listened to, be treated seriously and not feel foolish if their answer is not quite the one anticipated.
19. Pupils' behaviour is good. They are inspired and motivated by the high standard of teaching and enjoy taking part in the well-planned and interesting lessons that challenge their capabilities and intellect. Many pupils behave in a very mature way for their age and contribute to making the school the pleasant and welcoming place it is. The school has not found it necessary to exclude any pupil, either temporarily or permanently for some years. Most arguments in school are short-lived, soon forgotten and sorted out between the pupils themselves. This is borne out by the fact that there was no evidence of bullying in school during the week of the inspection, neither was there evidence of any tension amongst different individuals or groups. Quite the reverse; pupils see it as their duty to seek help for someone injured, unwell or unhappy.
20. Although pupils' skills of co-operation are very good in most situations, and they are eager to learn, a small minority occasionally struggle to behave well and listen attentively when they are not sitting properly or have to listen to an explanation that takes too long. In instances like these they become unsure of what is expected of them, lose concentration and fidget. Although most behave very sensibly in and around the school, from time to time their high spirits get the better of them, particularly the boys, and the standard of behaviour slips a little. However, the very well planned behaviour management strategies successfully reach out to help and guide those

pupils who sometimes find it difficult to concentrate and conform. These pupils learn from the many who behave well, often very well and from the strong emphasis the school has on promoting and celebrating success. There are shared, social expectations that pupils recognise and encourage others to meet. These strong, supportive relationships are very effective in helping to encourage the very good attitudes and the overall good behaviour evident in school.

21. Pupils with special educational needs are willingly co-operative and work well in their class groups, where they receive very good support. Pupils who speak English as an additional language have similarly positive attitudes to school. The school has been successful in creating a harmonious community where pupils irrespective of their cultural differences or attainment get along very well. These very good relationships do much to enhance the learning opportunities of all pupils.
22. The overall attendance and punctuality of pupils are satisfactory and have improved. However, as at the time of the previous inspection, the punctuality of a number of pupils is not good enough. Although most pupils arrive in good time for the morning register, too many do not. It is not unusual for one or two pupils from each class to arrive as the register is being called. A few arrive even later. Were it not for the good support they receive from teachers, these pupils would have difficulty settling into lessons already started.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good with a significant amount of very good and excellent teaching. The previous inspection indicated that some less effective teaching was due to insecure subject knowledge and work was not challenging enough for more-able pupils. The school has tackled these issues well; most teachers have good subject knowledge and in most lessons the more able pupils are appropriately challenged. There were no unsatisfactory lessons, although in a few lessons the strengths and areas for improvement were very finely balanced. The teaching meets the needs of all pupils and the school is successful in ensuring that all are fully involved in lessons and other activities.
24. Teaching is satisfactory in information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology, religious education and physical education. It is good in English, mathematics and science, and very good in art and music. No judgement was made on teaching history and geography as insufficient evidence was seen to make a valid judgement.
25. The quality of teaching has a positive impact on the quality of learning in the school. Teaching was at least good in 46 out of 65 lessons. It was at least very good in 18 lessons with five which were excellent. The teaching was satisfactory in 18 lessons, but a few of these, although satisfactory overall, had some significant weaknesses. In reception, teaching was good overall; in Year 1 the teaching was very good with four excellent lessons; in Year 2 most teaching was mainly good, but there were more lessons which were satisfactory. The school has the potential to increase the amount of very good teaching by sharing the very good practice, which already exists in the school.
26. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress throughout the school because of the effective teaching. The quality of learning is good in reception and Year 2, and very good in Year 1. In a few lessons the progress slows; this is when the teacher's expectations are not so high and management of pupils is not so effective. A few pupils lose interest and this hampers the progress of others.

27. Pupils with special educational needs are given very good support by the co-ordinator for special educational needs and the learning support assistants. The co-ordinator monitors the weekly plans of all teachers to ensure that the work for the special needs pupils matches the targets on their individual education plans. The support assistants play a vital role in managing the pupils and guiding them in activities. All have very good relationships with the pupils and they offer unobtrusive but effective support. As a result, pupils make good progress. Lower attaining pupils receive support in lessons from classroom assistants who help them develop their spelling and reading skills. This support varies in quality and does not always support effective learning.
28. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive good teaching, either from the specialist teacher on an individual or group basis, or in class. Teachers ensure that the pupils have understood the tasks and that they are challenged enough.
29. Teaching in the reception classes in the Foundation Stage has improved since the previous inspection and is good in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Teaching in creative activities is very good and results in some work of a very high standard. The teachers have a very clear understanding of the needs of young children and plan a range of relevant and stimulating activities, which capture their interest and imagination. High expectations of attainment and behaviour ensure that the children make good progress in most lessons. There is a range of purposeful play activities, which help to develop early literacy and numeracy skills. Planning is very thorough and ensures that all children are challenged. There is an important emphasis on personal, social and emotional skills, which is reinforced by all teachers. Class management is effective, resulting in good progress. The size of the outdoor accommodation limits the amount of teaching which takes place outdoors.
30. In Years 1 and 2, there were examples of very good teaching, but also a few lessons in Year 2 which, although satisfactory overall, had some weaknesses which affected the progress pupils made.

These factors were:

- the pupils did not always understand the task
- there was less challenge
- lower expectations of what pupils could achieve
- less effective management of pupils.

Factors which contributed to the most successful lessons were:

- very clear and effective planning
- high expectations of behaviour and achievement
- very effective pupil management
- a lively and exciting exposition, which captured the pupils' interest
- a brisk pace and a session at the end of the lesson, which helped to reinforce the learning and lead into the next lesson.

31. The very good quality of relationships in the school supports the learning very well as pupils feel confident and are not afraid to make mistakes.
32. The teaching of numeracy skills and literacy skills is good; teachers have secure subject knowledge and make the learning interesting. In numeracy, the pupils do not always have enough time or sufficient opportunity for independent recording of their

work. The use of homework to support the learning is good and appropriate for this age group. This has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers use the information from assessment to organise groups or extra support. There has been some monitoring of the teaching; for example, in mathematics and for staff appraisal. The monitoring is not regular enough and sometimes lacks a clear enough focus. The school does not make the most of promoting effective teaching by sharing the very good practice, which already exists in some classes. The use of classroom assistants to support teaching varies; in some lessons, staff are not fully involved, which limits the progress pupils make. Teachers assess pupils' work well and use the assessments to help pupils improve. The school does not have a central library or ICT suite, which makes the teaching of some skills more difficult. Teachers try to ensure that classroom facilities are used to the full to compensate for this. The school has not identified or planned ways in which skills such as writing, problem solving or ICT skills can be developed in different subjects across the curriculum, in order to make the best use of time.

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

33. The quality and range of opportunities provided within the school curriculum are good, with some very good elements.
34. The planning and organisation of the curriculum ensure that there is coverage for all subjects. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection, when there was incomplete coverage of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The school is committed to providing a broad range of learning experiences and is justifiably proud of its achievements in music, where pupils' attainments are above national expectations, and art, where they are well above expectations. The quality of the learning experiences in these subjects is very good, as it also is in science where attainment is above average. Another strength of the curriculum is the very good provision for pupils' personal social and health education (PSHE). Time is reserved for 'circle time' when pupils discuss these issues and for 'golden time', which is an important part of the school's systems for developing pupils' personal responsibility. The co-ordinator for this part of the curriculum has worked hard to make sure that teachers have good support materials, which describe the content of lessons and appropriate teaching methods; pupils learn for example about the safe use of medicines as part of the school's drugs education policy.
35. This strong commitment to PSHE and the arts means that there is considerable pressure on the time available for teaching all the other subjects. Much of the curriculum is organised under topic headings and some links are made between different subjects. However, the school has not yet given sufficient consideration of how to make the most effective use of the time available by systematically planning how these skills that can be practised, used and applied across a whole range of subjects.
36. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented successfully. The main elements of the National Numeracy Strategy are in place but in some mathematics lessons there is not enough time for pupils to record their work independently.
37. The school makes very good provision for children with special educational needs in the Foundation Stage and very good provision for children in Years 1 to 2. Procedures are well organised. The requirements of the New Code of Practice for special educational needs are fully met. The co-ordinator works very effectively with all

members of staff. The co-ordinator is responsible for organising the support the special needs pupils have and ensures that they have full access to the curriculum. Two children have a Statement of Special Educational Need and the school has ensured that their needs are fully met. Individual targets are reviewed regularly to monitor each pupil's progress towards the learning targets and to set new ones.

38. In most aspects the school succeeds in ensuring there is equal provision for all boys and girls and pupils from a range of backgrounds. Occasionally there are insufficient agreed strategies in place to ensure that pupils can catch up if they miss part of a numeracy or literacy lesson, for example, for violin tuition.
39. The range of learning experiences, which the school provides over and above normal classroom activities, is good. Pupils are taken on a number of educational visits in the locality and further afield, which supports their learning well. There is a lunchtime football club. The quality of links with the community is good. There are fund-raising activities for a number of charities. A local vicar visits the school to talk to the pupils and there are other workshops relating to religious faiths other than Christianity. The whole school community is involved with the children's parade as part of the Brighton Arts Festival. There is a special focus week each year; this year it was a book week in which there were a number of activities connected with books, story telling and literature in general. Other special events are arranged, such as visits by theatre groups and dancers. There are optional fee-paying after-school ballet and tennis sessions run by local groups. All these activities extend the pupils' learning, in addition to providing good opportunities for social development.
40. Overall, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for moral and social development has improved since the previous inspection and is now very good. Provision for cultural and spiritual development is now good, overall.
41. Provision for spiritual development is good overall, although the opportunities to develop spiritual awareness in assemblies during the inspection were limited. There are missed opportunities in assembly for prayer and reflection on the meaning and purpose of all life. Consequently the collective act of worship is variable in its content and does not always meet statutory requirements. In lessons, pupils have the opportunity to explore and discuss values and the way in which beliefs have an impact on people's lives. During the day, there are quiet times when pupils can think and reflect. There is very good opportunity to explore human emotions and feelings and a very positive ethos in which all pupils are valued and respected. The pupils' contributions and questions in lessons are listened to and valued by their peers and by adults. This contributes well to the pupils' self-esteem.
42. The provision for moral development is very good. All adults in the school are fully committed to ensuring that pupils know the difference between right and wrong. Pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Relationships in the school are very good and staff provide very good role models. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and are encouraged to think about the impact of their actions on others. At lunchtime, a group of Year 2 'buddies' support anyone who may have a problem and take this responsibility very seriously. The provision for social development is very good because there is a strong sense of community and belonging. There are very frequent and well-used opportunities for pupils to work together. Good use is made of 'circle time' discussions to help pupils respond appropriately to the differing view within the group.
43. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good overall. They appreciate their own culture through different areas of the curriculum and experience visits in the locality,

which enrich their learning. They develop a good understanding of the cultural richness and variety in the world in which we live through the work in school and visitors to the school. Cultural development is fostered well by the range of exciting musical and artistic activities. Participation in the Brighton Festival brings pupils into a world of colourful, cultural images and sounds through dance, drama and music. The school succeeds in recognising and nurturing pupils' talents, for example, through the very high quality art work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. In most respects, the school cares well for its pupils. This has a positive impact on the ethos of the school. The procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development and behaviour are very good and there are good procedures for monitoring and supporting their academic progress. Good progress has been made in those areas since the previous inspection.
45. The issue of health and safety is now a priority for the governing body. A number of serious concerns were noted by the inspection team and reported via the school to the appropriate authorities in the week of the inspection. No recent professional assessment has been made to determine the degree or seriousness of the risks related to these areas.
46. Aside from this, the staff implement a range of good practices in order to reduce the likelihood of accidents and injuries in school. Pupils are trained to keep classrooms and corridors free of unnecessary clutter. Teachers are careful to ensure that lessons do not present a risk to the pupils taking part in them. Pupils are properly supervised throughout the school day and there are good procedures for dealing with injuries and administering first aid.
47. Three members of staff have been fully trained in first-aid provision giving good cover throughout the day. Good links with medical practitioners and the parents of pupils with specific medical conditions help staff meet these pupils' needs in school. Staff closely monitor sick and injured pupils for any signs of distress and make every effort to contact the parents should there be any concern about their children's health. In anticipation of admitting pupils with physical or mobility difficulties, the governors have given due consideration to the adjustments that need to be made to the school.
48. The school has good procedures for child protection. All staff, including the midday supervisors, are mindful of the need to listen carefully to what pupils say and to be alert to any indication of neglect or abuse. The school cherishes the open and trusting relationships established in school, which also serve to keep open vital lines of communication between children and adults. Staff are aware and are regularly reminded about the reporting procedures that apply to issues relating to child protection.
49. Procedures that support pupils' personal development are very good. Good links and a continuing dialogue with parents help the school have the right strategies in place to respond to the pupils' individual needs. The school is particularly successful in managing the crucial period of transition from home to school. All staff make it a priority to settle children well, beginning with the established and successful pre-school meetings between teachers and parents. By the time children leave the reception class they are secure and confident in their approach to school.
50. A good, well-planned programme of personal, social and health education has been developed since the previous inspection. Aspects of citizenship, healthy living, sex education and the dangers of drug abuse are taught in a meaningful way through class

and group discussion in stages appropriate to the age and maturity of the children. These lessons are used effectively to support pupils' personal development, further their self-esteem, their understanding of relationships and awareness of the feelings of others.

51. Everyone involved with the school expects all pupils to do their best and this is a key factor in the quality of support pupils receive. The school celebrates success at all levels. Pupils' accomplishments and achievements are recognised and celebrated in assemblies and displays in school. Skilful use is made of the school's talented actors, artists, fledgling dancers and musicians, giving them opportunities to reveal their talents and practise their skills in front of an assembled audience. Parents value the fact that the school recognises on a personal level any achievement their children make.
52. Very good systems are in place to promote positive behaviour and to monitor and eliminate any incidents of bullying or racism. This has a very positive impact on behaviour. Pupils are confident that teachers will deal with any inappropriate behaviour. This has a positive effect on their attitude towards the school and what it is doing to promote their well-being. Pupils are continually encouraged through individual and group discussion to show kindness and tolerance to others. Most pupils develop a sense of equality and fairness in their dealings with each other, helping them work and play collaboratively.
53. Periodic reviews are made of the ways in which the school promotes good behaviour by taking into account the views of staff, parents and pupils. This helps ensure the right systems are in place to support the increasing number of pupils who come from families experiencing personal difficulties. As a result, the system of merits, awards and 'Golden Time' operates successfully throughout the school and continues to act as an incentive for pupils to behave well.
54. The headteacher sets a positive example to the rest of the staff in promoting high standards of behaviour. She is often around the school talking to pupils about their day and encouraging honesty, good relationships and friendly conduct. Office staff and midday supervisors provide a consistent approach to discipline outside the classroom. As a result, pupils are confident that they can turn to any member of staff should they ever feel anxious, unhappy or unsettled.
55. Children with special educational needs are given very good support. The school identifies pupils with special educational needs at a very early stage and makes appropriate provision. Individual education plans contain appropriate targets, which are informed by detailed assessment of pupil's difficulties. This information is used effectively to plan appropriate work and has a positive effect on children's progress. The school works closely with the local education authority's support services, for example, the speech therapist and the educational psychologist. All these procedures combine to promote the good standard of behaviour and very good attitudes seen in school.
56. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. In order to provide a more accurate method of recording attendance during the day, the school intends to keep a separate record of those pupils who arrive late, those who go home early, the circumstances and reasons. This record will help improve the procedures applying to emergency evacuations and also help keep a check on the incidence of lateness. Parents receive frequent reminders of the importance of their children's good attendance and punctuality. As a result, most think twice before taking children out of school for reasons that cannot be authorised. Registers are called promptly and are now marked in accordance with statutory requirements, an improvement since 1997.

57. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good, and good use is made of them to guide teachers' planning. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Assessment in English, mathematics and science is made on a daily basis and recorded so that quick modification of lessons can be made when necessary. Every teacher uses a similar format to record pupils' attainment at the end of a unit of work, which is used well to inform end-of-year report writing and teacher assessments. There is no formal assessment of the non-core subjects other than in music and design and technology. The school has introduced an individual tracking system for the pupils, which includes a variety of standard tests such as baseline assessments, reading tests and the national tests and this ensures that teachers are fully aware of each individual's progress. From these tests individual targets are set. There is no agreed marking policy in place yet, but for the youngest pupils this is usually immediate verbal feedback. There are some good examples of evaluative marking with helpful comments to improve the learning, but the quality of marking varies.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

58. The school's partnership with parents promotes effective links between home and school. The value of this partnership has improved since the previous inspection. Most parents find the staff approachable and easy to work with and as a result are keen to contribute to their children's learning in and out of school. The quality of information available to parents is good, particularly that given verbally by teachers and from displays of children's work in school. The school has successfully engaged parents' support in helping their children overcome obstacles to their learning and make the most of their time in school. The links with parents have a positive impact on the pupils' learning.
59. The vast majority of parents responding to the questionnaire and all those spoken to during the course of the inspection were very positive about the school and its work. A number of parents wrote separately to the inspectors saying how much they appreciated the school's provision for creative arts and its involvement within the community in this respect. Parents have a good view of the school and what it provides for their children. However, despite the fact that most believe the teachers are easy to approach, a significant number of parents feel they are not receiving enough information on how their children are getting on. Only half of those responding to the questionnaire believe the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. The inspectors support the parents' positive views and agree there is room for improvement in the information given to them in the end of year report on their child's progress. However, the evidence from the inspection shows pupils are provided with a good range of learning experiences outside of lessons.
60. Reporting to parents is good overall, although the quality of the information in the written reports lacks enough detail. However, the widespread use of word bank phrases tends to generalise rather than individualise some of the information given with the result that some parents feel the comments in reports are not specific enough. The section on the pupil's personal progress in the report is good. Although parents are given an idea of the actual targets their children need to focus on, the reports do not always clarify how parents might help their children achieve them. Parents are given information on the topics that their children will cover during the course of the year. The prospectus is a good introduction to the school's teaching methods and another helpful source of information on how parents can work with their children at home.
61. Teachers routinely make themselves available to parents after school. Most parents take up the opportunities the two consultation evenings per year provide to discuss with teachers any factors that may be limiting their children's good progress at school or at home.

62. The school works closely with parents when their children are put on the register for special educational needs. The parents' views and opinions are sought and are considered when drawing up targets for the pupils to achieve. An 'open door' policy operates under which parents are able to discuss their child's progress with the special educational needs co-ordinator. This enables parents to understand the individual steps their children need to take to help them progress.
63. The school keeps parents well informed about its events and activities, primarily through newsletters but also through information on notice boards and from the timely, verbal reminders from staff. Governors are keen to promote the school and its successes. Their annual report is an attractive and readable document that now complies with the statutory requirements laid down for it; an improvement since the previous inspection.
64. Parents are very keen to see their children do well and want them to do their best. A significant number of parents come into the school as willing and active volunteers; helping in lessons, with reading practice, with fundraising, gardening or on the pupils' visits out of school. Parents arrive in large numbers at events that directly involve their children such as concerts and consultation evenings. They work closely with the teachers in seeking ways to improve the school environment. Members of the Friends of Downs Infant School are successful fundraisers whose events and activities not only raise the profile of the school within the local community, but also provide another route for parents to make their views known to teachers.
65. Parents willingly come forward to serve on the governing body. More nominations are received than there are places available so the vacancies are quickly filled. Parents, as a whole are not afraid to make their views known to the school and have a very good impact on school procedures and policy making.
66. Many parents involve themselves with their children's learning by encouraging numeracy, reading, spelling, music practice, art and craft at home. The dedication of parents towards their children's success is evident in the way they show interest in what their children learn, and their positive response to the information and welcome they receive from the school. This all has a positive effect on pupils' learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

67. The leadership and management are good, overall. The headteacher provides very good, purposeful leadership with a clear vision of the school. She is very well supported by the staff, governors and parents and there is a strong shared vision for further development. The very good leadership of the headteacher has ensured that good progress has been made in many aspects of school life since her appointment. The potential for further improvement is very good.
68. Several key issues in the last inspection referred to leadership and management issues. Some statutory requirements were not met. The ones that were identified have now been met but risk assessment and health and safety procedures are not tight enough. The governors' premises committee has been formed very recently and is now getting to grips with urgent matters. There are some matters, which have been identified and discussed during the inspection, which are unsatisfactory. At the time of the last inspection collective worship did not meet requirements. It is still the case that not all assemblies meet statutory requirements. The responsibilities of the headteacher and senior management team are clear and there is a good system for performance management with targets related to the school improvement plan.

Subject co-ordinators now have more explicit job descriptions and have developed their roles well.

69. Many governors, including the chair of governors, are relatively new. They have already developed their role very well and are very well informed about the work of the school. They have developed their role as effective critical friends by asking searching and challenging questions, and provide good support for the school. Many governors spend time in school in various capacities, which helps them to have first-hand information about what is happening. A recent positive step has been to allocate to different governors areas of curriculum responsibility. The governors intend to spend more time in classes and are sensibly spending time discussing the best way to do this. The governors monitor the attendance and punctuality on a regular basis.
70. The management of special educational needs is very good. The school's approach is very well organised and designated funds are used appropriately. The special needs team consists of the co-ordinator and two learning support assistants who are very well deployed to meet the needs of the pupils. One assistant has had training from the Speech and Language Support Services and is now training her colleague. All staff work closely with the co-ordinator, who ensures that they are all aware of the procedures. Parents are kept well informed and are invited to all reviews. Very good records are kept. There is a governor designated as a person responsible for overseeing this aspect and she plays a very active role. She meets regularly with the special educational needs co-ordinator and reports back to the governing body.
71. The school has developed the use of data to measure the effectiveness of the school and to track how well pupils are doing or where extra support is needed. Inclusion is generally good; the school strives to ensure that all pupils are included in the educational provision. In a few examples, when pupils leave a lesson, for example, for music tuition, there is not always enough provision to help them cover what has been missed. The school improvement plan is a very useful working document for moving the school forward. The school aims are clearly reflected in the work of the school.
72. The subject co-ordinators are very enthusiastic and hardworking. Although they do not yet have clear action plans for their subject, they have a clear understanding of the standards, strengths and weaknesses. The previous inspection indicated the need to improve the monitoring of teaching and learning. This is still not rigorous enough to further improve the teaching and learning and to ensure that the balance of activities is maintained. There is currently no consistent system for monitoring planning or analysing pupils' work.
73. There are sufficient suitably qualified staff to teach the age range of pupils and all subjects of the National Curriculum. The special educational needs support staff work very well with the teachers in providing extra support. The use of classroom assistants varies; in some cases it is good, but in others they are not sufficiently involved in the learning, which impedes the progress pupils make. When the support is good for example, asking the pupils questions and developing their speech and language skills, effective progress is made. There are good systems in place to help to ensure that classroom assistants understand the aims of the lessons and have regular communication with the teachers.
74. Budgets are based on the needs identified in the school improvement plan. The school has budgeted very carefully over the past year in order to improve the financial situation. Funds are limited and this has restricted what the school can do, particularly with regard to accommodation and resources. The finance committee monitors the budget on a regular basis. Care is taken to obtain good value on all purchases and the principles of best value are applied satisfactorily. The smooth and effective day-to-day

management of the school by very efficient administrative staff, supports the teachers very well and is carried out with the minimum disruption to teaching. The expenditure per pupil is higher than the national average. However, taking into account the standards achieved and the overall quality of education provided, including the good quality of teaching, the school provides good value for money.

75. The overall range and quality of learning resources are adequate, although more resources are needed for history, geography and design and technology. The school makes the best use of the available accommodation and enhances it by stimulating and exciting displays. Aspects of the accommodation are judged to be poor at present due to health and safety issues which have been identified. Parents have noted some of the drawbacks in getting to classrooms by way of steps, stairways, narrow corridors and playgrounds with different levels. Not all rooms lead directly to an outside escape area, which hinders the emergency evacuation of certain classes. Although there are plans to extend the building, at present there is no central library or computer suite, which makes the teaching and learning of library skills and ICT more difficult. Teachers work hard and compensate for this in class. The size of the outdoor accommodation for children in the reception classes limits the activities which take place outside. Much of the fabric of the building, which the governors and current headteacher have inherited, is in a poor state of repair. The toilets in a Year 1 classroom are in urgent need of refurbishment. The uneven paving stones and gaps around drain covers in the playground are potential trip hazards.
76. The recently appointed caretaker works hard to deal with the maintenance of the building and to keep the building clean. Many areas of the school, including classrooms, show the commitment of teachers to provide enticing and attractive displays of pupils' work.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

77. In order to build upon the many strengths and continue the improvements made, the headteacher, governors and staff should:
- (1) Improve standards in history and geography.
(Paragraphs 10 and 118)
 - (2) Make the most effective use of time by:
 - ensuring that there is a suitable balance of practical work and independent recording in mathematics;
 - developing the use and expertise of classroom support assistants;
 - strengthening the procedures and practice for checking the teaching, learning and curriculum and sharing the good practice which already exists in the school.
(Paragraphs 32, 35, 73, 91 and 102)
 - (3) Raise the standard of accommodation by:
 - attending to the health and safety issues which have been identified;
 - continuing to develop the outdoor area for the reception classes;
 - improving the toilets and cloakrooms in Year 1.
(Paragraphs 45, 68, 75 and 86)

The following areas for improvement have also been identified and should be considered by the school:

- Develop more cross-curricular links to support learning in key skills such as writing and ICT.

(Paragraphs 32, 35, 91 and 127)

- Make sure that collective worship meets statutory requirements.
(Paragraph 41 and 68)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

65

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

32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	13	28	18	0	0	0
Percentage	8	20	44	28	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 one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	318
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	33
Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	33
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	46	52

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	41	44	43
	Girls	51	52	50
	Total	92	96	93
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (87)	98 (93)	95 (93)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	42	42	44
	Girls	52	51	52
	Total	94	93	96
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (88)	95 (91)	98 (89)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
322	0	0
0	0	0
13	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0

Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

0
10
0

0	0
0	0
0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.1
Average class size	29.5

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	230

Financial information

Financial year	2001
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	£
Total income	720343
Total expenditure	680409
Expenditure per pupil	2037
Balance brought forward from previous year	-15956
Balance carried forward	23978

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

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	348
Number of questionnaires returned	140

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	31	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	32	3	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	39	1	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	41	9	2	4
The teaching is good.	62	32	0	1	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	42	16	4	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	24	1	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	36	1	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	49	37	10	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	59	32	2	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	39	2	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	28	21	8	21

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents were concerned about problems related to accommodation.

Parents praised the very positive contribution which creative arts make to the curriculum.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

78. The educational provision is good in the Foundation Stage and has improved since the previous inspection. Standards are in line with expectations for this age overall, but a significant number of children are likely to achieve beyond expectations in communications, language and literacy, personal, social emotional development and creative development by the end of the reception year. The children join one of the four reception classes in the year in which they are five, with the youngest children beginning on a part-time basis.
79. They make good progress because the quality of teaching is good in each area of learning, with some very good teaching with well-planned activities. Teachers have high expectations of what the children can achieve and of their behaviour and the children respond very well. Time and resources are used well to support the learning. There is a good balance of different activities, which are pitched well at the age and abilities of the children. Children with learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress, because of the support, which they receive. Relationships are very good and help the children settle quickly and calmly into school.

Personal, social and emotional development

80. Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, which is a particular strength. By the time they leave reception, they are interested and well motivated to learn. They are confident to try new activities, initiate ideas and concentrate well. The children persevere well with their work and achieve work at a very good standard; for example, with their self-portraits. They experiment with mixing colours to get the correct tone and shade. Teachers use praise and encouragement well to reinforce the learning. Children feel happy and at ease in their surroundings and work and play well together. They respond well to adults. They are learning to follow instructions, and take responsibility for tidying up at the end of a lesson and getting ready to go outside or when changing for physical education. They are polite; for example, they answer their names politely when the register is called. They are aware of some cultures other than their own and are beginning to understand the importance of specific religious festivals such as Christmas and Divali. The good teaching promotes the learning well. The staff help the children to feel confident and special.

Communication, language and literacy

81. In communication, language and literacy, children have achieved the levels expected for their age, and several have achieved beyond this, particularly in speaking, listening and reading. The children, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress because of the good teaching. Children listen attentively, not only at story time when they gather around their teacher on the carpet but also to each other. Children work well in pairs or groups and often talk about what they are doing. Whether in role-play in the 'Painters and Decorators' or when working with construction equipment, they express their ideas well and use a fast-growing vocabulary. Children are encouraged to ask questions; for example, when sorting containers according to capacity.
82. They enjoy reading and many can already read familiar words with reasonable accuracy. Parents support their children very well with regular phonic activities.

Children have many opportunities to express themselves on paper through drawing and painting and are becoming early writers. Many children can form letters recognisably and can write their names. Book making is a regular feature of the school's work. The teaching is good. Teachers plan a wide range of activities and use assessments of children's performance to determine and develop future work. They are good at using spontaneous situations to develop language skills; for example, after trying to identify the different locations Elmer had visited in the playground. Staff provide very good encouragement for all children's efforts in reading and writing and they celebrate the children's work in attractive displays.

Mathematical development

83. In mathematics most children have achieved the expected levels for their age. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress. Children use mathematical language well to describe size, shape, quality and position. They are developing good mathematical ideas and methods to solve problems, for example, when trying to balance the weighing scales, they realise that by using building bricks they can balance it accurately. They say and use number names in familiar contexts, recognise numbers to ten and use language such as 'more' or 'less' to compare numbers.
84. They enjoy joining in with number rhymes and songs. In the role-play area, they buy and sell and have the opportunity to sort items into different categories. They recognise shapes and have an awareness of symmetry, which they explore in painting. In physical activities they understand and follow instructions; for example, when finding Elmer. They know that 'addition' means combining two groups of objects and 'subtraction' means to take away. They are beginning to write some numerals correctly. The teaching is good. Teachers use a range of strategies to develop the children's interest and to support effective learning. Children are very well managed and activities are well planned and resourced. Mathematics is developed in and outside the classroom, although opportunities for work outdoors are limited by the space available, which has to be shared by each class.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

85. Children have achieved the expected levels for their age at this stage in the term. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when it was considered that there was insufficient scientific content in this area. There are good opportunities for investigation; for example, when planting bulbs. They investigate using their senses and over time have good opportunities for looking closely at similarities, differences and patterns. The children are interested in the natural world and are developing a thorough understanding of it. Stories and poems are used well to add to their knowledge. Activities such as finding Elmer, help them to understand different locations in the environment. They develop good designing and making skills. They make their own careful choice of materials and tools, which they use to make models. They have a good sense of time and can recognise themselves in photos as babies. Computer skills are developing satisfactorily; children use programs independently and control the mouse to 'click and move items'. The teaching is good; teachers plan interesting opportunities to develop the children's knowledge and understanding and use their assessments to plan future learning.

Physical development

86. Attainment is good for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language and they make good progress overall. Children move safely with confidence, control and co-ordination. They show an awareness of space with regard to both themselves and others. They competently use a range of small and large apparatus and handle tools, construction and malleable materials with increasing control. The small outdoor space is shared by each class, which limits the amount of physical outdoor play, which can take place and does not enable the outdoors to be used as a natural extension to work done in the classroom. There is time-tabled use of the climbing frame. The use of this varies - when staff have a more passive role, rather than encouraging the children to be active, the learning slows. An afternoon session of outdoor games for all the older children is used very well to promote social skills as well as physical development. Children throw balls and bean bags with reasonable accuracy. Teaching is good; teachers manage the children very effectively and strive to compensate for the problems with the outdoor area. Each class has regular lessons in the hall, which are well planned and very much enjoyed by the children.

Creative development

87. Children make very good progress in creative development and most have achieved beyond the levels expected for their age. They have many well planned opportunities to respond to their senses and record these in drawings and paintings. They explore shape and patterns in fabrics from a range of cultures. The very good teaching ensures very good progression in skills; the children handle and discuss the fabric and then produce very good work. Very good use of praise and encouragement and very skilful questioning enables the children to know how they can improve their work. Most children can name the primary colours and many secondary ones. They know what is their favourite colour and that you can mix two colours and make a third. They use colour very well in their paintings and collages. In the role-play area they discuss the fabrics and colours they could use to decorate their house. Each child has a sketchbook, which contains very good examples of mixing colours and using different techniques. This promotes their spiritual awareness very well. In music the children sing tunefully for their age and know a wide repertoire of songs. They remember the words and actions well and use musical instruments sensibly. They understand how to make long and short sounds. They enjoy dressing up and role-play. The teaching is very good because staff provide a very good range of activities and give children a chance to try out their own creative ideas. Resources are good and stored so that children can select their own and also tidy up after themselves.

ENGLISH

88. Since the previous inspection the school has made considerable improvement in the teaching of English and standards are higher than they were. However, inspection findings show that the current Year 2 is unlikely to attain as well as previous years have done and standards are currently in line with expectations, overall. On entry to school, a significant number of pupils in the current Year 2 were identified as having difficulties, particularly in relation to English. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in all aspects of their work. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level in national tests in writing has not increased. The school continues to strive to increase the percentage of higher levels through a number of strategies. Many pupils in Year 1 are working at levels above those expected for their age. The school's good results are due to sharply focused teaching and high expectations.
89. The school focuses on the development of the pupils' speaking and listening skills from an early age. This is to help them acquire an adequate working vocabulary, as a

significant number of the pupils join the school with weak language skills. By the end of Year 2, pupils listen well and express themselves clearly in speech. Standards are in line with expectations, overall. Pupils are given many opportunities to practise their speech, such as through role-play and creating scripts to perform to the rest of the class. These strategies are helping to raise the standards of speaking and listening skills.

90. By the end of Year 2, pupils have above average reading skills with about a third achieving the higher Level 3. Most of the less able pupils achieve the level expected nationally. Reading is fluent and expressive with few errors. Pupils correct their errors and have a good understanding of how to build words from letter sounds. Library skills are satisfactory. They understand terms such as 'author', 'illustrator', 'index' and 'glossary' and some of them select books by reading the 'blurb'. They retell stories and describe characters and most of them show a personal response to literature. Very few, though, are able to name a favourite author. Teachers keep accurate records of pupils' reading progress in pupils' reading record books and younger pupils have a home/school 'Jolly Phonics' book that is used as a link between the parent and the teacher. Most parents are supportive of their children's reading and regularly listen to them at home. This has a positive impact on the standards achieved.
91. From an early age, pupils are taught to form letters correctly and develop a style that is legible and well presented. The pupils know how to use capital letters, full stops and question marks correctly. They can correctly sequence stories, often using effective descriptive words. In Year 2, the spelling of basic words is accurate and all pupils know their letter sounds. They write in a range of styles for a variety of purposes. They produce narrative, description, lists, instructions and poetry. The use of planned opportunities to extend writing skills across the curriculum is limited and does not always make the best use of time.
92. The quality of teaching and learning is good and sometimes excellent. The pupils take a keen interest in their lessons and are stimulated by enthusiastic teaching. The teachers have a secure understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and use a wide variety of methods to promote speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Teachers in each year group plan together to ensure that all pupils have similar opportunities. Day-to-day planning includes detailed notes on how each group will be taught. Each pupil has targets to work towards and there are also whole-class targets. This ensures that the needs of all pupils are met. The special educational needs co-ordinator monitors the work of the special educational needs pupils, which ensures that good progress is made. They are very well supported by the co-ordinator and two learning support assistants. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive good support and make good progress in extending their use of a suitable range of words and phrases. All pupils apply themselves well and make good progress. Evidence of the sustained development of literacy skills over time is clear. Because the teachers set tasks that are at an appropriate level for each group, the pupils are able to work independently. They maintain concentration and gain in confidence. They are eager to please their teachers and respond to praise. Pupils who speak English as additional language make good progress. They receive good support from a specialist teacher, who also provides teachers with ideas and activities to use in class.
93. Lessons are well structured and have good pace. Teachers follow the guidance in the National Literacy Strategy and make good use of the resources available to interest the pupils and to take learning forward. Whole-class introductions to the lessons are effective as the objective of the lesson is shared with the pupils, so that they know what is expected of them and the learning from previous lessons is discussed. This also allows the teacher to assess how well the pupils are learning so that s/he can intervene

effectively. During the lesson, most teachers refer back to the learning objectives, which ensures that the pupils are kept focused. In two excellent lessons seen, the teachers' enthusiasm and lively teaching style resulted in very good learning from all ability groups. The choice of text was also most appropriate for the writing and reading tasks and was a contributory factor to the success of these lessons.

94. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the school's achievements in English and a clear vision of how the subject needs to be developed. The school makes very good use of the results of tests and teachers' observations to assess pupils' performance and to monitor their progress. This has led to improved standards throughout the school. There is no central library. Books are stored in classrooms, many of which are on loan from the Library Support Service. A few books are displayed in the entrance hall, but these are 'extras', which do not fit into the class topics. The headteacher and subject manager monitor the effectiveness of teaching through English by observing lessons and regularly check the progress being made by the pupils.
95. English makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers encourage pupils' personal response to stories and poems.

MATHEMATICS

96. Standards of attainment are in line with national averages. Some pupils exceed national expectations, although the proportion of these higher attaining pupils is greater in the current Year 1 than it is in the current Year 2. Inspection findings differ from the latest national test results, but reflect the standards in the current cohort of pupils, where there are more with learning difficulties. The school has made good improvement over time since the previous inspection because most of the teaching is now good, pupils make good progress in lessons and the management of the subject is very good.
97. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented. Evidence from lesson observations, teachers' planning and assessment records shows that the quality of teaching is good overall. As a result, all pupils make good progress. Teachers ensure that those pupils with special educational needs in the subject are well supported and that the work they tackle is manageable so that, although they are working at a lower than average level, they still make the same good progress as other pupils. Classroom support assistants often work with the pupils of lower ability and during the inspection were observed playing mathematical games and helping pupils to use computer programs to practise number skills. There are occasions however, when classroom assistants are not used very effectively, which does not promote good learning.
98. A number of lessons were observed during the inspection and the quality of teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good. In the good and very good lessons, the teachers maintain a good pace, challenge pupils of all abilities and set tasks which enable pupils to work independently. In these better lessons teachers 'target' their questions at individuals according to ability; in one lesson, when most pupils were coping with simple tens and units questions, the more able pupils had to think quickly to count the tens and identify numbers in the forties and fifties. In the satisfactory lessons, time is not used so effectively; teachers are not so adept at keeping pupils of all abilities 'on their toes'. During the mental mathematics sessions they set tasks which are not so well matched to pupils' abilities, which means that they are either not sufficiently challenged, or the work is too difficult and the pupils are unable to work independently.

99. In almost all lessons teachers' management skills are good or very good and, as a result, pupils behave well and show a willingness to get on with their work. Teachers use a variety of methods to teach mathematics. They use bead strings so that pupils can see what is happening to numbers as they add ten more or count in twos, threes or tens. When teaching multiplication, teachers use number lines, number squares, counting cubes and 'PowerPoint' demonstrations on the computer. Some teachers are better than others at realising that pupils need these practical demonstrations in order to help them understand. When the explanations are good and supported by practical examples, pupils get on with their work productively; for example, in one lesson when many pupils were able to construct arrays of numbers using cubes and describe the arrays using multiplication and addition number sentences.
100. At the time of the inspection, most pupils were working at the level appropriate for their age. In Year 2, for example, they add and subtract numbers up to 20, are familiar with doubling and halving numbers, extend number sequences, know about odd and even numbers and are beginning to understand the place value of two-digit numbers. At the time of inspection, they were beginning to tackle multiplication and in common with pupils of this age, were finding this challenging. They can name common 2D shapes and describe some of their features, they measure in centimetres using a tape measure and recognise 'o'clock' and 'half past' on a clock face. In Year 1, pupils already begin to understand place value with two-digit numbers.
101. The time available for teaching mathematics is the minimum recommended in the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers are aware that time is precious but too frequently spend too large a proportion of lessons on teacher-led explanations, which leaves too little time for pupils to do independent or group practical work. This imbalance in the use of time and an over reliance on prepared worksheets means that pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to practise their own recording skills. Teachers are aware that pupils' skills in using or applying mathematics are not so well advanced as their other mathematical skills and have taken some action to improve them by including word problems as a part of each lesson. Pupils are not however being set problems which allow them to make their own decisions about possible solutions and are not given enough time in lessons for these skills to develop. There are examples of pupils using their mathematical knowledge in other subjects. In Year 1, for example, they use tallying in geography to complete a traffic survey and the teacher then shows how the data can be used to construct block graphs. These opportunities tend to occur incidentally instead of being included in the schools overall curriculum planning. This means that some opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills in other subjects are missed.
102. The management of the subject is very good. The school is keen to continually improve its performance and so it continues to seek advice from the local education authority. The subject co-ordinator has worked with the mathematics consultant to identify areas for development and, as a result of this and teachers' commitment to succeed, the quality of teaching is improving. There have, however, been insufficient opportunities for teachers to improve their skills by learning from one another. A good start has been made in assessing and recording pupils' achievements.

SCIENCE

103. The school makes good provision for science. The results in the national tests in 2002 show that the percentage of pupils achieving at least the expected level was above average, with a well above average percentage achieving the higher level. In the aspects of science related to materials and their properties, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level was in the top five per cent in the country. Results in science

had much improved from the previous year's tests and also from the previous inspection when they were judged to be average. In the previous inspection, standards were inconsistent and few pupils achieved a higher standard of scientific skills.

104. Current inspection findings in Year 2 show that standards are above average. The good quality of teaching has a positive impact on the learning and pupils become keen investigators with inquisitive minds.
105. Pupils cover all aspects of the curriculum and record their work in written and pictorial form. They begin to record their work neatly and in table form in Year 1. They carry out investigations; for example, testing whether different circuits will work. They give sensible answers to explain their findings. In Year 2, a pupil explains how a circuit works by saying, "The electricity needs to go from the battery, along a wire, through to the bulb, along and back again to make a circuit". They realise that a bulb will not light if the circuit is open. The use of correct scientific language is promoted very well and pupils in Year 2 have a thorough understanding of terms such as 'terminal'. They know that a healthy diet and exercise are important. They develop good skills of scientific enquiry. In Year 1, pupils know a range of sources of light and realise why we need light to be able to see things clearly. They know that if the battery is not connected the bulb will not light. They handle materials such as crocodile clips very sensibly. They recognise a range of common animals and identify similarities and differences between the adult and the young.
106. The quality of teaching is good overall. In two out of four observed lessons the teaching was at least very good. This has a very positive impact on the progress which pupils make. In all the lessons they were keen to investigate and find things out. The planning is very thorough and matched well to the different needs of the pupils. More-able pupils have extension activities, which give them plenty of challenge. The teachers make the work interesting and they manage the pupils very well in lessons. In an excellent lesson in Year 1, the pupils moved around in a carousel system, working in groups to see what was in different boxes. The teacher had very high expectations of their attainment and their behaviour and they responded very well indeed. Teachers explain the task clearly to the pupils, ensuring that they all understand. Consequently, the quality of learning for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and any pupils who speak English as an additional language, is at least good. Teachers use open-ended questions very well and lessons have a brisk but appropriate pace.
107. Pupils are very enthusiastic about science; in a Year 2 class, everyone cheered when they were told that science was the next lesson! The very good relationships help the pupils to be confident and keen to have a go. They are not worried about making mistakes. The teachers ask challenging questions and are often rewarded by a sea of hands as pupils respond with enthusiasm. The pupils concentrate very well and their behaviour in lessons is also very good. Science makes a very good contribution to pupils' moral, social and spiritual development. Pupils work together very well, taking turns in a sensible way. They handle and share equipment sensibly and recognise safety rules. They respect each other's views and have time to reflect on what they have found out. Boys and girls are equally involved in lessons. The use of ICT and literacy and numeracy skills to support science is satisfactory.
108. The co-ordinator manages the subject very well and has a clear understanding of what is necessary to maintain the improvements made. As yet, there has been no formal monitoring of the teaching and learning, but this is a target for the current year. The informative and useful planning supports the staff very well. Spiritual development is fostered well; for example, Year 1 pupils gasped with delight when they recognised what the objects in the darkened boxes were.

ART AND DESIGN

109. Standards in art are well above expectations for pupils by the age of seven. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, achieve very well. Particularly noteworthy is the very high standard achieved, even by the very youngest pupils, across a wide range of activities. Before beginning a painting, clay model or printing, they are able to spend time experimenting with the media, learning to work with it and learning what effects they can make with it. Only when they are thoroughly familiar with the material do they begin to work on a project. They observe and draw from nature, for example, flower heads and seed pods. The many higher attainers show great attention to detail by using a full range of pencils to show intricate detail through shading. Almost all the other pupils draw with a good sense of perception.
110. Art is well represented in displays throughout the school. The emphasis which is put on the learning of basic skills and techniques, is evident in the displayed work. The good progress that the pupils make is also apparent. Pupils have many opportunities to work creatively and use their imaginations. The pupils in Year 2 look at the work of William Morris and Charles Rennie Mackintosh and discuss how a pattern is symmetrical or how it repeats. During one lesson, there was great excitement when one of the pupils spotted that a William Morris design looked like a mask and the other pupils began to see the same image. The children are given choices when they come to design their own patterns and are not restricted to the teacher's ideas. Year 1 pupils make very effective Rangoli patterns using coloured rice and lentils. During these lessons they build knowledge about art in other cultures as well as supporting work they are doing in religious education about Divali. As a result of the careful planning, art makes a good contribution to pupils' aesthetic and cultural development. Work is not restricted to two-dimensional work. Pupils in all classes are able to experiment with fabrics and clay. Year 1 pupils were observed making thumb pots, which were later going to be decorated and used as Divas, also part of their work on Divali. There is good use of ICT to support art work.
111. Only two art lessons were observed during the inspection, but judged on all the evidence available, including the work in the pupils' sketch books, teaching is very good overall. The main strengths of the teaching are the subject knowledge, the enthusiasm and the very high expectations teachers have of their pupils. Explanations and demonstrations are very clear so that pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Teachers move unobtrusively around the class supporting pupils and challenging their thinking. The pupils respond with great enthusiasm whatever their ability and show very high levels of concentration as well as enjoyment. In the lesson where the pupils were making clay thumb pots, there were periods of silence while they worked with determined concentration.
112. Leadership and management are very good. The subject co-ordinator is well qualified and a committed art teacher. Her enthusiasm has influenced the rest of the staff and the pupils. She monitors work across the curriculum and is in the process of compiling a portfolio of pupils' work. The pupils evaluate their work and choose their favourite piece. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop a more formal approach to assessment. The scheme of work that the school follows is a combination of national recommendations and the school's own scheme, which gives the pupils the opportunity to develop a rich and wide range of skills in a variety of media. A topic of particular delight for Year 2 pupils is the school's own topic on the illustrations of Quentin Blake. Pupils have studied his work and reproduced some of them and drawings of their own in the same style. These now form an eye-catching display in corridors and classrooms.

113. Attainment was reported as good five years ago and, in spite of the pressures there have been to develop other areas of the curriculum, the school has been able to build on this success. Inspection findings are that there has been good improvement.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

114. From the few lessons observed and the evidence from documentation and pupils' past work, standards are judged to be broadly in line with expectations by the age of seven. Displays indicate that a significant amount of work is above expectations. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some very good teaching in Year 1. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress.
115. Lessons are planned well with tasks that interest the pupils and develop their skills. The curriculum provided for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is broad and effectively balanced. They make satisfactory progress in designing artefacts for a set purpose and in using a variety of materials. In a very successful lesson in Year 1, pupils studied fruit and vegetables as part of their food-technology learning. After the lesson, in which they had the opportunity to taste several fruits and vegetables, they were given the task of making their own salad recipe for a particular person and occasion. During this lesson, they talked about both the suitability of the ingredients and the appearance of the salad. "Do you want a one-colour salad or a crunchy salad?" they were asked. They had a list of ingredients they could choose from and completed a design sheet that encouraged them to think carefully about the activity. Special educational needs pupils were well supported by an adult helper during this lesson, which enabled them to achieve the learning intention of the lesson.
116. Year 2 pupils know about simple winding-up mechanisms. They look carefully at objects with winding mechanisms, learn the vocabulary of 'axle', 'turn', and 'pull' and use these to describe their artefacts. They use this knowledge to design and make a model of 'Incey-Wincey Spider' climbing up the waterspout. They use scissors, glue, card, boxes and dowelling with good control. They were pleased with the outcome because the spider did move up and down. Pupils in Year 2 were also given problem solving tasks; they had to devise safe ways to retrieve a toy bear from high up in the classroom. Much discussion occurred during this lesson. All pupils used a planning sheet and they evaluated their work at the end of the topic. Pupils enjoy their work, behave well in design and technology and are proud of their achievements.
117. The co-ordinator has drawn-up the policy and the scheme of work and has ensured that it indicates how pupils will develop their skills. Teachers have just begun to assess the pupils' work and are using the national guidelines to do so. The school is planning to improve resources, which are patchy at the moment. Design and technology is an improving subject.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

118. Standards attained by pupils in both subjects are slightly below expectations. This indicates a fall in standards since the previous inspection. Development of the subjects is now a priority on the school improvement plan after a period when there has been relatively less attention given to them whilst the school concentrated on raising standards in other areas. Neither subject has been neglected, but teaching has been based on some traditional topics in the school in which the progress pupils are expected to make has not been clearly defined.

119. It was only possible to observe two lessons in these subjects during the inspection and therefore no judgement on teaching overall has been made. From the evidence of pupils' work, teachers' work and from talking to pupils it is clear that they have enjoyed some interesting and exciting activities such as having a '1950s Day' or visiting the Toy Museum and Wilderness Woods. These experiences have been valuable in themselves, but insufficient consideration has been given to how they might be used to help pupils increase the whole range of knowledge, skills and understanding contained in the National Curriculum programmes of study. Overall, progress is therefore slightly less than satisfactory.
120. Pupils have a little knowledge of the differences between toys made in the past and those made in the present and of some the ways in which life was different for their parents or grandparents. Many of their responses are vague and not based on specific knowledge. They know a little about Guy Fawkes but are unable to name any other famous person from the past. When asked about other famous events or stories from the past they draw a blank. Pupils produce timelines of their families and of the story of the Gunpowder Plot, but recording of work in history is underdeveloped. Year 2 pupils have learnt about the geographical features of islands through a very successful project based on the imaginary island of 'Struay', which in turn is based on an actual location. The locality of the school, which is very rich in geographical features, has not been used to the fullest advantage to allow pupils to build up a good geographical vocabulary. There are examples of pupils using and applying skills from other areas of the curriculum such as writing about life on the island of Struay or making graphs following a traffic survey, but these opportunities tend to occur incidentally rather than being systematically planned.
121. There are two new co-ordinators who are very keen to redevelop these two subjects by retaining the best of the present school practice and introducing new learning experiences where they are needed. Resources available are barely adequate for these plans and this hinders pupils' achievements.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

122. Attainment overall in information and communication technology for the majority of pupils at the age of seven is in line with that found in most schools. Standards were judged to be satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection and they still are. Progress is satisfactory throughout the school, including pupils with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language. Standards have kept pace with national developments.
123. Pupils in both Years 1 and 2 use the equipment with increasing confidence. Most pupils know how to log on and off and locate the appropriate program. Year 2 pupils have a sound knowledge of the main keys and use the mouse to move the cursor with confidence. They are able to use the return key to create a list and use the shift key and space bar with confidence. Year 1 pupils can use different fonts to write their names and they learn about other means of communication such as tape recorders and telephones. They successfully use word-processing programs to record information they have gathered in other lessons, for example, writing instructions on how to plant a bean.
124. The pupils respond well to the work set and as result learning is sound. They listen carefully to instructions and remain on task when working individually at the computers or programming the 'Pixie' with instructions to move in a given direction. They work well together and offer each other advice.

125. The quality of teaching in the observed lessons of short, direct skill teaching is satisfactory. In all classes the skills to be taught in each lesson are clearly focused. Activities are well organised, with programs prepared beforehand so that pupils can make the best use of the time available. Support assistants are well briefed so that satisfactory learning takes place. No whole-class teaching of computer skills was observed during the inspection. With only two computers in each class it means that pupils have to gather around one machine to watch while the teacher demonstrates; practical work then takes several days to complete. This inevitably slows the rate of learning, which is still satisfactory overall. All Year 2 pupils have their own folder on the desktop of the computer that they can open to access small focused tasks to practise. They are all able to open their folder, click on icons and save their work.
126. The pupils enjoy their lessons in ICT. In the whole-class lessons observed, behaviour was usually good. Pupils were attentive and responded well to the teachers. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language work well in ICT lessons, and with adult support, play a full part in the lessons. The way in which small groups of pupils work co-operatively at the computer makes a positive contribution to their moral and social development.
127. The new co-ordinator is fully aware of what needs to be done to improve the provision for the subject and this forms the basis for her development plan for information and communication technology. It includes developing the use of ICT across the curriculum, including literacy and numeracy, as it is under-used at present. Resources are adequate but have their limitations, as the computers in the reception classes are not compatible with digital cameras. However, the school has sufficient resources to deliver what is necessary for the Key Stage 1 curriculum.

MUSIC

128. The high standards reported at the time of the last inspection have been maintained; pupils continue to achieve standards above national expectations, thoroughly justifying the time and resources committed to the subject and making it a strength of the school.
129. All classes have a weekly music lesson, and in addition, year groups get together for a singing practice. Lessons are planned very carefully and assessment in the subject is good so that teachers have a good knowledge of pupils' abilities. The approach adopted is designed to give all pupils opportunities to learn and enjoy music. Very careful records are kept to ensure that everyone has a turn on the instruments. All pupils have a chance to perform to the best of their ability. All pupils participate fully, enjoy music lessons and make good progress. Some pupils find it a little more difficult to concentrate in the large singing groups, but good control ensures that they all learn the importance of group discipline in music.
130. Pupils listen carefully to music and can identify, or make an educated guess at which instruments are being played; for example, when they listened to the overture of 'The Nutcracker Suite' and recognised the violin and suggested the viola in the opening section. Teachers use very good methods to help pupils develop musical ideas and skills. They develop their confidence in solo singing by playing a game which involves individuals singing in response to the whole group. Great sensitivity is used by teachers to ensure that no child feels intimidated and all of their attempts are treated positively. These teaching methods ensure that the subject makes a good and often very good contribution to the pupils' personal development.
131. Every opportunity is used for pupils to acquire a sense of rhythm; for example, the whole group are asked to tap out rhythms whilst they are singing. During the inspection

this practice was observed in a whole school assembly when over three hundred pupils tapped or shook imaginary instruments whilst one class had their turn playing percussion instruments. Pupils have a good repertoire of songs, which they sing with an above average melodic awareness. In class lessons pupils use the good range of instruments available to play rhythmic accompaniments. They compose short phrases as a whole class and in groups, using an increasing range of methods to record their ideas. They use computer programs to make up compositions and often choose this activity in 'Golden Time' when they have a free choice of activities.

132. Pupils have opportunities to perform to their parents at Christmas and at the end of the school year when parents are invited into demonstration lessons. The music consultant from the local education authority has used recordings of the pupils' lessons in the training of other teachers, because they show good achievement. No opportunities are provided for pupils to learn pitched instruments such as recorders, although a number of pupils receive violin tuition on an optional fee-paying basis. Not enough thought has been given to how the timing of these tuition sessions can be varied in order to minimise the impact on learning in other subjects. Consideration has been given to the formation of a lunchtime music group but lack of a suitable space makes this difficult. The music co-ordinator has worked hard to plan a comprehensive programme of work which includes musical experiences from both British and other cultural traditions. This supports the effective learning in music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. Standards in gymnastics and games are in line with national expectations and have been maintained since the previous inspection. It was not possible to observe any pupils doing dance activities during the inspection, but the school acknowledges that this aspect of physical education is slightly less well developed.
134. A number of lessons were observed during the inspection in which the teaching was consistently good. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers strike a good balance between instruction and activity; they maintain a good pace to the lessons so that pupils have the benefit of genuine physical exercise. They teach pupils the importance of warming up and cooling down before and after exercise. Teachers use a combination of demonstrating movements themselves and choosing individual pupils to demonstrate their achievements. These methods ensure that pupils know what they are striving for. Teachers do not give pupils sufficient opportunity to evaluate the performance of others or their own efforts or to suggest improvements.
135. There is a set of large apparatus that is used regularly by the teachers to teach gymnastic skills. However, much of the equipment is rather heavy but its use is made possible by the commitment and help of the school caretaker and other support staff who ensure that it is set out and put away. In order to give time for each class to have two lessons each week in the hall (although lessons do take place on the playground when weather permits) there is no time for pupils to set up and put away this equipment, which limits their understanding about handling equipment safely. Pupils use the apparatus confidently, showing good co-ordination and inventiveness; for example, when some Year 1 pupils were challenged by their teacher to move across different arrangements of apparatus whilst moving at different levels and different speeds whilst trying to incorporate a turn into their movements.
136. The co-ordinator has ensured that the school has an up-to-date programme of work by introducing a new scheme with detailed lesson notes for the teachers, who are committed to increasing their own expertise and confidence. This support and commitment have helped to ensure that the quality of teaching is good overall and

therefore all pupils make good progress. Some pupils are not so well co-ordinated or confident as others and teachers often use classroom assistants to work with these pupils to make sure that they are also making good progress.

137. Pupils change quickly into their kit, which is an improvement since the time of the last inspection, when they did not wear special clothing for lessons. The management of lessons is good and often very good; pupils know what is expected of them and quickly and quietly find spaces as soon as they arrive into the school hall. When using small apparatus, pupils collect and return it sensibly. Pupils show genuine enthusiasm for activities; they love the warm-up games but do not get over excited and silly. When practising catching and throwing skills, they show good co-ordination and control and try very hard to improve. During the inspection there were no opportunities to observe pupils practising small-side games where they could employ attacking or defending skills, but these activities are included in the school scheme of work.
138. The learning is well supported by extra activities such as a lunchtime football club. Tennis coaching is available after school, although this is an optional fee-paying activity. The subject co-ordinator organised a charity skip during the summer, which also involved a visit to the school by a sports celebrity. This also has a positive impact on the development of pupils' social skills. The subject does not feature on the current school development plan, although the co-ordinator has clear priorities to improve pupils' interest and ability in dance or movement and to link these developments with pupils' interest and enjoyment of music.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

139. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 2. In Years 1 and 2, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress in their learning. Standards have improved since the previous inspection, when the time allocated for the subject was insufficient and religious education did not meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
140. In Year 2, pupils begin to understand the significance of some of the important beliefs and practices of the Christian, Hindu and Jewish religions. Visits to a local church support the learning very well, and result in good work. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 know some of the stories in the New Testament about the life and work of Jesus. They know the importance of festivals such as Christmas to Christian people and Divali to Hindus. A visit from a dance group in relation to Divali deepens the pupils' knowledge and understanding of this festival. A range of exciting work across the curriculum, for example, Rangoli patterns in art, also supports the learning. In Year 2 pupils understand why it is important to have rules, and begin to understand the meaning of rules in a religious context. Literacy is used appropriately to support the learning, especially to promote speaking skills; for example, in role play.
141. In Years 1 and 2 the quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some good teaching in each year group and one very good lesson in Year 2. In this lesson, which was related to 'special things', the very good relationships and attitudes of the pupils and the high expectations of the teacher, helped to ensure very good learning. By the end of the lesson, the pupils understood that respect for what we each believe to be special is very important. Not all teachers are fully confident in teaching religious education, but this is improving through the support of the co-ordinator, and most teachers now have sound subject knowledge. Lessons are appropriately planned and the learning aims are often shared with the pupils at the beginning of the session. Teachers often question skilfully to assess knowledge and understanding and to encourage

discussions; for example, in one lesson about Divali, there was an interesting discussion about good and evil. Most teachers provide pupils with good support to ensure that they are all fully included in activities and discussions. Behaviour management is usually good and, as a result, in most lessons pupils listen attentively and are enthusiastic about their work. Teachers have a sensitive approach to their teaching and give pupils opportunities to reflect on their own beliefs and those of others. They think about the impact of their actions on others. Role-play is used effectively in some lessons to re-inforce learning. There is good provision for pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. There is satisfactory use of ICT to support learning; for example, in word processing or using an art program to reflect good and bad.

142. The management of religious education is good and is having a positive impact on raising standards. There has been a small amount of monitoring of teaching and learning, but in order to improve the standards further and to continue to improve the teachers' confidence, this needs to be developed. Statutory requirements are now met. The co-ordinator supports staff well with the planning, both long and short term.