

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PETER'S COMMUNITY INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Portslade-by-Sea

LEA area: Brighton and Hove

Unique reference number: 114411

Headteacher: Mrs Rosalie Harrington

Reporting inspector: Wendy Simmons
23674

Dates of inspection: May 12th –14th 2003

Inspection number: 247456

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:	3-7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St Peter's Road Portslade-by-Sea Brighton
Postcode:	BN41 1LS
Telephone number:	01273 418069
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs K Walker
Date of previous inspection:	12 th –14 th January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23674 Wendy Simmons <i>Registered inspector</i>	Foundation Stage Science Music Religious Education Educational inclusion, including race equality. English as an additional language.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9053 Vivienne Philips <i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents? How well does the school care for its pupils?
11982 Ray Morris <i>Team inspector</i>	English Art and design Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?
20948 John Linstead <i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History	How well is the school led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Peter's Infants' and Nursery School educates 146 pupils and is smaller than most other primary schools. There are similar numbers of boys and girls, except in the Reception class, where there are more boys. Most children join the school, in the Nursery class, at the age of three. The school is set in a small industrial estate, close to the dock area of Portslade. The majority of pupils come from white British backgrounds, but there are a few pupils from different cultural heritages. Six pupils speak English as an additional language, which is a higher proportion than average. A very high percentage of pupils leave the school at times that are different to the usual time of admission or transfer to other schools, largely due to changes in housing and changes before children move into the Reception class. Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below average. There are 29 pupils (20 per cent) registered with special educational needs, many of whom have complex needs, but no pupils have statements. Pupils come from a very wide range of social backgrounds, including a significant number of pupils who experience social and emotion difficulties and disadvantaged circumstances. There are three teachers on temporary contracts. The school is involved in negotiations with the Local Education Authority about how many pupils will be admitted to the school after 2004.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Peter's is a highly effective school, which provides a very good overall standard of education. It is an exceptionally caring school in which pupils are given the opportunity to thrive, whatever their ability or background. Pupils are keen to learn and relationships are excellent. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. This, together with the very good leadership and management is resulting in high standards and very good achievement. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Leadership and management by the headteacher and senior staff are excellent. With the very good support from governors, standards are improving and pupils achieve very well.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a flying start and this continues in Years 1 and 2, which reflects the very good teaching, learning and interesting curriculum.
- Standards, in reading, science and art are well above average, and in all but physical education and design and technology, they are better than average.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good; they often attain average standards and are extremely well supported by the excellent On Track project.
- Personal, social and moral education is exemplary and enriched by very good spiritual and cultural development.
- Pupils develop very positive attitudes and behaviour, which supports their learning.

What could be improved

There are no major areas for improvement, but in order to develop the school's very good provision towards an excellent standard there are several minor issues, which the governors may wish to include in the school's development plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1998, when it was judged to be good overall. Since then, there has been excellent further progress. In every aspect of the school's work, there has been progress, with numerous examples of good and very good developments. Most significantly, this is evident in the improvement in standards and the very good improvement in how well pupils achieve. This reflects developments in teaching, pupils' learning opportunities and the quality and richness of the curriculum. Very significant improvement is evident in reading, art and in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Numerous improvements to the accommodation and increased resources are widening pupils' learning opportunities. The opening of the Nursery is especially notable. Most importantly, staff development and changes in the governing body have resulted in very good improvement in the leadership of the school. There has been effective action in addressing the key issues identified in 1998, especially relating to the use of assessment information. Links with parents and the community are now excellent. The school is well placed to continue to make further progress, despite further staff changes.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

The table shows that pupils achieved better results in national tests in reading and average results in writing and mathematics in 2002. The high standard in reading compared with other very similar schools is due to the high proportion of pupils who work at Level 3 of the National curriculum, rather than the average Level 2. Standards in writing and mathematics in 2002, compared with similar schools were lower than average, largely because fewer pupils reached Level 3.

The school has successfully improved reading writing and mathematics, as standards are now well above average in reading and are above in writing and mathematics. The school is meeting the needs of its pupils very well. Children in the Reception class get off to a very good start, and achieve very well, as many of them have limited skills and knowledge when starting school. By Year 2, pupils achieve very well and this is reflected in the high standards found in all subjects, with the exception of design and technology (DT) and physical education (PE), where standards are average. The space available for PE sometimes restricts better progress. The school places a strong emphasis on widening pupils' competence in using spoken language; this is a significant factor in why they do well. Provision for the most able pupils is good and for those with special educational needs, it is very good, which often results in them attaining at least average standards. Very good teaching and learning have immense impact on the standards in the school. The school evaluates its work and sets challenging but achievable targets for improvement.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils' very positive attitudes provide a strong basis for learning. They enjoy school. Pupils are interested and involved in activities and respect the feelings, values and beliefs of others.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are polite, helpful and follow the school rules. There has been no recent exclusion. Challenging behaviour is successfully managed.
Personal development and relationships	Very good, with a strong emphasis on developing social skills, showing initiative, taking responsibility and supporting others. Relationships are excellent. The <i>On Track</i> project gives highly effective support.
Attendance	Good. Pupils are keen to attend. There is less absence than in most schools, which means that pupils do not miss learning opportunities.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good

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

Teaching and learning are very good overall. Teachers have very high expectations and challenge and inspire the pupils to learn. Sometimes, teachers have to work very hard to motivate some children who are quite passive when starting school or have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The teachers make excellent use of the wide range of resources available. Teaching assistants make an important contribution to children's learning because they work extremely well with teachers and they are genuinely interested in helping the children to overcome difficulties and so, make speedy progress. The children get off to a flying start in the Nursery and Reception classes; indeed, teaching is often of an excellent standard in the Reception class. Very good teaching and learning continues in Years 1 and 2. Teachers really understand that children learn in different ways and need many different experiences. As a consequence of this, the school provides a very rich curriculum and wide opportunities for the pupils to learn for themselves by exploring, enquiring and by talking about what they are learning. Furthermore, teachers have a very good understanding about the importance of evaluating what the children can and cannot do, and as a result, they use this assessment information to plan further lessons that really help the children to improve. Excellent relationships exist between all adults and pupils, this helps pupils to work productively, have fun and apply considerable intellectual, creative and physical effort in their learning. The support provided by the *On Track* project is excellent, by quickly bringing together many professionals in the community to support children and families at St Peter's. This early intervention is a very significant reason why the pupils make progress and do not experience early failure.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is broad, rich and well planned in topic projects, making learning meaningful. Skills, which pupils learn develop quickly from year to year but are not always detailed explicitly in the school's curriculum planning document. Extra curricular activities; links with the community and the range of visits are excellent.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Work is well adapted and assessed for pupils to make very good progress. Assistants give good support, and links with professionals in the community are highly effective in providing quick and focused help.
Provision for pupils learning English as an additional language.	Good. Teachers are skilled at helping these pupils to make progress. They provide a welcoming environment and many resources to help them to learn quickly. The school had a specialist support assistant who is no longer available, and this is a factor in why achievement has changed from very good to good.
Pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent. This supports pupils' positive attitudes, growing self-esteem, and all-round development. Pupils are beginning to understand that Britain is a multicultural society. Personal, social and health education is exemplary.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Excellent. Pupils are very well cared for. Health and safety, child protection and personal development reflect best practice.
How well does the school use information from assessment?	Very good. Assessment information is used very well to help teachers plan pupils' learning. Pupils' progress is carefully evaluated and they are given targets to help them to make further progress.
Partnership with parents	Excellent links with parents. Parents are very supportive and make a very good contribution to their children's learning and school life.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff	Excellent. The headteacher and senior staff provide a very strong lead. They have a clear vision to improve the school and have built a high-performing, inspired and motivated staff. Subject co-ordinators provide very good leadership and management, with many responsible for several subjects. A highly skilled administrator supports their role.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good overall. The relatively newly formed governing body call the school to account by evaluating standards and by playing an active part in planning improvements to further raise standards. They are highly knowledgeable, enthusiastic, well qualified and provide superb links with the community.

Aspect	Comment
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Monitoring and evaluating of teaching and learning is very good by senior staff and good by co-ordinators, although in science and mathematics their evaluation of teaching in lessons is limited. Information from the analysis of test results is used very well to plan further improvements.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. Finance and staff are used very effectively. The school considers how it can provide <i>best value</i> very successfully.
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.	Very good overall. Resources are of high quality and plentiful. Staff are highly qualified. Class sizes are generally small, which gives pupils many chances to work directly with adults. The accommodation is good overall for the demands of the curriculum, but space is limited of PE. The learning area for Reception and Nursery children has improved dramatically, but as yet, the outside area is still being improved so that it is of the same high quality as the inside environment.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like the school and work hard. • It is a very good and caring school. • The school is well led and managed. • Links with the community are very strong. • Teaching is good. • Pupils behave well and develop maturity • There has been very good improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's annual reports are very thorough, but some phrases are very technical and thus difficult to understand.

Inspectors confirm parents' very positive views and note that several aspects are even more positive, such as teaching and leadership and management, which are very good. Improvement is excellent. Inspectors agree that pupils' reports contain some technical phrases.

PART B: COMMENTARY

Attainment

This is what the pupils know, understand and can do at a particular point in time. Such as, by the end of Year 2. This is often compared with national test results and also against schools with a similar percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals.

Achievement

The progress that pupils make as they move through the school. This is measured against what they were able to do when starting this school in the Nursery class and what they can do by Year 2. Achievements are likely to be high where pupils are working at full stretch, constantly engaged in thinking or doing things which are unfamiliar and which require effort, concentration and perseverance. Achievement is likely to be low if pupils either fail to understand their work and what is expected, or they are consistently successful at tasks that they have already mastered.

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Overall, pupils reach high standards and achieve very well.

Main strengths

- Standards have risen considerably since the last inspection, which reflects the excellent leadership by the headteacher and senior staff.
- Pupils reach higher than average standards by Year 2 in almost all subjects, with very high attainment in reading, science and art.
- Pupils achieve very well for their ability, making immense progress from their well below average level of attainment when starting the school at the age of three.
- Very good teaching and learning and rich curriculum help pupils to achieve their best.
- The early intervention *On Track* support is a significant factor in why virtually all pupils reach at least average standards by the end of Year 2.

Areas for development

- Standards in physical education (PE) and design and technology (DT) are in line with national expectations, rather than at the same high standards as found in other subjects.
- The school has recently lost the support of a specialist support teacher for children learning English as an additional language. This means that the high quality translation support is currently unavailable.

1. When the school was last inspected in 1998, standards were judged to be broadly average, although in subjects such as science, history, geography and information and communication technology (ICT), they were higher than average. Recommendations from the last report identified scope for improvement in pupils' writing and in the way teachers use assessment information within lessons. Since 1998, there has been very good improvement in standards, as they are now judged to be above average. Pupils at St Peter's achieve very well from their much lower than average starting point when joining the school in the Nursery. Excellent leadership and management by the headteacher and senior staff result in improvement in the all-round provision for the pupils.

2. When starting school, in the Nursery, the knowledge and skills that children have are often well below average, reflecting the diverse social needs and sometimes chaotic home lives. Many children

have poor speaking skills and do not communicate with confidence or clarity. A high proportion of pupils are only just beginning to use isolated words and phrases or gestures to communicate. Many have had limited experiences of the world around them and most lack a strong sense of curiosity or impulse to explore things without considerable encouragement. Furthermore, their personal, social and emotional development is often well below average. A higher than average proportion of children join the Nursery who are just beginning to learn English as an additional language. The good progress made by children in the nursery develops into very good progress in the Reception class. Although more than 20 per cent overall will not attain the nationally expected average (Early Learning Goals) in all aspects of their learning. Nonetheless, this still represents very good achievement in relation to their attainment on entry to the school.

3. Children's attainment on entry to Year 1 is generally below average, standards in creative development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world and reading are average. Children make very good progress, especially in their language skills and in their personal, social and creative development. The very good achievement reflects the often excellent teaching in the Reception class. A small proportion, are very able learners. These children make equally good progress and; when starting in Year 1, will be confidently working at Level 1 of the National Curriculum. From the work seen, the school is especially successful in helping boys to do as well as girls, which is unusual in the national context. Pupils continue to progress in Years 1 and 2. Very good achievement leads to higher than average standards by Year 2.

4. National test results for Year 2 in 2002 were above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics, which is better than 2001, but not as good as in 2000. The 2002 results showed that the school compares better in reading with other similar schools which have the same number of free school meals, but in writing and mathematics performed below similar schools. The findings of this inspection show that there are many social factors evident in the school, which reduce the validity of the similar schools comparison, not least the high mobility of pupils. For example, in 2002, two new pupils joined the school just before the national tests.

5. Since 1998, the school has made significant progress in developing speaking skills and this underpins the improvement made in many subjects. The staff at this school clearly understand how children learn and as a consequence of this, they place considerable emphasis on helping them to broaden their vocabulary, widen their competence in using longer sentences and give them many opportunities to talk about their work. For example, one word answers are not good enough. When reading the story *The Shark with No Teeth*, the teacher sensitively helped pupils to explain exactly why the shark's character changed.

6. In reading, there has been a continuing trend of improvement, showing strong use of the National Literacy programme and very good teaching and learning of basic skills. This results in very good achievement. The well above average results of 1999 and 2000 are again evident in the findings of this inspection, with all pupils working at Level 2 or beyond. Moreover, close to 50 percent of the pupils are working at the higher Level 3. The school has worked especially hard to help boys to do as well as girls, and this is why boys are doing better than other boys of the same age in the country. Regular and focused reading ensures progress, both within the literacy hour and also when pupils read with their parents or work in small groups. The teaching and learning of basic skills are very good, with excellent provision in the Reception class, as seen in the literacy session when the teacher worked with individuals and read *All About Animals*. Across the whole school, pupils talk about books and develop a strong understanding of how to work out words and the meaning of the text.

7. In writing, results since 1998, in the national tests have been variable, ranging from better than average in 1999 to below average in 2001. This would appear to be because the school is successful at getting the pupils to an average level, but fewer reached higher levels. This is why standards are below

average against similar schools. Since 2001, the school has placed a major focus on improving many aspects of writing. This has been very successful, as standards, in this inspection, are now found to be above average. A particular strength is the way in which the school uses a special writers' club to allow pupils to work on longer and more complex pieces of writing. The school is also successfully helping boys to do equally as well as girls, which is contrary to the national picture.

8. In mathematics, since 2001, when standards were below average, there has been consistent improvement. In 2002 results improved to match the national standard, but when compared with other similar schools, they were below average. This appears to be because the school gained 25 per cent at the higher Level 3, which was below that attained in similar schools. It is important to note, this would represent 2 pupils and so, care needs to be taken in interpreting the data. The recent improvements show a strong emphasis on working on investigation and problem solving activities, such as in their *Maths Week* challenges. As a consequence of this, and further training and development of the Numeracy Strategy, standards are now found to be above average, with boys and girls attaining similar standards.

9. Since 1998, improvement is also evident in science, taking the results from above average to well above average. This is because the pupils are encouraged to think and learn for themselves through investigation and, allied to the improvement in reading and writing, they are often able to apply more advanced skills in their learning.

10. High standards in ICT and history have been maintained. This inspection could not make an overall judgement about geography, as it was not possible to see enough teaching and work. However, from the work seen and discussions with pupils, it would suggest that these high standards continue. In art, standards are now very high. This work is delightful and shows the impact of developing skills from an early age and the richness of the curriculum. The curriculum and links with the community are also factors in why standards in RE are now above average. In music, pupils still continue to sing well and now have more opportunities to appreciate different music and invent compositions for themselves. This has resulted in standards that are now above average. Standards in PE remain average and in some respects, the restricted space limits greater improvement. Work in DT also remains broadly average.

11. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well and attain broadly average standards by the time they leave the school. This is a direct result of early and regular assessment, very good support and teachers' high expectations. Assistants work well to support their learning. The school successfully won their bid to take part in the *On Track* support programme. This programme was established to reduce youth crime, build communities and make stronger links between parents. As a result of this, children who have difficulties with social skills and learning are given very quick and highly effective support from many agencies, which work directly in the school. For example, a nurse, speech therapist, counsellor and educational psychologist work with many children and parents. This gives the children confidence in themselves and reduces early failure.

12. The *On Track* programme also helps parents and teachers with concerns associated with very talented and more able pupils. Overall, more able learners make at least good progress. The school has successfully increased the number of pupils reaching Level 3 in all aspects of English, mathematics, science, music and art and in some aspects of ICT and history. Able pupils are helped to flourish and very gifted pupils work with older pupils.

13. Pupils learning English as an additional language achieve well, making at least good progress. The classrooms are truly inviting to these pupils, with different languages displayed and many books, which show Britain as a multicultural society using different language texts. The school's ethos of developing all pupils' speaking skills helps these pupils to attain standards which are similar to other

pupils in the school. The school has recently lost the support of a specialist support assistant for children learning English as an additional language. This means that the high quality translation support is currently unavailable and this is why achievement is good and not very good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Very good overall.

Strengths

- Pupils develop very positive attitudes to school and learning.
- Pupils learn to behave very well.
- Pupils make huge strides in personal and social development.
- Relationships are excellent.
- Attendance is good.

14. At the last inspection, standards were generally good, and so this area of the school's work has improved well. This is partly because the school has built on what was already a positive picture by use of innovative links set up through local and other projects to foster greater confidence and better social skills. Although children join the school with a range of personal skills that have been much slower to develop than usual, once there, they show rapid gains in almost all areas of social development. As a result of the priority that the school gives to building their confidence, teaching them to listen, take turns, share and to enjoy trying things out for themselves, and an exceptionally warm welcome, pupils learn to love school.

15. Children are very happy to have a go with their work and to keep trying hard with tasks that are interesting and well explained. For example, in a Year 1 literacy lesson, everyone tried to think of a sentence to express the reasons why *Cruncher*, the *Shark With No Teeth*, might have changed from a bad character to a good one because of his experiences. Their effort and enthusiasm reflected the way that the teacher encouraged children to think for themselves with very well phrased questions and prompts. Although children depend on high quality care and teaching to foster positive attitudes to work, they learn to enjoy learning because of the rich range of positive experiences they have. They are reluctant to be absent unless they are really unwell, and so attendance is good because parents share their high regard for the school.

16. At first, many of the youngest children find it hard to understand why the school has simple rules that they are expected to follow and need considerable help to relate well to others. With highly skilled guidance and first rate examples from adults, children soon learn to respond very well to the school's golden rules. As a result, in general, they behave very well in lessons and around the school, as parents indicated. Children try particularly hard to listen to their teachers, to be polite and to do their best. There have been no recent exclusions.

17. The school has worked with extraordinary determination to give its pupils the best possible chances of doing well in all aspects of their education. It recognised the gaps in children's personal and social skills and set out to fill these so that pupils did not miss out in other ways because they lacked confidence in themselves or understanding of how to get on with others. As a result of all the school's efforts, children blossom as they grow in confidence and recognise each other's qualities. They learn to think about other people's feelings, to try to be kind and helpful and to get on with their own work without disturbing other children. By the time they reach Year 2, they have come a very long way to a level of good personal and social development, which is far better than might have been expected given their starting points.

18. Relationships in the school are excellent and make a highly significant contribution to what is achieved because they nurture the strong atmosphere of trust and respect within the school community and shape children's sense of security, enthusiasm for school life and behaviour. Staff, led by the headteacher, do all they can to create a welcoming, happy and friendly working atmosphere in which everyone wants to get on well together and do their best. Staff listen to pupils and value their ideas. As a result, community spirit and teamwork are very strong, children learn to be very tolerant and to

understand that bullying, racism and sexism have no place in the school, and everyone thrives on praise and encouragement.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

Very good overall provision.

Strengths

- Teachers have very high expectations.
- Excellent relationships together with very good management and planning helps pupils to overcome difficulties; make progress; and, develop a zest for learning.
- Teachers are very knowledgeable, especially about how pupils learn.
- Teachers make very good use of assessment information to plan work for all pupils.
- Pupils have an excellent knowledge of their learning because teachers encourage pupils to think and learn for themselves.
- A very broad curriculum and much practical work make learning fun.
- There is very high quality support from parents, *On Track*, and the wider community.
- The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are very well taught.

Areas for development

- Opportunities for drafting writing are generally limited, and so this sometimes impedes pupils from reaching even higher standards.
- The school no longer has a specialist assistant to support pupils who speak English as an additional language.

19. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall, showing good further improvement since the last inspection, when it was of a high standard and contributed positively to pupils' good progress. As then, it remains a significant strength of the school, but also shows further progress in teachers' skills and especially in how assessment information within lessons is used to plan further work, which was a key issue in 1998. Now, in many lessons, teachers and assistants are constantly making notes about how each pupil tackles their work and how successful they have been in learning a new skill or piece of knowledge. For example, adults noted how well the children in the Reception class used the computer mouse to draw detailed Indian fabric pattern designs and then print their work. From this information, the teacher was able to give additional help to those who struggled and further challenges to those who quickly mastered the skill.

20. During this inspection, 27 lessons or part lessons were observed. In addition to this, teachers' planning was carefully evaluated and discussions were held with pupils. Furthermore, the school was able to provide a wealth of additional information and samples of pupils work. Of the lessons seen, six were satisfactory, nine were good and ten were very good. Two lessons were excellent. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed.

21. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is very good overall. This confirms parents' views particularly that it has improved considerably since 1998. This is most evident in the improvement to the accommodation, increase in teachers and opening of the Nursery. Highly skilled teaching interweaves formal and practical activities, so that basic skills are practised and developed, while also allowing children time to become independent learners and thinkers. A lovely example of this was seen when the children explored different sized tubes and talked about the variation in the flow of water at the water tray. Teaching in the Reception class is especially strong, showing much excellent practice by the two teachers who work together extremely effectively. When reading *I Feel Happy*, one teacher focused on talking about speech bubbles and reading with expression, while the

other helped all the children to think up their own ideas of how to make someone happy. Provision in the nursery is consistently good.

22. The very good teaching and learning found in the Foundation Stage continues into Years 1 and 2. Overall, teachers and assistants have a very strong understanding of the needs of young children. Moreover, teachers really understand how children learn. For example, they give time to think and explore before they ask for answers to questions. They ask challenging and thought provoking questions, which make the pupils think for themselves. The quality of planning, and the management of the children is excellent in the Foundation Stage and very good at Key Stage 1. Adults work with small groups to develop children's confidence and skills, especially in speaking, which underpins the very good progress that they make. Pupils master many new skills and knowledge because teachers' plan challenging activities, which match the differing needs of all pupils. Learning is made fun and children make decisions for themselves. Across the whole school, learning is enriched by the many excellent links to develop the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

23. The teaching of basic skills and the provision for numeracy and literacy is very good. Pupils work on different topics, which link a wide range of subjects. One of the best features is the way in which teachers help pupils to develop, understand and use new vocabulary. This enables pupils to achieve high standards in their reading comprehension and writing skills. In literacy lessons, teachers successfully develop the many skills needed by pupils to become fluent readers and often demonstrate how writing can be improved. However, although pupils write very frequently and achieve high standards, opportunities for drafting writing are developing, but more complex drafting skills are generally limited.

24. In numeracy, pupils do many practical activities and have to explain their work and ideas; this is very good practice and helps them to understand how the basic elements of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division work. For example, they have made their own mathematics games and invented their own sums with a score of 200. Again, their learning is rooted in observation, discussion and exploration. A very good example of this was evident in their investigations into right angles in the local environment.

25. Homework is used very effectively to support pupils' learning at school. In mathematics, pupils learn their tables and also play numerous games. In literacy, most pupils read on a daily basis and make their own notes about the books with their parents. Moreover, they practise skills that have been introduced in literacy lessons, such as verbs, tenses and writing stories such as, '*An Island Home for Raj and an Elephant*'.

26. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because their difficulties are identified and thoroughly assessed at an early stage. Lessons are carefully planned to include work that meets their particular needs and additional support, when appropriate, is provided by teaching assistants during the lesson or in short, specifically planned sessions outside the classroom. Excellent links with the community enrich the quality of teaching and learning. This is most evident in the support from the *On Track* programme. Individual support to improve behaviour or basic literacy or social skills helps many pupils quickly to overcome barriers to learning.

27. The school gives very effective support to more able pupils. The school also recognises the needs of especially gifted pupils. For example, they have introduced violin lessons and provide special project activities for very gifted pupils in English, mathematics and science. In this respect, the use of ICT is very effective in supporting able learners.

28. Pupils who speak English as an additional language learn quickly at St Peters. The school places great importance on the development of speaking within their daily lessons, and so all pupils make progress. Until recently, there were many opportunities for work to be translated into Arabic and Hindi, so that these pupils could make links between their first and additional languages. This was

excellent practice, which resulted in rapid progress of children. However, the school no longer has a support assistant.

29. Staff are energetic and strongly committed to the children. All of them are very keen to improve. For example, three are working on a specialist research project linked to the use of assessment. As a result of this, teachers make very good overall use of assessment information to plan pupils' next stages of learning. Informal discussions, as teachers circulate around the class, are very effective in helping pupils to improve. Pupils are extremely clear about their targets for development and show a keenness to develop by working hard, concentrating and persisting with new learning. By Year 2, pupils have an excellent knowledge of their own learning. The staff always praise pupils' efforts and this motivates them. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and a credit to the school.

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

Overall, provision is very good.

Strengths

- The curriculum is very well organised, making very effective use of visitors, practical activities, artefacts and excellent extra-curricular activities.
- Provision for special educational needs and the use of the *On Track* project are superb, leading to many of these pupils reaching average standards in their work by Year 2.
- The school provides exceptional support for moral and social development.
- Personal, health and social education are excellent.
- Foundation Stage provision is very well planned to ensure that pupils make a very good start to their education.
- Links with the community, other educational establishments and parents are excellent; these support children's learning and are improving standards.

Areas for development

- Although pupils learn new skills very effectively, skills are not explicitly detailed in the school's overall policy document. This is important, as the school will be facing significant staff changes later in the year.

30. The curriculum is very good. It is broad and balanced and exceeds statutory requirements. It is rooted in a strong understanding that young children learn best by engaging in practical investigations, visits and opportunities for them to think and learn for themselves. This is especially evident in the Nursery and Reception classes, where the children are encouraged to plan and record activities, which they do throughout the week.

31. When pupils enter the main school, a key feature of all lessons is the extent to which they are provided with high quality opportunities to develop the skills of speaking and listening. These are explicit in teachers' planning and help pupils think about what they are going to say, how they say it and how to listen and respond to what others say. Personal and social education is well planned and, embedded as it is in the ethos of the school, also occurs informally. These two aspects of the curriculum are significant factors in why pupils achieve well. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been thoroughly established and, as a result, the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are very well taught. The school has given much attention to providing opportunities for first hand observation in art and practical investigations in science, and to using these skills when making links between different subjects. Consequently, pupils' good literacy, numeracy and thinking skills help them learn progressively through topic based programmes embracing all National Curriculum subjects and

RE. Homework is used effectively to consolidate and extend pupils' classroom learning. Sex education and drug awareness are appropriately included in the science and personal and social education policies.

32. Teachers' weekly plans cover the required skills, knowledge and understanding for the National Curriculum. However, these are not made explicit in the school's overall curriculum plan. Skills are all very clearly identified in different assessment paperwork, but are not drawn together in one place. Provision for physical education is restricted by the size of the hall, which is only adequate for comparatively small classes, and limited space outdoors.

33. The curriculum is enriched by the provision of a wide range of additional experiences and extra-curricular activities. Visits to local houses, farms, museums and places of worship for different faiths make teaching more meaningful, and visitors to the school bring a wealth of experience and stimulating ideas to widen pupils' horizons still further. The school aims to raise pupils' self-esteem and help them explore and make sense of their world. To this end it provides a range of artistic experiences through visiting music and theatre groups, taking part in local music and dance festivals, and by valuing the pupils' own artistic efforts through displays and exhibitions. Together with after school clubs, this additional provision is excellent for a school of this size.

34. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is of very high quality and the school gives good attention to their varied learning needs. Additional support is provided through careful planning of appropriate work in lessons and by specially prepared activities taught by teaching assistants, either as part of a normal lesson or in small groups for short periods of time outside the classroom.

35. Links with the community, partner institutions and parents are of an excellent standard and support pupils' learning in many ways. Those established with local organisations through the On Track initiative have had a significant impact on the progress of many pupils. The school benefits from having student teachers working alongside teachers in classrooms, and the contribution of parents and their support for the work of the school is a positive factor in its success.

36. The school works very effectively to ensure that all pupils get a fair deal by taking steps to plan the curriculum so that no group of pupils is disadvantaged. Pupils of all abilities are helped to participate in work, which meets their particular needs, thus allowing them to see themselves as successful learners. For example, the school has introduced violin and piano lessons for able musicians, and very able pupils work alongside older pupils, often on individual work. Those with English as an additional language enjoy opportunities to value their first language as well as to acquire competence in English.

37. Provision for pupils' personal development has improved greatly since the last inspection, when it was judged as sound, with strengths in moral and social aspects. It aims to give children the skills they need to make the most of their experiences at school. These skills include listening actively to teachers, doing what is asked, thinking for themselves, taking turns to speak, following simple rules, sharing books, toys and other resources, and taking care of people and the school. Parents think highly of this.

38. Everything that the school does is built on a foundation of very strong, clear moral principles, including the rights of every child to live and learn happily with others. The school's passion for ensuring that pupils are 'healthy, happy and work with zest and enjoy each day with learning, laughter, love and much music' is evident in the way it fosters moral and social awareness in all it does. The golden rules are part of the home and school agreement and govern everyday life and routines in and out of the classroom. For example, children know that they are expected to be polite and not disturb others, but, inevitably, need little reminders from time to time. In lessons, when children gather on the

carpet to listen to the teacher, a whisper or a quick glance is followed by a smile of encouragement. This is often all that is needed to check a little push or some interrupting. Children are coaxed and encouraged to reach the high standards of behaviour set, while being in no doubt about the consequences if they break the rules. They learn about fairness and trust through diligent application of the golden rules.

39. Adults ensure that children have lots of opportunities to work and play with others in pairs and groups to develop a very clear understanding of what co-operation, teamwork and getting on with other people involves. Right from their early days at school, children are taught how to share, to respect others' rights to have a go on favourite toys and to learn to say sorry when they upset someone. The consistency with which staff manage the small arguments and self-centred behaviour characteristic of young children makes a huge difference to their growing awareness of other people's feelings and rights. Adults help children to understand what to do without being heavy-handed or unpleasant, which results in children having the confidence to try to do better and to use initiative in saying sorry when they see they have upset someone. The school council allows children the chance to express their views on how to improve the school, which they relish. It has resulted in a delightful system where people sign up to bring in flowers for the entrance hall.

40. The school encourages spiritual and moral development very successfully because many features of both are part and parcel of the school's daily life. For example, children are given time to think what they want to say in response to teacher's questions, without being rushed into mechanical answers, and so they learn to reflect on what people say and do. Most areas of the school are full of scintillating displays that celebrate a rich range of children's achievements and work in progress, as well as a wide variety of cultural experiences. For example, the use of fabric, including hand printed batik and digital photographs of active, happy children creates a real sense of school as a special place where children are valued. Teachers plan and use opportunities for inspiration and enchantment very well, for example, in Year 2, when children were enthralled to see a huge conch shell and were each given a turn to 'listen for the sound of the sea'. They use opportunities for exploring different customs and beliefs very well, for instance in talking about Heena the visitor, (an Indian doll) during assembly and sharing what they knew about the similarities and differences between their lives and hers. The best examples of spiritual and cultural provision are not always matched by a real sense of occasion in all assemblies and inspiring images of different cultural traditions in all classrooms. Otherwise, provision is far better than is usually found.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

The overall quality of care is outstanding.

Strengths

- First rate steps to safeguard children's welfare boost all their achievements superbly.
- Policies and procedures focus impressively on the children's best interests and development.
- Assessment procedures and the use of these to guide teachers in planning new work for pupils are very good.

41. The quality of care provided by the school was described as very good by the last inspection. It has improved well and is now even better. This is because the strengths identified then have been enhanced by the *On Track* project, which has enabled the school to involve parents and a range of specialist support in helping children to be ready to learn successfully. Children and their needs are very well known to staff, who are particularly good at noticing changes in mood or behaviour that might require sensitive support, for example, when a grandparent or pet dies. Impressive levels of trust, openness and respect contribute significantly to the quality of care offered to everyone within the school community.

42. The school takes exceptional care to look after its pupils and do what is in their best interests, in line with educational and other guidance, including that for child protection and all matters of welfare, health and safety. For example, it not only comforts and cares for any child who has fallen over, but notes the injury and treatment, tells the parent and gives the child a sticker so, at a glance, staff and parents know they need to be watchful. The school does all it can to build very positive relationships with parents, welfare officers, counsellors and others who have a key role in caring for children. This is because the school is determined to increase children's self-esteem, confidence and independence so that they are able to live and learn happily together. The school takes very great care to do this through praise and rewards that they earn through their own efforts, including instances of kindness and good behaviour. The policy of 'Yell and Tell' is particularly successful in helping children to discourage and deal with anti-social behaviour, including bullying, with support from staff. Attendance is very closely monitored so that absence patterns are identified and do not undermine achievement.

43. The school has a very good range of assessment procedures. The systems are simple to use and well thought out. As a result of this, assistants, teachers and sometimes parents, can evaluate how well pupils are doing in each lesson. From this, teachers quickly see who has grasped new ideas and who needs additional help. Then, the next lessons are planned to reflect the individual pupils' needs. In addition to the teachers' assessments, pupils also evaluate their own work, and with teachers, they set targets for their further improvement. The school keeps many samples of pupils' work, so that their progress can be seen from term to term.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

Partnership is very strong.

Strengths

- Parents think highly of the school.
- The school works tirelessly to help parents take an active interest in children's learning.
- The school does an excellent job in making parents feel that they have a lot to offer.
- The school provides lots of high quality, readable information for parents.

Area for development

- Reports on children's progress sometimes slip into use of jargon that means little to parents.

44. The last inspection described the school's partnership with parents as very good and effective. It has strengthened, with parents involved more actively in their children's learning than they were in 1998 because of the outstanding impact of the *On Track* project. As a result, parents have a much clearer idea of what children do in school and how they can help with activities at home such as reading and counting. This is because the school has been able to run a range of lively courses such as *Keeping up with Children* so that parents understand how literacy and numeracy are taught, and *Family Numeracy*, where they have the chance to work regularly with their own children. In addition, support from parent group workers and counsellors ensure that parents have the chance to identify what they find difficult about their role and develop their own skills in dealing with problems. All the varied support available through the project helps parents to see how they can take an active part in their children's learning and in school life. It has enabled the great majority of parents to take an active interest in the school.

45. Parents feel very welcomed and valued by the school, which consults them regularly about changes and ways forward. Several help regularly in school and are given training for this. They feel involved because their contributions are valued, including those from parents of children with special educational needs who help to shape individual education plans (IEPs). The *Friends* of the school (FOSP) association is very active in fund-raising and organising social events. Parents know that time is set aside for them on Fridays and that their help is appreciated with practical activities and outings.

They are really pleased with the school's approachability, high expectations, good teaching and leadership, and their children's progress, behaviour, growing maturity and enthusiasm for school. They enjoy being part of a happy community school that is so committed to each child's personal and academic progress. Links with parents in the Foundation Stage are excellent. For example, parents especially enjoy the *Topic Sharing Day* and welcome the home visits before children start school.

46. The school produces regular, easy-to-read information for parents about what is going on and what opportunities are available to them for helping out or developing their skills further. Many leaflets feature children's own drawings or ideas, for example, that on *Helping your child to read*. Others include digital photographs that make presentations livelier and reflect school life very well. The range and quality of information for parents is very good in general, although reports on progress are not always as easy to follow as other writing, because of the use of technical terms or educational jargon such as "phonetically plausible". However, parents generally have a good idea of how their children are doing because of very effective informal discussion, parent consultation evenings, use of certificates and rewards, and the school's speedy contact with parents if anything is wrong.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Strengths

- Leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff are excellent and together with the very good leadership and management by the governors underpins the excellent improvement which has been made since the last inspection.
- The school benefits from having an inspiring team of staff and governors, all of whom share a vision to continue to improve the school.

Areas for development

- Some co-ordinators have not yet been able to watch and evaluate the quality of lessons throughout the school in all of the subjects for which they are responsible.
- The outside play area for the Foundation Stage is uninspiring.

47. The quality of leadership and management of the school is of the highest standard. The leadership of the headteacher and senior staff is excellent. The headteacher has considerable professional knowledge and expertise, with the ability to motivate and encourage all those associated with the school. These attributes have enabled her to build a team of highly effective and dedicated teachers and support staff, united in their efforts to provide an education of high quality for their pupils. This is firmly based on a deep understanding of the ways in which children learn and has a marked impact on the teaching in the school. The school's work is a true reflection of its aims, so that pupils learn very well while at the same time are, 'happy and work with zest.'

48. The quality of the leadership of the school has enabled it to make excellent improvement since the last inspection. This is in spite of the fact that there has been a high turnover of staff in recent years. Standards in all subjects have been maintained or raised, most notably in English, science, art and mathematics. The school's accommodation has been significantly and imaginatively improved to provide extra classrooms. The school has continued to develop as part of the community, helped by its provision of a nursery and ever strengthening links with parents. An important part of this has been the help provided to parents and pupils through the school's participation in the *On Track* initiative, which is managed to an excellent standard by the co-ordinator for special educational needs. This has provided very good support in several areas, including speech and learning, counselling and access to other health professionals.

49. The headteacher receives excellent support from her deputy. A testimony to both her ability and the strength of the school's management systems was that the school was very efficiently run by the deputy for a term while the headteacher was seconded to a large local primary school to help them with their development programme.

50. The strong management structure is supported by the good work carried out by subject co-ordinators. The size of the school means there is a small staff and all teachers have subject responsibilities. They carry these out effectively. Co-ordinators regularly look at teaching plans, pupils'

work, evaluate pupils' attainment and achievement. The checking on the quality of teaching and learning in lessons by coordinators in mathematics and science is limited. However, they monitor many other aspects of work thoroughly. Monitoring of lessons is limited due to the co-ordinators having responsibility for more than one subject, or because they are new to the school.

51. A significant reason for the school's success is the quality of the continuous evaluation of teaching and learning. The headteacher regularly observes lessons, discussing with teachers what was successful and identifying how things could be improved next time. School staff constantly evaluate their own performance, and there is an ethos in the school of wanting to do better. Teachers welcome advice for improvement, seeing it not as criticism but well meant, professional guidance. The school goes beyond the legal requirements to provide for the professional development of its teachers. Their training needs are identified through discussions with senior staff, and appropriate targets set. However, teachers undertake more than this. For example, three teachers are currently engaged in research scholarships on 'best practice' in schools while others are taking part in a pilot programme on assessment.

52. The school provides placements for student teachers and welcomes the fresh ideas and enthusiasm they bring. Teachers from schools in the local area visit in order to see examples of good teaching to help their own professional development. The headteacher and other staff provide very good help and guidance to teachers new to the school, both informally and through the well-established school routines. The school's excellence in developing its staff was recognised when it received the *Investors in People* recognition in June 2002.

53. The quality and extent of the school's evaluation of its own performance means it has a very good understanding of what it does well and where it might improve still further. This is borne out by the quality of the plans it makes for improvement. All members of staff are fully involved in the drawing up of these plans and the reviews of how successful previous ones had been. The school's priorities are clear and are always ultimately linked to the raising of standards.

54. The governing body is providing very good support for the school. Several governors are fairly new to their posts but are making a significant contribution to ensure it carries out its statutory duties appropriately. They have formed a variety of committees in order to do this, review their own performance and draw up their own plans to improve. All governors have received good support and training from the local authority and so understand what is required of them and how to fulfil their roles. The school is fortunate that its governors bring with them a range of professional expertise, which they put to good use to help the school. These include a librarian, a recently retired headteacher and school inspector, an accountant and a director of the *On Track* initiative.

55. Governors have a very good understanding of the strengths of the school and the ways in which it will develop further. This is because of their close involvement with the school. Several governors work regularly in school, for example in organising the library or working directly with pupils. They visit the school informally and as part of the organised visiting programme in which governors focus on a particular aspect of teaching or learning. Governors have drawn up written guidelines for themselves on how these visits should be conducted and are always welcomed into school by teachers and pupils. The school's plans for improvement are scrutinised and added to by governors, who play a significant part in the identification of priorities, for example with advice about how to improve the quality of the school's premises and accommodation. They also consider what difference any provision has made to pupils' learning.

56. The school manages its finances very effectively. The plans for improvement are underpinned by appropriate financial planning, and prudent spending has enabled it to provide enhanced resources and accommodation. The school's budget is very well managed and the different grants awarded to

the school used excellently. These include the money provided for the *On Track* scheme as well as that for special educational needs. The latter being added to substantially by the school to provide the current high levels of support. Careful budgeting also means that the school will be able to continue to provide the present levels of staffing this year and continue much of the *On Track* initiative when the current funding ceases. Governors are kept fully informed about expenditure through regular meetings of the finance committee and reports given by the headteacher. The day-to-day financial transactions are well managed and school systems ensure due propriety is maintained. The school invariably attempts to obtain *best value* when making routine purchases with larger expenditure always preceded by the receipt of different tenders. The school makes good use of technology to support the management of the school. All finances are computerised, including the ordering and payment of goods and the production of financial reports. Staff use the computer well to produce the many awards given to pupils, school brochures and advertisements, plans, policies and guidelines.

57. There is a very good match of teacher skills and expertise to the demands of the curriculum. Teachers are well supported by a good number of assistants, some of whom have professional qualifications. Although there is one class of 27 pupils, other classes have low numbers. The quality of school staff is complemented by those provided by the *On Track* initiative. A range of expert assistance is provided to parents, teachers and pupils in a variety of health-related areas.

58. The school's accommodation is good because of the creative use of the limited space afforded by the size of the buildings. Classes and rooms have been built into the roof space and enhanced facilities for children in the Foundation Stage. The library has been imaginatively designed with the attractive displays all round the school providing a stimulating environment. The school hall is small and limits the extent to which it can be used for lessons, especially physical education. The school also recognises the need to develop the outside play area for children in the Foundation Stage and is on the way to making this area as attractive as the inside learning environment.

59. The school's resources are very good overall and well chosen to reflect the emphasis on the ways in which children learn. For example, they include a good selection of objects from bygone times, mathematical games and a very good quantity and range of books.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

There are no key issues.

60. To help the school build on the very good provision already evident, the school may wish to include the following minor issues in the school's improvement plan to help them to achieve overall excellence.

1. Create more opportunities for teachers to watch and evaluate science and mathematics lessons, so that subject co-ordinators can further develop their roles.
2. Make the development of skills more explicit in the overall curriculum planning document.
3. Explore ways of continuing to employ a specialist support assistant to work with children who have English as an additional language.
4. Develop the outside learning area for the Foundation Stage, so that it can be used better in variable weather conditions and by decorating it, so that it is as visually attractive as their inside learning environment.
5. Explore ways of bringing attainment in DT and PE from the current average standard to match the high standards found in all other subjects.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	27
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	10	9	6	0	0	0
Percentage	7	37	34	22	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 just over 3.5 percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y1 – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	25	93
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Not applicable	14

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y1 – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6	18

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	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	22	14	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	19	21
	Girls	13	14	13
	Total	33	33	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (88)	92 (88)	94 (96)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	21	22
	Girls	14	12	14
	Total	34	33	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (88)	92 (92)	100 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

It is important to note that each pupil equals just under 3%. A much higher percentage of pupils in 2002 were boys.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
140	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0

The table 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)	6.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	136

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Total number of education support staff FTE	1.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	40

Financial information

Financial year	2002/2003
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	£
Total income	395664
Total expenditure	276225
Expenditure per pupil	271000
Balance brought forward from previous year	101967
Balance carried forward to next year	119438

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	146
Number of questionnaires returned	61
	42% response

Percentage of responses in each category

These may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	28	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	36	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	38	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	49	7	0	2
The teaching is good.	72	25	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	43	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	25	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	34	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	59	36	3	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	66	33	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	33	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	46	10	2	10

Other issues raised by parents

Parents are very happy with the school, but noted that their children's annual reports sometimes contained words and phrases, which are difficult to understand.

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

61. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and provides a superb basis for further learning. Basic skills are taught to a very high standard; relationships are excellent and there is a calm and inviting feeling in the classes, which helps the children to feel secure. These factors help the children to flourish. Furthermore, the *On Track* support programme is highly successful in working with parents and children from a very early age. This helps the children to develop positive attitudes towards themselves and success in their learning from the very beginning of their education. Links with parents are excellent.

62. A few children attend local playgroups before joining the Nursery at the age of three. The staff at St Peter's work very hard to develop excellent links with these local pre-schools and by meeting parents and children in their own homes. As a result of this, the children are sensitively helped to make the transition from home to school. When starting school, the knowledge and skills that these young children have is often well below average. Further details about this can be found below and in the earlier sections of this report.

63. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall in the Foundation Stage. Leadership and management are very good. Children benefit from good opportunities in the Nursery and very good and sometimes excellent opportunities when they move into the Reception class. Thus, by the time that children finish in the Foundation Stage, they have made very good progress and achieve very well for their ability. Further information can be found elsewhere in this report.

Personal, social and emotional development

64. The provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is very good. Pupils make very good progress and achieve well due to high quality teaching and learning. The children settle into school quickly because of the well established routines and they are happy. Staff make learning fun. There is lots of laughter in the class, which gives children the confidence to take risks and learn how to make relationships with others. Behaviour is good and the children get along together very well, sharing, taking turns and working co-operatively. Moreover, they are encouraged to take charge of their own learning, as the teacher and assistants help and encourage the children to choose activities once the more formal learning activities are finished. The children are positively encouraged to show their initiative, as seen when three children in the Nursery made a castle of brick for the teddy bears and, as a consequence of this, they make progress in learning how to play with others rather than just playing next to other children.

Communication, language and literacy

65. The provision and teaching in this area of learning is very good. In the Nursery, children are helped to learn and understand many new words, such as when they cooked beans on toast and began to describe the soft texture of bread, with the crunchy crisp feeling of toast. Children soon learn how to enjoy books and also begin to make marks on paper, as they begin to try writing for themselves. An example of high quality practice was evident in the use of puppets to help the children to learn about the sequence of a story. Added to this, texts are often in two languages, which helps children for whom English is an additional language to feel included in the class. In the Reception class, the teachers have modified the National Literacy Strategy well. The emphasis on developing speaking continues, with all adults working hard to encourage the children to speak in sentences. Especially successful is the small group work. For example, the children have to work in pairs and tell each other's news to the group. High quality questioning by the staff makes the children think. The superb

work on reading results in average standards by the end of the Reception year. This is because the children read very regularly to an adult and within groups. This occurs almost daily. Most importantly, as seen in an excellent lesson, the teacher helps the children to express themselves so that they understand what they are reading by talking about the clues in the pictures and from initial letters. They spend time making predictions about what might happen in such books as *The Dragon*. Here, the teacher spent five minutes just on the cover picture. As a result of persistent questioning, by the teacher, the children improved their observations and language from just saying, “Walking” to “Four children running” then, “It’s about four children running in the park to find a dragon”. More able children also receive challenges, as evident in their reading of *The Gingerbread Man* where the teacher demonstrated how commas and exclamation marks work. This high quality fun demonstration helped the children to read with better expression. Furthermore, it resulted in them explaining that an exclamation mark is an “excited full stop”. At every possible opportunity the children are encouraged to remember and learn sounds and letter names. Although they write frequently, most of the children are still at the stage of beginning to use letter shapes as a means of recording their ideas. Few use their phonic knowledge to write simple words, although the more able do this with confidence, making sentences and writing interesting stories. Links with homework are strong, showing parents’ positive encouragement of their children. Teaching places strong emphasis on helping the children to try for themselves and persevere. Handwriting is developing very well, showing careful attention to accurate letter formation.

Mathematical development

66. The quality of teaching and learning is good. When starting school, the children have little knowledge of counting, numbers, shapes and measurement. Because of the many informal opportunities to do practical activities, the children begin to show curiosity about number and count in their play. They begin to recognise groups of objects, counting them as, *one, two three* and can sort shapes and objects into different categories. In the Reception class, the National Numeracy Strategy is suitably modified to ensure that the children do plenty of practical activities and work on simple mental calculations, using addition and subtraction to 20. They have a good knowledge of shapes, showing the very good learning opportunities, as evident in a very good lesson when the children described shapes in a bag using attributes, such as corners and sides, with a more able child confidently recognising a pentagon. Overall, while a significant number of children become confident with mathematical knowledge, the proportion who are working below the Early Learning Goal is higher than average. More able children are confident at counting forwards and backwards, but have fewer opportunities to invent their own ways of recording their mathematical work than they do in writing and reading activities. This is why the provision in mathematics is judged as good rather than as very good, as elsewhere in the Foundation Stage. Nonetheless, the children achieve well and make good progress in their mathematical understanding from their very low starting points.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

67. When starting in the Nursery, the children build on their very limited knowledge of the world around them, so that they attain average standards by the end of the Reception year. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The strong emphasis on asking and answering questions helps pupils to understand new things. For example the teacher asked, “How have the tadpoles changed?” and the children had to go and observe and compare them for themselves, before giving an answer. Learning is rooted in helping the children to develop a sense of wonder, excitement and links with cultural development, as seen when they worked with a parent trying out the delights of different Indian foods. Children make good progress in using computer skills. For example, they accurately use the mouse to draw patterns and pictures and compare and match shapes. By the end of this term, all of the children are likely to be able to select and print their work. Children have access to a good range of construction materials, which they use imaginatively to make models. Children quickly learn about growth, with much planting and growing of seeds, as evident in the work related to a book about

Jasper's Beanstalk. However the immediate outside area has very limited planting and digging space in which the children can investigate insects and creatures in their natural habitat. Nonetheless, they are often taken to the school's *secret garden* to do investigation activities. Although this is good, spontaneous enquiry is limited.

Physical development

68. Children develop physical skills as expected. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, and especially good in helping the children to develop fine hand control skills. By the end of the Reception year, virtually all children use pencils, crayons and scissors with accuracy and are helped to gain better co-ordination. For example, in the Nursery, they learn to balance on low beams and jump from hurdle to hurdle while balancing a beanbag on their head. This progresses further in the Reception class, as the children master a range of interlinking skills of crawling, leaping and balancing on a narrow beam, as seen when they went on an imaginary picnic. Working together, the children had to latch the trailer to the trike, ride carefully on the marked line to the edge of the pretend river and then negotiate a series of hoops, beams and tunnels before reaching the secret garden.

Creative development

69. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. There are good opportunities for the children to play and make decisions about the creative activities they will do. For example, they enjoy dressing up. When using the role-play area the teacher and assistants intervene to develop the children's language skills, imagination and span of concentration. This is good practice. They enjoy imaginative play, as seen when three children played together feeding the babies before school, while others acted out being artists. The children experience a wide range of interesting activities in which they use their senses. For example they were totally absorbed in clay pot making and were captivated by dancing to Indian music in a very good dance session, where they not only developed their imaginations, but worked on contrasting high and low dance movements to make their own little performance. Musical work is of a good standard. Children learn many songs and delight in playing the instruments. Opportunities for spiritual and cultural development are very well established. For example, the high quality teaching of painting and drawing skills helps the children to become absorbed in their work and proud of the results. Observational skills are very well developed, as evident in the way in which the Nursery children painted daffodils by mixing and matching their own colours of yellow and green. This progresses further in the Reception class as evident in their knowledge about Mondrian's *Boogie Nights* and in their use of a combination of materials, paint and computer technology to create their own line pictures in the same style.

ENGLISH

70. Standards in all aspects of English are currently above average by Year 2. Standards in reading have been consistently higher than average in national tests since 1998. Further good progress is evident, as the findings of this inspection show standards that are now well above average. The school has worked successfully to raise standards in writing, as they are now above average, which shows good improvement on the 2002 test results. Overall, boys' and girls' results are broadly similar, but boys at St Peter's are doing better than boys nationally. This reflects the school's commitment and success in working to raise standards. The school has been especially effective in widening the provision for more able pupils, particularly by providing a writers' club. Due to the very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, they often attain average results.

71. A significant proportion of pupils start Year 1 with below average speaking and listening skills. Very good teaching and learning opportunities means that by the time they leave the school standards have risen to above average. This represents very good overall achievement. Pupils learning to speak English as an additional language make at least good progress but, currently, the school does not have a specialist support teacher to further improve their rate of progress. Overall, most pupils speak clearly

and thoughtfully in a range of situations. A good example of this was observed in a Year 1 art lesson when, after an introduction which emphasised new vocabulary, pupils were asked to explain why they had chosen to draw a picture the way they had. They spoke confidently of spirals, grappled with anemones, and gave clear accounts of their choices. Those in a similar Year 2 lesson gave competent explanations of the method used to make a screen print. Pupils listen very well to each other and respect each other's views.

72. The quality of teaching and learning in reading is very good in Years 1 and 2; it builds on the very good progress made by children in the Reception class. Pupils are systematically taught the sounds of letters and ways of building words and have access to a wide range of high quality books. Most sound out simple words accurately and know that the meaning of a sentence can help them to identify individual words in it. An able pupil, for example, successfully read a difficult version of the *Owl and the Pussycat* by using a combination of sounding out new words, recognising familiar ones and using the context of the sentence to work out others. Pupils benefit from many opportunities to hear adults read and this helps them develop understanding and their expression when reading aloud. Animated reading of a 'big' book by the teacher in a Year 2 lesson, for example, encouraged pupils to join in and read with good expression, while the different emphasis placed on certain words and speech provided helpful clues so that pupils fully understood the meaning of the story. Pupils are keen to read to adults and confidently select books from the library, using the colour coded and Dewey system of classification.

73. Since the last inspection, emphasis has been placed on the teaching of writing. As a result, the majority of pupils are likely to achieve at least average standards by the end of Year 2, with a significant proportion being above average. Handwriting is systematically taught and so most pupils write legibly and clearly. They write carefully and pay attention to using correct spellings that are systematically taught in lessons and through homework. An example of this was observed in a Year 1 lesson when a girl using the computer to write the names of different objects was given help to spell 'skirt', and then immediately applied this knowledge to spell 'shirt' without any help. Many opportunities to write are provided and pupils are developing a range of skills for making their work interesting. They learn about the use of connectives and good examples of their use were seen in pupils' writing about what they did during the holidays. Pupils write for a variety of purposes in English and other lessons. For example, when writing explanations of what they have done in science experiments. Older pupils of higher ability write from the point of view of another person in history to describe how a servant in a Victorian household would have felt, and all pupils write an evaluation of their term's work explaining what they think they have done well and how they think it could be improved. Although pupils with higher ability are provided with additional opportunities for extended writing, they are only at the early stages of developing re-drafting and editing techniques.

74. The quality of teaching and learning in English is very good. Teachers prepare detailed lessons, have very good subject knowledge and employ a variety of ways to make the work interesting and secure pupils' attention. They have a very good understanding of how pupils learn. An example of this was observed in a Year 1 literacy lesson when the teacher used a recorded 'rap' verse that pupils joined in to help them to understand how to emphasise rhyming words. Having secured their interest it was held through a teaching session on rhyming letter sounds because the pace of the lesson was brisk and the teacher provided extra challenges for the more able pupils. Short but regular breaks are taken so that pupils are physically active and alert and focused on learning. T

75. Teachers and teaching assistants know the special educational needs of particular pupils and ensure they are fully included in lessons, such as when the teaching assistant provides additional, but discrete, support. Teachers are alert to opportunities for developing English in other subjects. A strong feature of teaching is the opportunity for pupils to reflect on their learning. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils

were given time to think carefully before responding to the question, “Which parts of the lesson did you find easiest?” As a result, their responses showed a relatively mature insight.

76. Appropriate use is made of information and communication technology to help pupils develop spelling and writing skills and to use the Internet for researching information. Wide ranging learning opportunities, together with teachers’ skills make a very good contribution to pupils’ social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

77. A significant factor in why pupils make very good progress is the use and range of assessment procedures, which are very good. Every pupil's progress is carefully monitored. Regular test results are complemented by samples of pupils' work, which show the development of their skills and knowledge, and by assessments of particular pupils carried out by teaching assistants during lessons. As a result, pupils with particular difficulties and those with higher ability are identified quickly and appropriate work or additional support is provided. Teachers analyse the results of the national tests and establish priorities for their work. The relative weakness in spelling identified in last year's tests, for example, has been effectively improved this year. Valuable work is being done to help pupils evaluate their own learning.

78. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Teachers' plans are regularly checked work is closely analysed and all teachers helped to understand how well pupils are performing in comparison with national expectations and, more importantly, how lessons need to be planned to help pupils improve. The National Literacy Strategy, and lesson observations carried out by the co-ordinator with the headteacher and a governor, have had a significant impact on raising standards. Overall improvement in the subject since the last inspection has been very good.

MATHEMATICS

79. Standards attained by the current Year 2 pupils are above average, showing improvement especially in the last year when pupils' attainment was average when compared with that of seven-year-olds in the national tests in 2002. This was an improvement on the results of the previous year and, taken with the results over the previous 5 years, generally reflects the national trend for improving standards and very good achievement for the ability of the pupils.

80. Pupils leave the Reception class, with a slightly higher than average proportion working just below an average standard. Pupils with special educational needs also make very good progress with most achieving results at the expected national levels. These standards are higher than those found in the previous inspection and reflect the improvements the school has made in its teaching of the subject. More able pupils are well supported, showing a considerable improvement in the proportion working at a higher level in their work.

81. Pupils have good skills in solving problems mentally. This is because teachers provide many opportunities for them to practise and help them develop a variety of ways of tackling these problems. These strategies include using their knowledge of number bonds to add and subtract numbers mentally. For example knowing that 7 and 3 make 10 and that 7 and 4 would be one more. More able pupils extend this to larger numbers, with many adding and subtracting numbers in this way to 100. They have a good knowledge of different *tables* and *doubles* and *halves* and again use this knowledge to solve problems. For example Pupils in Year 2 said that 'double 6 was 12, so 6 and 5 would be one less.' Pupils' number skills are generally good so that, for example, they write and recognise large numbers and can find halves and quarters of numbers including 'odds'. Their knowledge of shapes and measures is good. For example, they identify right angles in their classrooms and know the names and attributes of many two and three-dimensional shapes.

82. The standard of teaching and learning is good and is responsible for the good achievements pupils are making. Teachers' development of pupils' speaking and listening skills underpins their main approach to the teaching of mathematics. This is through investigations and the using of mathematics to solve problems. Pupils develop their understanding and use of number, measuring, calculating and so on through this approach. They learn to select the correct operations to solve problems, to estimate and adopt suitable strategies. For example, pupils in Year 2 estimated how many times they could write their names in a minute and then used a timer to find out how accurate they had been. Teachers plan very carefully and provide stimulating activities that motivate pupils well. Teachers make extensive use

of games to develop number skills. These are very popular and provide pupils with good opportunities to consolidate what they have learned while having fun!

83. Through the provision of *Maths Week* activities at school, parents have been given a good insight into the ways in which children learn, what they are doing at school and how this can be extended at home. Homework forms an important part of the teaching but again this consists of games and 'real' situations to develop understanding. Many parents have expressed their appreciation of the activities put on in the *maths week* and how they now see how mathematics can be fun.

84. Teachers listen to pupils and assess their understanding of mathematics very well. From this, they intervene with questions and further practical ways to deepen their thinking. Pupils are asked to explain how they arrived at answers and others are asked to think of other ways this might have been done. This sharing of strategies helps all pupils learn and gives teachers the opportunities to pose further questions. Teachers make very accurate assessments of pupils' progress. These are shared with pupils so they know how well they are doing and to some extent, what they need to do to improve still further. These assessments are used well to set appropriate work for different abilities.

85. Very good support is provided by teaching assistants. Teachers involve assistants well in lesson planning and in gaining assessment information. For example at the end of one lesson in Year 1 the teacher asked the assistant to share the successes her group had in their practical activities. This enabled pupils to explain how they had overcome difficulties and provided a good assessment of individual pupils for the teacher.

86. The quality of leadership and management is very good, reflecting the good improvements made since the last inspection in raising standards. Staff have received training on assessment. The subject co-ordinator has made good use of the expertise provided by an external adviser, for example in introducing more formal tests in Year 1. This has enabled her to identify areas pupils are not so confident in and plan ways to address these. Parents are seen as integral in the learning of mathematical concepts and skills and they have been helped to do this through her provision of activities and advice. Resources are good and used well to foster pupils' enjoyment in mathematics lessons. In addition, the school has added considerably to its fiction and reference books concerning mathematics. The action plans drawn up by the co-ordinator have proved successful in identifying priorities and taking appropriate action; for example, in focussing on the development of skills for the more able pupils. The headteacher watches and evaluates many lessons, but this aspect of monitoring, by the co-ordinator, is limited.

SCIENCE

87. Standards are well above average by Year 2. All of the pupils are working at least at Level 2, with a significant proportion understanding Level 3 work. This represents very good progress and achievement overall in Years 1 and 2.

88. At the time of the last inspection, standards were found to be above average. Since then, further good improvement has been made in pupils' attainment, achievement, assessment procedures and resources. Links between literacy, numeracy and other subjects are now very well established, showing further improvement in the curriculum.

89. The school treats every pupil as an individual. Those with special educational needs make very good progress for their ability; as a result of this, they reach average standards. The provision for gifted pupils is well thought out and allows them to widen their opportunities for independent investigation activities. For example, reference books and the computer are used to research creatures of their own choice, such as leeches and bees.

90. Only a few pupils speak English as an additional language in Years 1 and 2. The provision for them is good; this is largely because all of the activities require hands on observations and investigations. Moreover, the teachers in this school really understand how pupils learn. As a consequence of this, considerable emphasis is placed on developing all pupils' speaking skills, especially their use of specific scientific vocabulary. Teachers ask many thought provoking questions, which help pupils to understand what they are learning. A particular strength of teaching is the way in which teachers give the pupils plenty of time to think about answers before they share their ideas with others. Teachers sensitively interject to help the pupils to use more complex explanations. For example, when discussing habitats in Year 2, the teacher asked "I wonder why creatures like the dark?" and pupils thought of many different ideas, which the teacher combined into one longer answer. Links with writing are very good, as pupils watch how the teacher makes notes, as evident in their bread and decay experiments.

91. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Pupils are keen to learn and show very positive attitudes. Teachers place very good emphasis on pupils thinking and planning investigations for themselves, as seen when Year 1 had to find out how the different surfaces of ramps affected the speed of movement of vehicles, which they had designed and made themselves. By the end of the lesson, pupils confidently explained why the sandpaper surface was slower than the plastic and they had measured, recorded and compared the distance travelled by each vehicle. Pupils are well managed and the relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Teachers make very effective use of assessment information to plan pupils' work, so that they can achieve their best. For example, samples of work on electricity show how teachers marked and assessed the circuits and then provided additional challenges to add more bulbs, while considering the effect of this on the light produced when only one battery is used. In lessons, teachers work in a way that not only praises pupils' efforts, but also encourages them to overcome difficulties and make predictions. Overall, teachers have very good subject knowledge.

92. Teachers work hard to make learning engaging and meaningful. Considerable thought has been given to the organisation of the curriculum. Particular strengths include: the way in which science is linked into topic projects. Skills are effectively developed from Year 1 to Year 2. Pupils enjoy an exciting range of activities, such as *Science Day*. Visits are carefully planned to widen learning opportunities. For example, when visiting Booth Museum, they found out about skeletons and carefully drew and labelled different bones, with the most able including details about the torso. As a result of this, pupils compare the similarities and differences between humans and animals at a higher than average level for their age. Work on healthy living is especially well planned, showing excellent links with the community. A nurse and paramedic help with this work.

93. Links with ICT are strong. Pupils collect data about taste and produce numerous graphs. Very good use is made of the digital camera and Internet to research such things as parts of plants and magnetism. Links with other subjects, such as design and technology and art are very good, as evident in their work about material, when they designed and made a suitable waterproof coat for teddy and in their detailed observational drawings of seeds.

94. Links with parents are excellent; they help in lessons and are regularly invited in to find out about how their children learn science. This helps to develop pupils' self esteem. Overall, science makes a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to enjoy the wonders of nature and the excitement of finding things out. During the inspection, pupils delighted in the scent of lavender when exploring the habitats of woodlice, ants and spiders. Moreover, they were amazed, shouting "Wow", when hundreds of insects were seen when they lifted a huge stone in the secret garden.

95. The quality of leadership and management of science is very good showing a strong understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. As yet, there has been limited opportunity for the co-ordinator to observe teaching. However, the school places considerable emphasis on checking teachers' planning and by looking at the work produced by pupils and tracking their progress. The school has a very good range of resources, which are very well organised. Particular strengths include the recent increase in science books, both for information and within stories. This has been an excellent use of money because it helps pupils with their reading and literacy skills. There has been good improvement since 1998.

ART AND DESIGN

96. By the end of Year 2 standards of work are well above average and pupils' achievement is very good. This is due to the quality of teaching and pupils' interest in learning. Work seen shows that pupils are helped to develop the skill of drawing from first hand observation, which they then use to good effect in painting, printing and model making. Pupils make very good progress from the firm foundation provided in the Nursery and Reception class. By Year 1, pupils draw pictures that include attempts to show the surface texture of Victorian clothes and by Year 2, add shading to represent the curved surface of whalebone. Painting skills are developed through simple colour mixing of powder paint to produce different shades and by reproducing different skin tones, so that portraits painted of friends show attempts to represent differing skin colours. Extensive use is made of the work of established artists to stimulate pupils' imagination so that attractive pictures are painted, for example, in the style of Matisse. From using large cardboard boxes and paint to make simple prints, pupils progress to using string, and embossed into polystyrene to print seashell patterns. Then, in Year 2, they create two colour screen prints of fish and explaining how this is done.

97. A particular feature of pupils' work is the use of textiles. In addition to sewing activities many opportunities are provided to print and paint on textiles, which culminate in the oldest pupils making large, hanging silk paintings of underwater scenes. A criticism made in the last inspection was the lack of opportunities for three dimensional work. This has been addressed and pupils now work with paper collage; make cardboard models, and use materials such as clay.

98. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers have good knowledge of the techniques pupils need to know and they teach these well. A range of quality materials is available for pupils to use and many opportunities are provided for them to base their work on first hand observation. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, the teacher taught pupils how to use charcoal pencils and oil pastels to draw a selection of seashore creatures. By demonstrating different ways of using the pencils and pastels, and by providing examples of adults' work, she helped pupils use the materials selectively so that they produced successful drawings, some of which were of a particularly high standard. Those with a special talent in the subject were provided with a task that further developed their skills by encouraging them to show detail of the surface of a shell as well as its colour. Pupils with special educational needs are equally well involved and also attain high standards. Information and communication technology is well used to support pupils' learning. Pupils begin by creating simple patterns and then progress to drawing pictures and eventually use these to illustrate such things as Christmas cards.

99. A significant feature of teaching is the planned opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own and other' work. In a Year 2 lesson pupils made thoughtful contributions to discussion and there was a noticeable feeling of respect for each other's effort and a genuine attempt to support each other in the suggestions for improvement. This feature of the lessons seen, the way in which teachers use examples of art from other cultures and the effort made by staff in celebrating and displaying their work, make an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural education.

100. The quality of leadership and management of the subject is excellent. Teachers receive clear guidance for teaching skills and have a wide range of stimulating examples of previous work to draw upon. Teachers' plans are checked regularly and the quality of pupils' work assessed and commented upon. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

101. It was not possible to observe any lessons during the inspection. Discussion with teachers, evidence from finished work and teachers' planning and records show that standards achieved by the end of Year 2 are broadly average. Pupils' rate of achievement is satisfactory.

102. No overall judgement is made about the quality of teaching and learning, as no lessons were observed. However, from the other available evidence learning progresses from the Reception class, where children have benefited from planned experiences using toys, textiles, and construction equipment to make simple models such as beds for The Three Bears. They make choices of bread and ingredients for sandwiches and sew textiles to make simple hand puppets. In Year 1, pupils draw simple designs for moving toys with axles and wheels, explaining why they have chosen the materials, and test these as part of a science lesson. When making Chinese dragons pupils investigate different joining techniques before deciding on split pins which will allow movement. Earlier work with textiles is developed through three-dimensional padded fruits in connection with work on healthy eating, demonstrating increased competence in sewing. Pupils think about different joining techniques before selecting the most effective one for constructing Easter baskets. By Year 2, pupils design and make cross-sections of buildings from cardboard boxes, demonstrating increasing competence and understanding of the different methods of joining materials. They can focus on tasks that develop their range of skills and knowledge by making a working Jack-in-the-Box with folded paper as a spring and making boats from cardboard that can be used in floating experiments.

103. In addition to the emphasis on practical activities and linking these with other subjects, teaching encourages pupils to co-operate and enjoy the challenge of working together to design and make larger constructions. A particular opportunity was provided for this through an extra-curricular activity to make a large three-dimensional figure from withies and paper to carry in a Brighton Festival parade. Planning ensures that pupils are taught to think carefully about designing their work and to justify the choice of materials used. This shows further progress since the last inspection, when the designing aspect of the subject was weaker than the making element. Nonetheless, there is insufficient emphasis on pupils evaluating how well they have done and suggesting improvements. Little evidence was seen of the use of information communication technology in the subject.

104. Leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory. The school policy has been recently reviewed and staff have met to consider more effective use of resources. The co-ordinator checks teachers' lesson plans and ensures that the necessary resources are appropriate and easily accessible. Arrangements are in place for teachers to assess pupils' work and a folder of examples is kept for this purpose although it does not, as yet, provide teachers with guidance on how to compare pupils' work with national standards. The subject makes an effective contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY

105. There was too little evidence upon which to make a judgement about the standards pupils are reaching by the age of seven. The majority of teaching is done through speaking and listening so that there is relatively little recording of work. No lessons were observed during the inspection and it is not possible to judge the standard of teaching.

106. The school uses the personal experiences of younger pupils well to develop geographical skills. These include discussing their journeys to school, where they have been on holiday and some use of maps and globes. These enable pupils to make simple plans, of their journey to Preston Manor and the Toy Museum, for example. Their first hand experience of the weather helps them compile simple charts showing this over a period of time and expressing their likes and dislikes of different weather forms. Of great significance are the many journeys undertaken by Barnaby Bear both to pupils' homes and his wider travels in this country and abroad. These, and the photographic evidence of his exploits, inspire a lot of interest and discussion. Pupils, and in one case, grandparents, have kept diaries chronicling his adventures. This source provides teachers with 'real' situations to help pupils understand where these places are, what clothing might be needed, how he might get there and how those places compare with their own environment. Whilst there is evidence pupils have considered these aspects of geography it is not clear how far their understanding of how places change and of geographical terminology has developed.

107. The coordinator, assisted by the headteacher, is enthusiastic and has a good understanding of the ways in which geographical understanding might be increased, for example by using stories in literacy lessons. She manages the subject appropriately making plans, which should develop the subject satisfactorily. As with the teaching of history, the planning tends to outline what pupils will do rather than exactly what they will learn and, the skills being practised are not clearly stated in the planning.

HISTORY

108. By the age of seven, pupils in Year 2 attain higher than average standards, showing good achievement. This maintains the standards seen in 1998.

109. In the younger classes, pupils have an appropriate understanding of the passing of time and are beginning to sequence events successfully. They order events in their lives and gradually extend this as they move through the school. In the older classes pupils have a greater appreciation of chronology. This is because they have had good, first hand experiences of handling artefacts from times past, have talked with visitors recalling their experiences and have used other sources of evidence. These have helped them appreciate how things change over time so that they can compare their lives to those of people in the past. For example pupils compare toys from those of Edwardian and Victorian times and identify the essential differences. They understand some of the reasons why people's lives were different and how they behaved. This is well illustrated by the experiences of pupils visiting Preston Manor who were able not only to dress as Victorians but actually use some of the appliances and tools of the times. These included using a mangle, irons, washing dollies and clothes brushes. These experiences also provided pupils with good writing opportunities and they showed their understanding by telling, for example, what it must have been like to have been a servant in Victorian times.

110. The standard of teaching overall is good because of the progress pupils make and the levels of attainment they reach. History is taught as part of the topics pupils study overall with the emphasis very much on practical investigations and, where possible, first hand experiences. This approach develops pupils' skills in historical research rather than say, the learning of 'facts'. In one lesson, pupils in Year 1 were asked to compare photographs of Brighton at the turn of the Nineteenth Century with one taken more recently. Their teacher drew their attention to peoples' clothing and the shops and asked pupils to compare them. Later she produced objects from times past and again asked pupils to describe them and compare them with those seen today. Pupils responded to this provision of resources very well and made some perceptive comments. Emphasis is placed on a lot of speaking and listening and the development of thinking skills. The success of this method and on historical investigation was evident when one pupil pointed out that "Just because it is a black and white photo doesn't mean they didn't wear colourful clothes". Teachers make good use of visitors to the school who allow themselves to be interviewed by pupils and so tell of their experiences. The school also uses

its own buildings and history very well. The school has an air raid shelter and a wealth of records and photographs which pupils make good use of. Resources are good.

111. The subject is well led by the subject co-ordinator with the assistance of the headteacher. Teaching plans are well drawn and form an integral part of the planning that takes place around each topic area. However, as for geography, the skills pupils are expected to develop are not explicit in this planning although assessments do show what pupils have understood.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

112. By the age of seven, pupils in Year 2, reach higher than average standards this maintains the position found at the last inspection but represents good progress, due to the overall improvement in the curriculum. Overall, pupils achieve well for their ability.

113. Pupils collect and communicate information from a variety of sources, because the ways in which their learning is arranged provides them with the opportunities to do so. Pupils use books, question visitors, search CD-ROMS and use the Internet. They are becoming aware of the reasons why one way might be preferable or feasible than another. For example, when it might be appropriate to send a letter or an e-mail. They have had experience of using technology to make things happen, for example by programming a floor and screen 'turtle' or assembling plant parts. Pupils' word processing skills are appropriate and they make good use of different paint programs to communicate their ideas. Pupils gather information from different CD-ROMS as well as the Internet. They have begun to make good use of a microscope connected to the computer and a digital camera to record what they do. Some pupils use an effects program to show how punctuation is added to sentences.

114. The teaching and learning of ICT is good. Pupils make good progress. Skills are demonstrated to the whole class or to smaller groups, using computers based in each class and pupils then practise these skills. Their progress is assessed and logged appropriately. In the younger classes, pupil numbers are low which enables teachers to work individually with pupils. Only one short lesson was observed during the inspection in which pupils practised keyboard skills. Pupils in this lesson explained the function of different keys and took it in turn to use them. Pupils benefited from the provision of a large screen linked to a computer so that all could clearly see the effects of using the space bar and shift keys to add spaces to a piece of prepared text. In other lessons pupils worked at computers using programs associated with the lesson themes often aided by assistants.

115. The leadership of this subject is good. It continues the good work carried out by the previous coordinator. All staff are confident users of technology and have had training beyond that provided at the basic level by the national training programme. The assessment of progress has been improved, enabling teachers to identify more closely what pupils can do and need to do to improve. Resources are adequate, with plans well advanced to increase computers and other resources.

MUSIC

116. Standards by Year 2 are above average. This represents good improvement since 1998, when singing was strong, but composition skills were no more than average. Pupils of all abilities are encouraged to enjoy music. More able pupils enjoy violin lessons and the school encourages pupils to learn the piano. Achievement is good overall.

117. It was only possible to see one music lesson, so no overall judgement is made about the quality of teaching and learning. However, from the recorded music retained and from the singing heard, this would suggest many good features. The planning shows that pupils learn a good range of skills and knowledge and have plenty of opportunities to demonstrate their creative talents. In the assemblies seen, pupils sang tunefully songs such as *Now it's Spring*. During the one lesson observed, the quality of teaching and learning was very good. Here, pupils sang *Beside the Sea-Side* and made their own

accompaniments using different instruments, which resulted in a full orchestral performance at the end of the lesson. The lesson was very good because it was exciting, allowing pupils to think imaginatively. The teacher set very high standards, which helped the pupils to learn about rhythm, keep time and polish their final performance.

118. Pupils listen to a range of music such as Pacabel's Cannon. On several occasions, pupils spontaneously slipped into singing an African tribal song. Clearly music plays a very significant part in pupils' spiritual and cultural development. This is reflected not only in how pupils enjoy different music, but also in how the curriculum is organised. Since 1998, the school has purchased many instruments from all over the world and most classes have tables set out, so that pupils can experiment with sounds and make up their own compositions. The staff have been trained in how to develop the compositional aspect of children's learning, with the staff improvising African harmony singing. There has been development in pupils using ICT for composing and listening. Pupils are now using recording as a means of assessing and improving their work. Pupils' learning is enriched by visitors. For example, they enjoyed a visit by an African drummer. Pupils regularly put on shows, such as when every child played the mouth organ in the style of a train.

119. The quality of leadership and management is very good; the co-ordinator is well qualified and enthusiastic. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement in developing her role and a more coherent approach to the subject. The curriculum is well thought out to support teachers who do not have specialist music knowledge.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

120. Standards, by Year 2 are broadly average. This was the judgement made at the last inspection. Achievement is satisfactory.

121. Pupils are developing competence in throwing and catching balls and co-operate well during these activities. They are learning to play simple competitive games in which they avoid an opponent by dodging or moving into an empty space to receive the ball. They control their throws so that these are generally accurate and avoid each other's faces so that the ball is usually caught by their partner. They respond well to the challenge of lessons, listen carefully to their teachers' instructions and take part enthusiastically in warm up activities such as the *Bean Game*.

122. Teaching was generally good in the lessons seen, but its impact was limited by the accommodation because pupils have restricted space in which to move. Lessons are carefully planned with clear objectives. Pupils have the opportunity to warm up properly, but are not always helped to understand the reasons for warming up and the effect that exercise has on their bodies. Teachers' good class control ensures lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and that the few pupils who have difficulty controlling their own behaviour are fully included without disrupting the learning of others. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour were generally very good in the lessons seen.

123. The school makes optimum use of its available accommodation. The relatively small hall is adequate for small classes, but shelving and additional furniture, including a piano; reduce the safely usable space. A range of appropriate gymnastic apparatus and mats is available, along with a good selection of equipment such as balls, quoits and skipping ropes, and the use of a large parachute encourages co-operative activity. The playground is used creatively, with markings for playtime games and climbing apparatus to supplement the indoor equipment. A nearby park is used in the summer and this provides the venue for the school's athletics activities and Sports Day. The curriculum is planned to cover gymnastics, dance and games, knowledge of health and fitness, and to encourage pupils to evaluate and improve their performance. Specific opportunities created for PE to support learning in literacy and numeracy are a notable feature of the curriculum, such as when pupils are encouraged to move around the hall like pigs to stimulate vocabulary for describing their behaviour. Extra-curricular

activities make a valuable contribution to the curriculum. Pupils have opportunities to play football and take part in dance activities and festivals in Brighton.

124. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed by the co-ordinator who was only recently appointed and has other subject responsibilities. Teachers' lesson plans are regularly checked and this, together with a recent review of the school's policy has identified dance as an area for development, for which staff training has been planned during the coming year. The school is aware that opportunities to use information communication technology to teach the subject are not always fully exploited. PE makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

125. By the end of Year 2, evidence from pupils' work and the one lesson seen show that pupils attain high standards. They cover a wide range of work within topic projects. The school pays careful attention to the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' achievement is good. Links with the community are excellent and there are many opportunities to visit different places of worship. As a result of this, pupils find learning interesting and meaningful.

126. Because only one lesson was seen, an overall judgement about the quality of teaching and learning is not possible. However, from the superb range of photographic evidence, it would suggest that there are many very good features, which help the pupils to think and learn for themselves and to apply plenty of creative effort in their work. From discussions with pupils, they have a growing knowledge of Christian beliefs from Year 1 to Year 2. For example, they know about the main Christian festivals and talk about the signs and symbols of faith, such as the significance of the use of water during baptism and how the Swedish celebrate Easter. They also have a developing understanding about the Hindu, Sikh, Jewish and the Muslim faiths. Moreover, they know about some of the similarities between them. Following their visit to a Sukkoth for Jewish harvest and a Hindu temple, they learnt about the importance of giving to others and then linked this to the Christian celebration of harvest by sharing their gifts within the local community. Their knowledge was further extended as they found out about the rice harvest in Bali. Work is very well planned to encourage pupils to think, while also improving their vocabulary and speaking skills.

127. Overall, teachers have very good subject knowledge and make very strong links between this subject and social education. As a result of this, pupils learn how to respect and understand different cultures within our society and about how to be a good citizen. Religious education gives pupils the opportunity to explore and respond to human experiences and feelings, which has very positive impact on their spiritual development. For example, they talk about their feelings and attitudes to others. Here the very strong links with literacy are evident. In an enthralling reading of Jonah and the Whale, the teacher helped the pupils to search for the meaning in the story. The pupils used their imaginations superbly. As a consequence of giving 'special thinking time', the pupils worked hard to suggest an idea, whatever their ability. Pupils with special educational needs talked about being afraid, cold and hungry, while more able pupils suggested that the story told them that, "We all make mistakes and we can learn to do better."

128. Assemblies help to widen pupils' knowledge and understanding. In the delightful assembly about Heena, the Indian rag doll, the pupils thought about how it feels to have no one to play with, with the headteacher reminding the pupils that the 'Person of the Week' has kind hands and is a good friend to everyone. Overall, the subject helps pupils to develop very positive attitudes.

129. The subject is very well co-ordinated. Effective use of ICT supports children's learning, and an excellent range of books inspires pupils to read and find out more about many different religious themes. The work by a parent and governor in choosing these books is excellent, as they naturally show how Britain is a multi faith society. There has been good improvement since 1998.