

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THORPE GREENWAYS INFANT SCHOOL**

Southend-on-Sea

LEA area: Southend-on-Sea

Unique reference number: 114778

Headteacher: Mrs D Matthews

Reporting inspector: Mrs E Pickford  
23128

Dates of inspection: 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> January 2003

Inspection number: 247487

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Greenways Thorpe Bay Southend-on-Sea Essex
Postcode:	SS1 3BS
Telephone number:	(01702) 464951
Fax number:	(01702) 602161
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Greenway
Date of previous inspection:	January 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23128	Esme Pickford	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Religious education	Characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and achievements Teaching and learning
9588	Tony West	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare and health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
23054	Graham Johnson	Team inspector	Special educational needs Educational inclusion English History Geography Physical education	Leadership and management
17826	June Punnett	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Art and design Music	The quality and range of learning opportunities Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development
2229	Doreen Hansen	Team inspector	English as an additional language	The assessment of pupils' attainment

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Thorpe Greenways Infant School is an above average sized community school, for pupils age four to seven years. It is a popular school situated in Thorpe Bay, on the outskirts of Southend. The school is accommodated on the ground floor of a large building shared with the junior school. The 355 pupils are taught in 12 classes, four in each year group. Children join the Reception classes in the September following their fourth birthday. Most children have previously attended playgroups or nurseries. The first assessments made when pupils join the school show a wide range of ability but attainment tends to be average overall. The pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and live in a mixture of privately owned, rented and housing association property. A fifth of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is average. The percentage of pupils whose mother tongue is not English is higher than in most schools. Ninety seven per cent of pupils are white, several are of dual race and a few are from Chinese and Asian cultures. The percentage of pupils on the register of special educational needs is average. Some of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties, autism, speech and communication difficulties and emotional and behavioural problems. Two per cent of pupils have statements of special educational needs, which is average.

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

Thorpe Greenways Infant School is a very good school and provides children with a very good start to their education. The leadership and management of the school is very good. Pupils enjoy school, have very good attitudes to learning and behaviour is excellent. The quality of teaching is good overall, with a high percentage of lessons being very good or excellent. This enables pupils of all abilities to learn and progress well. Standards overall are above average by the age of seven. Pupils with special educational needs and those speaking English as an additional language achieve well in relation to their attainment when they start school. The school is very effective in promoting strategies to make sure pupils are included in all lessons and have equality of opportunity. It provides very good value for money.

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

- Very good leadership, management and teamwork have resulted in high standards of achievement in English, mathematics and science.
- The very good overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development creates a harmonious school community.
- The school's excellent links with the parents and the local community are of considerable benefit to all pupils.
- Pupils develop a keen enthusiasm for learning as a result of the interesting opportunities planned for them and the good teaching they receive.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent and appropriate in a variety of situations; the teachers and all other adults provide very positive role models.
- The school's commitment to do its best for each pupil and the strong caring support provided for all pupils makes a significant contribution to the good all round progress they make.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and those learning English is very good and enables them to achieve well.

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

- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in subjects other than English.
- Standards of handwriting and presentation.
- Systems for checking teaching quality are not rigorous enough in some subjects.
- Attendance levels are below the national average.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Very good improvement has been made since the school was inspected in January 1998. All the key issues have been tackled effectively. The analysis of data is now very good and is used to set targets for improvement and make adjustments to the curriculum. Very good assessment systems are in place and are used well to plan tasks within lessons which provide challenge for the different ability groups, including the more able pupils. The very good curriculum information and courses provided for parents enables them to provide effective support for their child's learning. Leadership and management are strong, with good delegation. The quantity of very good and excellent teaching and learning has improved considerably. The school is deeply committed to further improvement and is in an excellent position to succeed.

## STANDARDS

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

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

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average   E

In the 2002 national tests, pupils aged seven achieved well above average results in reading and mathematics and above average results in writing when compared to all schools nationally. Compared to schools with a similar intake, standards were well above average in all three of these subjects. Over 40 per cent of the pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in reading and mathematics. Pupils of all abilities achieved well, especially those with special educational needs and those speaking English as an additional language. Girls performed slightly better than boys overall. Targets set for improvement were exceeded. Teacher-assessed results in science were well above average overall when compared nationally, with 35 per cent of pupils achieving the higher Level 3. Standards of work seen in the current Year 2 during inspection were above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in reading were well above average. Standards in handwriting and presentation of work are not high enough. In history, geography, music, design and technology, art and design, information and communication technology and religious education standards are as expected for age. No overall judgement was made about standards in physical education. Standards in swimming and singing are well above those expected at the age of seven. Challenge is regularly provided for more able pupils to move their learning forward. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English are well supported by adults and tasks in lessons are carefully matched to their needs so that they achieve well.

Children in the Reception classes make very good progress from the average standards seen in most areas of learning when they join the school. By the end of the Reception Year most pupils exceed beyond expectations in their personal, social and emotional development and meet the Early Learning Goals (nationally expected standards) in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and their physical and creative development. Children with special educational needs and those with special talents also achieve well.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are very keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Pupils behave extremely well in lessons, in the playground and when moving around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils work and play together harmoniously. Adults and pupils show considerable respect for each other.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory and below the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and promotes consistently good learning. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen, although teaching in some classes is consistently better than others. In the Reception classes there is a strong focus on developing clear routines and widening children's experience to ensure they settle quickly, grow in confidence and become enthusiastic learners. The good assessment systems are used well to plan activities which enable children of all abilities to make very good progress. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is good and builds effectively on the good foundation established in the Reception classes. Particular strengths in all teaching are the detailed planning and high expectations of how all pupils should behave and how much they should achieve. The wide range of subject expertise within the staff is shared well and as a result a high percentage of excellent and very good lessons were seen in English and mathematics. Teachers are very good at involving parents in their children's learning.

The teaching of English is good and enables pupils to develop their skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing from average levels in Reception to above average at the end of Year 2. The school has a well structured and very effective approach to teaching the basic skills of reading and spelling, which results in the well above average standards achieved. The teaching of mathematics is good and makes best use of resources, including computers and programmable robots. Relationships and classroom management are very good and this means that pupils listen well and work purposefully in lessons. Pupils try their hardest, work at a good rate and are able to evaluate their own learning at the end of the lesson. Support staff and students work very effectively alongside teachers and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language work with as much commitment and concentration as others in the class. Teachers thoroughly assess and monitor pupils' progress and use the information well to set targets and plan lessons to meet pupils' needs. Marking is of variable quality and currently a focus for development.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad and balanced, emphasising the requirements for literacy and numeracy, whilst giving pupils good access to other subjects. A satisfactory range of visits and visitors and additional activities enrich the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Provision for statemented pupils is very good and enables them to make very good progress. Pupils on the special needs register have appropriate individual education plans and very good support in class which enables them to achieve well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Pupils are given good support in subjects where they need to develop or extend their vocabulary. In lessons they are given good opportunities to develop oral confidence and make very good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good overall. The school encourages pupils to take responsibility for their actions, work co-operatively, respect the feelings and beliefs of others and develop a sense of community.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has very good systems for monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development. Staff take a keen interest in the welfare of all pupils. Procedures for monitoring child protection and health and safety are good. The monitoring of attendance has resulted in some improvement. Attendance figures do not reflect the effort the school is making to improve. The school has an effective policy which promotes racial equality.

The school provides very good information for parents through newsletters, written reports and parents' evenings. Staff are accessible to parents at the start and end of the school day. Very good information is provided for parents about what is being taught and how they can help. Many parents have developed their understanding of standards expected for age through courses provided by the staff. Parents regularly help in school and are very good at supporting their children's learning at home.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher, deputy and senior management are committed to securing high standards of work and behaviour. Staff are valued and encouraged to develop and share their expertise.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The wide range of experience within the governing body enables it to fulfil its duties effectively. It offers very strong support in shaping the direction of the school and takes a critical interest in standards and achievements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Test results are carefully analysed and targets set for improvement. Expertise and good practice is shared well within the staff. Monitoring is not organised well enough to enable all co-ordinators to fully understand the strengths and weaknesses in their areas.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of the funding it receives to provide pupils with the best possible support in class to enable good progress to be made. The system for allocating funds to subject areas needs to be reviewed. Good use is made of grants for staff training. Governors monitor spending effectively and best value for money is sought on purchases.

The school is well staffed with suitably qualified teachers with a wide range of expertise to teach the Reception classes and the National Curriculum and religious education in Years 1 and 2. Administrative, caretaking and support staff contribute considerably to the smooth running of the school. Resources are generally good and will improve once the new computer suite is fully equipped. The accommodation is satisfactory and all the available space is utilised well. The outdoor play areas are due for development.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children enjoy school.</li> <li>• Teaching and progress are good.</li> <li>• Parents are happy to approach the staff if there are any problems.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Expectations are high.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of additional activities.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with parents' positive comments. They found that the additional activities, including visits, appropriate for the age of the pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children join the Reception classes with a wide range of ability and skills. The range of attainment measured by the first assessments when children join the school shows that children's attainment is broadly average. By the time they leave the Reception classes the majority of the children achieve well and are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals in their personal, social and emotional development and meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals in all other areas. These are communication, language and literacy, mathematical, creative and physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. The overall good teaching in the Reception classes is extremely successful in promoting each child's learning and provides all pupils with a very good start to their schooling and very good progress is made. Children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress with very good support. Children identified as gifted and talented are especially well provided for in teachers' planning; as a result they make very good progress.
2. The results in National Curriculum tests for seven year olds at the end of Year 2 in 2002 show a considerable all round improvement compared to previous years, especially in the percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels in reading, mathematics and science. Standards are well above average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing compared to all schools nationally. When compared to similar schools, in terms of the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Teacher-assessed results in science were well above average and show considerable improvement since the last inspection.
3. Work seen during the inspection found standards in reading to be well above average and standards in writing, mathematics and science to be above average in the current Year 2. Standards of spelling seen were above average and parents make a significant contribution to this by helping their children at home. The maintenance of the high standards achieved in 2002 is the result of good teaching and assessment which enables lessons to be planned to provide challenge and appropriate support for each individual pupil. It reflects the school's particular success in target setting and creating a learning environment that supports and motivates all pupils, boys and girls, those of all abilities and those speaking English as an additional language. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school, so that by the time they leave, most are on the way to attaining the expected levels for their age. Others with profound problems are achieving very well in relation to their earlier attainment. Parents of these children comment that after only a term some pupils are achieving things they had been told by experts were impossible.
4. By the end of Year 2 standards in speaking and listening are above average overall because pupils are questioned well, encouraged to think things through and given good opportunities to express themselves. Pupils are confident to ask questions to clarify their understanding and to put forward a different point of view. Although standards in writing are above average in English lessons, expectations of what the majority of pupils write for themselves in other subjects are not high enough and are sometimes limited by worksheets which make low level demands on pupils' skills. Handwriting is unsatisfactory overall. The majority of pupils have difficulty with pencil control when they join the school in Reception and by the end of Year 2 some pupils are holding pencils incorrectly and not forming letters and numbers properly. This goes unchecked and leads to unsatisfactory standards of handwriting and low standards of presentation in books. Pupils' work on display in classrooms is of a satisfactory standard.
5. Standards of work seen in mathematics are above average both in numeracy and other areas of the mathematics curriculum. Pupils improve their mental agility as a result of daily sessions at the start of lessons. They are developing a wide mathematical vocabulary and use information and

communication technology well to enhance learning and develop understanding. Problem solving is related very well to their everyday experiences and they achieve well.

6. In science, standards of work seen were above average and show improvement since the last inspection. This is the result of the carefully structured curriculum followed in Years 1 and 2 which is taught well and pupils gain good knowledge and understanding and well above average results at the end of Year 2. However, standards in investigative science are average. There are insufficient opportunities for more able pupils to devise their own investigations.
7. Standards seen in information and communication technology (ICT) meet expectations for age and have risen considerably since the last inspection. The scheme of work has been restructured and staff confidence has been developed through training. Although the new computer suite is not yet operational staff make very good use of the classroom resources. Pupils have regular access to the computers that are currently available and pupils of all abilities use them with confidence in most lessons.
8. Expected standards were seen in history, geography, art and design, design and technology and music. No overall judgement was made for physical education because too few lessons were observed during the inspection. Standards in singing and swimming were above those expected for age due to very good teaching by staff with particular expertise. Standards in religious education were as expected by the end of Year 2.
9. The very good analysis and use of data from National Curriculum tests and records of pupils' work has enabled the school to set appropriate but challenging targets to raise standards. Very good assessment systems are now in place and are used effectively to plan work which challenges all the ability groups within the class enabling them to achieve well.
10. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their work, especially in their acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills. Their rate of progress is similar to that made by higher and average attaining pupils. They are well supported by both teachers and ancillary staff. These pupils are offered work providing appropriate challenge; the tasks they are set closely mirror those offered to other pupils so that they feel included in all of the activities of the class. For example, teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs have sufficient opportunity to contribute to whole class discussions, waiting patiently for their responses if they have a speech impediment. Teaching assistants develop close working relationships with the pupils for whom they are responsible and this enhances their progress.
11. Present provision for the 12 pupils for whom English is an additional (or third) language is very good. Pupils reach at least equivalent standards to those of their monolingual peers by the end of Reception and Year 2 and at times they do better than this.

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

12. Since the last inspection, pupils' attitudes to the school have improved markedly and are very good. Good admission procedures to the Reception classes ensure that children quickly settle in their new surroundings, work and play together well and become increasingly independent. Parents and carers confirm that their children want to come to school. They have very positive attitudes to their work, they concentrate well and respond with enthusiasm and a maturity that belies their years. Pupils are interested in all the school's activities and are responsive to and co-operate with their peers and all members of staff. The pupils listen attentively, follow instructions and settle quickly to the tasks given. They are very eager to be involved, to contribute and to learn. The great majority concentrate and work hard, independently and in differing group situations. Since the previous inspection, the pupils' behaviour in lessons during the inspection has improved and is now excellent.
13. In lessons, the pupils listen attentively and are extremely well behaved. In assemblies, whilst in the dining hall and when they move around the school they follow school rules and behave impeccably. This standard is maintained in the playground at break times and at lunchtimes.

There have been no exclusions during the previous year.

14. Relationships in the school are very good. When pupils work in groups, they share their views and opinions well and they value each other's work. In lessons observed during the inspection, pupils worked very well in a variety of different group situations. Pupils are very polite to one another and appreciate one another. One pupil reacted with great empathy and sensitivity to an autistic child. In a mathematics lesson, a pupil with English as an additional language was praised by one of the other pupils for the effort he had made. He went on to suggest to the teacher that the pupil should be given a reward.
15. Pupils are trusted, they are aware of right and wrong and comply with school and class rules. If any disruption does arise, members of staff handle the affair very well and limit any effects. The pupils follow the excellent role models provided by all members of staff, by being polite and courteous and having excellent relationships with everyone. They form very orderly queues, wait their turn and open doors for others. No examples of any oppressive behaviour, bullying, sexism or racism were seen during the inspection and the majority of pupils understand the impact of their behaviour on others.
16. The pupils handle resources such as musical instruments, computer equipment and books very well and there were no instances of damage or graffiti seen during the inspection.
17. The opportunities for them to take initiative and personal responsibility are good. The pupils willingly accept opportunities to help others and assist in preparing for lessons or tidying up afterwards. Pupils are very willing to support one another and some are enthusiastic members of the school council. This provides opportunities for pupils to be involved in the running of the school. Pupils are encouraged to undertake collections for a range of charities. During the inspection, however, few instances were seen when pupils were encouraged to take initiative for their own learning activities.
18. Over the period 2001 to 2002, the school reported an improvement of 0.8 per cent in pupils' attendance on the previous year, taking it up to 93.5 per cent. However, attendance at this infant school appears unsatisfactory when compared with the national average for primary schools of 94.1 percent. Over the same period, unauthorised absence at the school of 0.4 per cent was better than the reported national average of 0.5. The level of absences has affected all year groups in the school and has had a negative effect on the achievement and progress made by a few pupils who have missed the most lessons. Illness, medical treatment and additional family holidays are the most frequently recorded reasons for pupils' authorised absences. Registrations are undertaken well and comply with legal requirements. A small minority of pupils enter school late, but the majority of lessons get off to prompt and effective starts.

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

19. The overall quality of teaching is good. In the 69 lessons or parts of lessons observed, nine per cent of teaching was excellent, 23 per cent was very good, 42 per cent was good and 26 per cent satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Standards of teaching have improved considerably since the last inspection. The good quality of teaching reflects the strong commitment to provide the very best learning opportunities for all pupils, including their spiritual, moral and social and cultural development.
20. The special qualities of the teaching staff are a strength of the school. They are a hard working, committed and conscientious team who support each other well. Expertise is readily shared and teachers are willing to learn from one another and try new approaches and ideas in order to improve pupils' learning. Teachers and classroom support staff work very well together. Staff encourage pupils to become keen learners as a result of their enthusiastic and caring approach. Pupils learn to behave extremely well in a variety of situations and soon develop confidence as a result of teachers' high expectations. All staff are keen to provide the pupils with the best possible enjoyable learning opportunities within a well organised environment. Information and communication technology is used well in most lessons. Staff have gained the confidence and

respect of parents and keep them well informed about their children's progress. They are very good at involving parents in their children's learning.

21. The teaching of the Foundation Stage is good overall with some examples of excellent teaching, although there is some variation between the classes. The adults work closely as a team and their interaction gives a very good model for children's personal development. The adults provide a consistency in approach that results in high expectations of the children's work and behaviour, so they behave very well and work hard to attain high standards. Good planning provides children with a wide range of stimulating and relevant learning activities in all six areas of the curriculum. Assessment is very good and is used well. Staff have a good knowledge of the learning needs of children of this age and activities are well matched to each child's capabilities. Very good strategies are used to develop children's social skills and concentration. Elements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are gradually introduced to prepare pupils for their work in Year 1. Basic skills of reading, writing and spelling are taught very well. Provision for all areas of learning is very good, with the exception of the outdoor play area, which restricts children's physical activities and development.
22. Teaching is good overall in Years 1 and 2, although there are some differences between classes. The good teaching is evident in all subjects and shows considerable improvement since the last inspection, especially in information and communication technology which is taught well and used confidently by all teachers in their lessons. Teachers have good all round subject knowledge and no variation was seen in the quality of teaching between the subjects and the year groups. Excellent teaching was seen in three English lessons, a mathematics lesson and a science lesson. The very good and excellent lessons are very motivating; it is evident what the teacher wants the pupils to learn and is communicated clearly. Expectations of the effort the pupils make and the pace at which they work are very high. Teachers use questions and prompts skilfully ensuring that pupils of all capabilities are fully involved in class discussion by phrasing questions in different ways. Thus lower-attaining pupils gain confidence from being able to contribute successfully and average and higher attaining pupils are challenged to think and explain their reasoning, using subject vocabulary. Pupils sometimes ask questions which are followed up later if an answer cannot be found within the class resources. This learning partnership is well established in some classes. Classroom assistants are well briefed, so the quality of their guidance is good. They are used effectively in these classes to monitor and record oral responses. Staff supporting pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language quietly question and focus the attention of the pupils sitting close by in whole class discussion, assessing learning and encouraging them to contribute. Lessons are well structured so that time is efficiently used. Teachers and classroom assistants are watchful of the learning in groups who are not the focus of adult support and intervene appropriately. At the end of the lesson pupils report back confidently and evaluate their learning. They are very good at explaining what they have found difficult. In one class the assistant was effectively used in this session to help pupils correct mistakes and make improvements to their work, when the teacher found this appropriate.
23. Teachers' subject expertise is used well to devise relevant schemes of work. Year groups plan together to ensure that pupils' learning builds on what has been learnt previously. Teachers then plan their own lessons to the agreed objectives, adapting lessons to meet the needs of particular pupils in their class and their individual teaching style. This is very effective and encourages teachers to be innovative and try different approaches; it also provides variety for the pupils.
24. The teaching of basic literacy skills is good and a strength of the school. Teachers are implementing the National Literacy Strategy successfully by providing a good range of activities that are well matched to groups of pupils with different needs. Some teachers have been used to demonstrate good practice and train teachers in other local schools. The teaching of reading is very good and well structured. Pupils learn letter sounds and how to use these to read unknown words and for spelling. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and reading skills in most areas of the curriculum. However, opportunities are missed to develop writing skills in subjects other than English. In some subjects worksheets are used unnecessarily and limit what pupils write for themselves. The National Numeracy Strategy is firmly in place, taught

confidently and has contributed to the high standards now achieved in this subject. Pupils are effectively encouraged to develop their oracy skills by using mathematical vocabulary in discussion and to explain their reasoning. Good links are made with other subjects such as ICT and design and technology and geography where pupils are involved in measuring, calculating and presenting information in graphical form. Again the school has provided training for other schools in the area, having a leading mathematics teacher on the staff.

25. Teachers make good use of assessment to identify and monitor progress as well as planning for the next stage of learning. However, some staff do not circulate well enough to monitor progress whilst pupils are working and intervene if necessary. Marking is of variable quality and there are very few comments to say how improvements could be made or if additional support has been needed to overcome difficulties. Some teachers set literacy and numeracy targets for individual pupils but are not referring to them when marking pupils' work. The school is taking steps to improve marking. Poor presentation and unsatisfactory handwriting is rarely commented on. Awkward pencil grips and incorrect letter formation are particularly evident in Year 2 and are preventing many pupils developing a comfortable joined style.
26. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is generally good in every class and expectations have risen significantly since the time of the last inspection. The tasks offered to these pupils are well matched to their levels of achievement. Teachers and learning support assistants collaborate well in their preparation and planning. Teaching assistants are well briefed to support those with special educational needs; they have generally received good training and many display a high level of skill in their work. For example, many support staff employ good questioning skills and manage pupils well so that they remain closely focused on the task to be completed. The school's collegiate approach to management ensures that teachers and support staff develop close working relationships; this makes a very positive impact on the quality of education offered to pupils with special educational needs. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are well supported by adults in a similar way. Teachers are very good at repeating key vocabulary in English and mathematics lessons to develop understanding and directing questions which enable these pupils to use the new words. They are very successful at encouraging the pupils to have a try and build up their oral confidence. Teachers provide additional challenge for pupils who are identified as gifted or talented through their individual education programmes.
27. Homework is regularly set and used very well to support work in class. Pupils read regularly with their parents at home and also to adults in school and this contributes to the high standards achieved. Parents are given very good guidance by teachers as to how they can help their children at home. For example, parents attending mathematics classes make games which help to develop number skills. Parents also help pupils to learn spellings and find information related to their topics. In this way parents contribute to their children's learning and the high standards achieved.

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

28. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets all statutory requirements. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good and the extent to which the school provides for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a major strength. English, mathematics and science are particularly well planned and subject co-ordinators strive to ensure that teaching and learning are relevant to the pupils' daily lives. Information and communication technology is being increasingly well used to support learning across the curriculum; this is a very good improvement since the last inspection. The school allocates a large proportion of available time to English and as a result some of the time allocated to subjects other than mathematics and science is slightly below average. For example, the amount of time allocated to pupils' physical education during the winter months would benefit from review, as it currently falls short of that desirable for infant aged pupils. The school has successfully concentrated its efforts since the last inspection on improving standards in literacy, numeracy and ICT and this continues to be a focus, particularly in respect of

the more able pupils and those at risk of failing to achieve average attainment at the end of Year 2. The improvements since that inspection have been very good. The provision for collective worship meets statutory requirements.

29. Overall, the quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage are good. Planning for the children in the Reception classes takes full account of the six areas of learning as recommended in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. More focused teaching linked to literacy and numeracy is carefully planned for and introduced appropriately to the children. Planning is well linked to themes such as, 'Toys', 'Ourselves' and 'Colour'. A strong emphasis is placed on providing first-hand experiences of quality and on helping the children to acquire language skills. There is very good provision for personal and social development. This is a strength of the Foundation Stage, which prepares children well for their work in Year 1.
30. The provision for pupils with special educational needs within the curriculum is very good. Pupils' needs are identified early and there is a good range of support through pupils' individual education plans and through carefully planned activities within lessons which meet pupils' needs and enable them to achieve well. The special educational needs co-ordinator, class teachers and support staff work very well together to make best use of the available resources, monitor progress and revise plans regularly.
31. The introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has had a positive impact and has raised standards throughout the school. In addition, teachers identify many opportunities in other curriculum subjects to consolidate and extend the pupils' literacy, including speaking and listening and numeracy skills. The overall effectiveness, therefore, of the school's teaching of basic skills, is good across the school.
32. Good relationships are enjoyed with partner schools. Links with the on-site junior school help significantly when pupils transfer from the infants. Parents consider transfer to be '*like continuing in the same school*'. The schools share an on-site swimming pool. There are good links with the many local pre-school groups and the cluster of infant schools. The school is happy to provide places for students from secondary schools on work experience schemes; students from teacher training colleges and graduate teacher trainees are also welcomed to the school.
33. The contribution made to pupils' learning by the local community is very good. Local museums have given support to curriculum events in the school and the school has taken pupils on some outside visits. There are links with the neighbouring churches and one minister visits the school on special occasions such as harvest. Theatre and charity groups, poets and a local artist and potter have visited the school. The school's links with local music and dance festivals enrich the curriculum and provide excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their cultural understanding. The school welcomes members of the caring and emergency services to support the personal, social and health education curriculum. Local traders have provided support in developing the '*walking bus*' and the '*healthy schools*' initiatives.
34. The provision of additional and extra-curricular learning activities is satisfactory. Although the school arranges an annual visit for each class, there are no extra-curricular clubs at present. However, the school intends to start a football club when the weather improves. The small hall currently limits what can be done indoors at the present time. Parents help in school with reading and others have talked to Reception and Year 1 pupils about toys of long ago, artefacts from World War 2 and Muslim festivals. The school makes very good use of the local community to further its provision for pupils' cultural development.
35. The school is committed to equally valuing all of its pupils in every aspect of its activities and pays heed to making very good provision for all those who might otherwise be susceptible to disadvantage. As well as the very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language the provision extends to other groups. For example, the school's reputation for valuing individuals, whatever their needs, has encouraged the parents of children with Down's Syndrome to deliberately choose this school for their child. The school has a specially designed curriculum for a gifted child in the Reception class. Books have



been purchased which appeal to boys who are reluctant readers in order to motivate them.

36. In the previous inspection, the arrangements for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development were strengths of the school and judged as good. There has been a very good improvement since then; these areas remain strengths of the school but are now very good overall. The pupils are encouraged to appreciate and be involved with the creative arts throughout their time in the school. There is a richness to the themes that are displayed throughout the school; pupils' work is valued. In this school people are valued as well and this is reflected in its very good ethos. This school successfully encourages pupils to aspire to high levels of social, moral, cultural and spiritual values.
37. The pupils' spiritual development is good, enhanced through religious education and assemblies, where they learn about world religions and faiths. In assemblies, pupils enter to an atmosphere of calm created by well-chosen music. Music makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual development through assemblies and class music lessons. Although the focus is mainly Christian, the school plans well for the introduction at assemblies of other faiths and beliefs to pupils as well as aspects of personal, social and health education and citizenship. In assemblies the pupils sing very well, take part in prayers and have time for reflection. The assemblies are of high quality; many pupils sit enraptured by the music and stories. Pupils are encouraged to develop an appreciation of and to wonder at, the natural world during art lessons. In an art lesson, pupils from Year 1 were delighted when they looked at African batik pictures and in a Year 2 art and design lesson on exploring Mexican patterns and design, when pupils saw colours used by Mexican artists, they expressed awe and wonder.
38. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good and founded on the high expectations that staff have of them. All members of staff provide very good role models and are very consistent in the way they show respect for the pupils and adults. The school has a very positive approach to the management of behaviour and there are a variety of rewards for pupils and classes. Members of staff make the pupils aware of what is acceptable and help them to understand what is right and wrong. Moral issues are taught very well in class using circle time, when pupils take turns to express their views and in assemblies. As a result, pupils' behaviour in and around the school is excellent.
39. For the pupils' social development the school has a caring ethos in which everyone is respected as an individual and supported very well. This is exemplified in the way that all pupils are included in school activities and the way that they are valued. Older children support younger pupils and the pupils operate a friendship system at playtimes when they support pupils who may be feeling lonely. Pupils work and play well together, they share resources well and show care for each other. This was exemplified when a pupil who had packed to move overseas had no teddy to bring to school. Another pupil brought one of hers in for this pupil so, *'she wouldn't be left out'*. No one feels excluded in this school.
40. The personal, social and health education curriculum provides opportunities in class, circle times and assemblies to understand social issues and to accept that others may hold different opinions and beliefs and to listen to others. The staff encourage pupils to work and play with one another in a structured yet happy social atmosphere. This is especially evident during lessons, break and lunchtimes.
41. For pupils' cultural development, the school draws on examples from many cultural traditions. As well as helping pupils' experience their own local culture, the school celebrates the ethnic and cultural diversity of British life and the richness of life around the world. Through art, music, religious education, geography and history the pupils are given many opportunities to learn about the peoples, beliefs and places of the world. There is provision through the curriculum to learn of the cultural and faith traditions of Britain's multicultural population. Parents as well as the local vicar have visited the school to talk about their religions and faiths and the pupils have visited the local parish church. Visits to other places of worship are not made. The pupils have made visits to locations near to the school and some further afield that have added to their cultural experiences. Assembly themes are planned to reflect celebration and worship in a variety of faiths. There is a

rich and varied range of art on display from different artists, mainly from the western world, whose styles have been successfully emulated by the pupils. Visiting art groups, authors, poets and theatre groups have also enriched the pupils' experience. There are displays in the school of resources and musical instruments from around the world.

42. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. The teachers and support staff have very good knowledge of pupils' needs and they work very hard in class to provide opportunities to promote pupils' personal development. A range of rewards and sanctions, the very good personal and social assessment and target setting systems support this aspect well. The personal, social, health and citizenship education curriculum is well designed and implemented. The curriculum plans are detailed, the teaching is good overall and results in good provision. The scheme of work for personal, social and health education is currently under review by the co-ordinator. The governing body has a policy on sex education and a policy and procedures on substance misuse.

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

43. Since the previous inspection, the provision for the care of pupils and their welfare has been improved and is now very good. All members of the staff show concern for the well-being of pupils, the quality of information kept on each pupil is detailed and comprehensive and members of staff know pupils and their medical and personal needs very well. The school is supported well by health professionals and other agencies.
44. The school identifies and deals well with any hazards found on site and health and safety checks and inspections are regularly undertaken. The school's health and safety policy is detailed and indicates responsibilities for the implementation of checks and controls. The governors and members of staff are knowledgeable in this area and take their responsibilities in this area seriously, undertaking regular safety checks. Risk assessments are undertaken by the school, however these have not always been recorded or where appropriate, involved the two other institutions using the same site. Assessments are undertaken of all school trips in accordance with local authority guidelines.
45. Members of staff are trained to administer first aid and provide very good cover for the school's activities on and off site. The school's procedures for the care and treatment of pupils are very good, despite the lack of a dedicated first aid room. Thorough precautions are in place for dealing with emergencies arising from pupils' medical conditions and for dealing with accidents and injuries.
46. The school's arrangements for child protection are very good. The policy and procedures follow the guidelines of the local committee for the protection of children. The headteacher and deputy are designated as responsible persons for child protection. Other members of staff are regularly trained to ensure they understand the school's arrangements and procedures. The school monitors pupils very well, especially if there is any concern about their welfare. In line with local authority guidance, police checks are undertaken on new staff and helpers.
47. The school's ethos, the high quality of teaching and the consistent use of positive behaviour strategies support the excellent behaviour seen throughout the school. The monitoring of behaviour is handled consistently well by the staff and this results in the absence of any oppressive behaviour. The school has excellent procedures in place for encouraging positive behaviour; the school and class rules are displayed throughout the school and pupils are involved in setting these measures. Assemblies, class activities and circle time are used to reinforce good behaviour and the pupils devise their own code of conduct. The school has effective and successful methods to promote racial equality. Parents confirm that there are few incidents of bullying or racism and that the school deals with any issues speedily and sensitively.
48. Improving the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress was a key issue at the previous inspection. The school has made very good progress in addressing this issue led by the enthusiastic and well informed co-ordinator. Staff have amassed a large amount of data which is

used effectively to plan work that is appropriate to the individual needs of pupils of different abilities. Statutory assessment takes place in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 2. Results are analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses in these subjects and how well different groups of pupils achieve. The first assessments made when children join the Reception class, with the resulting attainment levels and predictions it gives are used well to monitor what the school adds to pupils' learning. The new assessment policy is integrated into the school's curriculum planning with a bank of assessment tasks covering all curriculum subjects with the exception of religious education. This practice helps to ensure that staff have an overview of how well pupils are achieving.

49. The school has collected together all its assessment information on a data base so it is now possible to check on the progress made by individual pupils from the time they enter the school to the end of Year 2. This information is being used to predict attainment at the end of each school year and to set ambitious targets. Teachers use the results of assessments to set more demanding work for the higher-attaining pupils in order to raise their standards even higher. Frequent checks to identify pupils who are doing better, or not as well as expected, are carried out by the assessment co-ordinator. Through skilful analysis and good communication, teachers, pupils and parents are able to identify improvements in standards and those areas needing further development.
50. The care and support of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils are set targets that are realistic yet challenging and are based on a thorough knowledge of the pupils' past achievements. Pupils' progress is under constant scrutiny and individual education plans are reviewed termly by the teacher and special needs co-ordinator. These plans and statements of special educational need are well maintained and are sufficiently detailed in their recommendations to be helpful to those offering support. There is a close link between the needs identified in the education plans and the course of action recommended to meet them. Parents are closely consulted when plans and statements are drawn up or reviewed. Assessment procedures are very good. The school is very alert to the need for the early diagnosis of special needs, working closely with the external agencies offering specialised help; this ensures that pupils also receive early support for the learning difficulties they encounter. Teachers and classroom assistants continually monitor the progress of the pupils for whom they are responsible and the constant flow of information between the special needs co-ordinator, staff and parents ensure that all have a good understanding of pupils' particular learning difficulties and are thus well placed to overcome them.
51. The monitoring of attendance and punctuality by the school is good and the school has been praised by the authority for the improvements made in attendance. Unfortunately, the pupils' attendance figures still do not reflect the efforts made by the school. Members of staff know the children and their families well and this enables them to monitor pupils' attendance and follow up any unauthorised absences or lateness. However, as noted previously, the school's overall attendance figure remains below the national figure for attendance. Pupils' unauthorised absence was better than the national average for primary schools over the same period.
52. Although the school does not always make calls home on the first day of any unreported absence, absences are followed up promptly to identify the reasons. For day-to-day recording of attendance, the school uses manual registers that comply fully with all requirements for the coding and reporting of attendance. The data is not yet transferred into any computerised system for analysis. The educational welfare officer allocated to the school has recently been appointed and has yet to visit the school. Although there are no regular pupil incentives in place to improve attendance and punctuality, when appropriate, awards are presented to the pupils in recognition of their efforts to be in school and on time.
53. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. The teachers and support staff have very good knowledge of pupils' needs and they are working in class to improve pupils' personal development. The personal, social, health and citizenship education curriculum supporting this aspect of pupil support is developing well. The school does not teach sex education, but does have a policy and procedures on drug and substance misuse

and is raising awareness. Many activities in school contribute to pupils' personal development, including raising money for charities, the many visitors to school, and visits outside the local area. Two pupils from each class are able to participate in the school council and contribute to the organisation of the school and school events. Few opportunities were seen during the inspection for pupils to develop independence as learners through research or to use their initiative.

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

54. Parents' views of the school are excellent, as are the links with parents. The school provides very good information for them. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school and their contribution to learning at school and at home, is very good. Parents are very proud of the school and their children's achievements and have great confidence in the senior managers. They believe that the children make good progress and that the children behave very well. Parents praised the high quality of care their children receive and the support that parents have received from the school.
55. Parents are invited to help and support the school, attend assemblies, performances, curriculum events, briefing meetings, parents' evenings and open afternoons. Parents are able to communicate with the school on a daily basis by seeing members of staff, or by arranging appointments. Any parents unable to visit school daily can communicate with parents using their children's reading diaries. The information provided for parents is very good. Parents are provided with newsletters, day-to-day class and school information; they are able to attend training courses, workshops on curriculum matters, concerts and performances and social events.
56. Parents confirm that the school handles the pupils' start at school in the Foundation Stage very well; the parents greatly appreciate the careful introduction of these young pupils to the school and the liaison with pre-school providers. Parents have opportunities each term to discuss children's progress with the teachers. Parents of pupils with special educational needs confirm that they are kept extremely well informed of pupils' progress. The school communicates well with parents on attendance and timekeeping in writing and by telephone and follows up unannounced absences. Parents confirm that the school is welcoming, that the school welcomes parent helpers, that it operates an "open door policy" and that the relationships between the school and parents have improved significantly. At their meeting, parents are confident that the school will respond quickly and positively to any suggestions or complaints and confirmed their confidence in the headteacher and senior management.
57. The great majority of parents in their questionnaires felt that they are well informed about pupils' progress. Pupils' annual reports are very detailed, they report on children's progress and abilities very positively yet the teachers are able to describe how their children can make further progress. The reports demonstrate that teachers know their pupils and their progress very well. Parents confirmed that they find all the information they receive helpful and informative. They especially appreciated information on curricular activities and the advice on how to support children with their homework.
58. Parents' contribution to pupils' learning at school and at home is very good. Comments made by parents at their meeting, were that homework in the school was very appropriate, extended the children's learning and that it is administered very well. Parents feel appreciated and welcomed when they help in school. They are given helpful instructions on how to support pupils with reading and other activities whilst in school.
59. Parents also assist with school productions, end-of-term activities and sporting fixtures. They support other curricular activities, assist on school trips, organise fund-raising and social events through the Friend's Association. This organisation is shared with the junior school and has raised substantial funds for the school.
60. The school has involved parents in research on the local traffic improvement schemes, travel to school projects and the implementation of the "Healthy Schools Initiative". Parents greatly

appreciate that the school has involved them in these projects and then communicates the outcome. The majority of parents support the home-school agreement. Workshops and parent evenings have been organised by the school on the curriculum, including literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology and are well attended.

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

61. The leadership of the school is very good and has improved even on the many strengths it had at the time of the last inspection. The principal reasons for this improvement are firstly that the school has responded to the recommendations of the previous report by continuing to raise the expectations of staff and the achievement of pupils. Data analysis and other very good evaluation procedures have been used effectively to ensure that teachers develop a very clear understanding of pupils' learning needs. Secondly, the roles of the deputy and senior management team have been considerably strengthened by the appointment of able staff, committed to securing high standards of work and behaviour. In addition, the school successfully creates a learning environment in which pupils are very enthusiastic about school, feel positive about their achievements and value the contributions of others.
62. All of these improvements have been facilitated by the headteacher, who, as at the time of the last inspection, offers strong and supportive leadership to her staff. She is offered excellent support by her deputy and each complements the other in the skills and perceptions that they bring to the management of the school. The headteacher has judiciously created a strong senior management team, confidently devolving to them responsibilities for key developments in the life and work of the school, but at the same time ensuring a measured and clear overview of its direction.
63. As a result of the headteacher's collegiate approach to management, all staff feel valued for the contribution they make and are well motivated to move the school forward. For example, teaching assistants are fully consulted on the progress of the pupils for whom they are responsible, those supporting statemented pupils sometimes using their particular knowledge to make relevant adjustments to their curriculum. Subject managers have appropriate responsibilities for developments in their respective subjects; they amend schemes of work and offer advice to colleagues, briefing them on developments and reporting to governors on school or national initiatives. While some monitor teachers' planning and pupils' work to ensure that there is progression in teaching and learning, this supervision is not consistently applied in all subjects, with the result that some have a better understanding than others of strengths and weaknesses in their curriculum areas. In the same way, the quality of teaching is not monitored systematically in subjects other than English and mathematics. This makes it difficult for the school to be sure of the quality of learning in subjects for which little evidence of progress can be gathered outside the lessons, for example, in physical education. The expectations of how co-ordinators use time allocated for monitoring are not clear enough, nor are the senior management team checking to ensure this is efficiently used and well focused.
64. The senior management team focuses its attention appropriately on the implementation of the school improvement plan, drawn up after thorough consultation with staff and governors. It has regular formal meetings, but there is much informal and open communication between its members and other staff so that all share a strong sense of common purpose. The school improvement plan has rightly and successfully been focused upon the raising of standards in English, mathematics and science and on improving the school's facilities for information and communication technology. The school is aware that other subjects need to be accorded appropriate prominence in its future plans.
65. Further evidence of the fact that the school truly recognises the value of the contribution of its staff is its receipt on two occasions of the 'Investors in People' award. The effect of this has a direct bearing on the quality of relationships between staff and pupils. Because there is a strong shared sense of purpose and direction among staff, there is a high degree of consistency in their approach to developing positive attitudes and good patterns of behaviour among pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy school and are well motivated to succeed and the school enjoys a good

reputation among parents.

66. The aims of the school, simply stated, are reflected very closely in its work. They refer to the creation of 'a caring, learning community in which all have equality of opportunity and success'. Staff are indeed at pains to ensure that all pupils are included in every activity, that work is set that matches closely the learning needs of individual pupils and that they develop a thorough knowledge of those for whom they are responsible. The school has gained a reputation as one at which those with special educational needs make good progress, including those who have special gifts or talents. There is a strong sense of harmony in the school and the inspection found no instances of oppressive behaviour, sexism or racism.
67. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs combined with English as an additional language is very good. Most pupils' special needs are identified at an early stage and the school promptly enlists the support of external agencies should this be necessary. These pupils are set realistic, but challenging targets for improvement; these are reviewed at least once a term by the class teacher and special needs co-ordinator in consultation with support staff and the child's parents. Pupils' education plans and statements of special educational need are well maintained and are sufficiently detailed to be useful to those working with them. Teachers and classroom assistants constantly monitor the pupils' progress and the special needs co-ordinator is very well informed of the development of each, although she does not yet have regular opportunities to monitor the teaching they receive. The co-ordinator has a very good understanding of her role and constantly liaises with parents and external agencies to ensure that the school secures the best provision for these pupils.
68. Drawing on a wide range of experience, the governing body offers very strong support in shaping the direction of the school and fulfils its statutory duties appropriately. The experienced chair of governors is well informed of day-to-day developments and works closely with the headteacher to ensure that the governing body is carefully briefed and well placed to make the right strategic decisions for future developments. He is a member of each of the four committees that report termly to the full governing body. As a result of the good channels of communication that are a feature of this school, the governors have a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development, adopting a rigorous approach to spending decisions and taking a critical interest in its achievements and standards. Members of the teaching staff regularly report to the curriculum committee on developments in their subjects and governors draw on the particular knowledge of other staff members, such as the office and premises managers, to ensure that they are informed on every aspect of school life.
69. The governors' finance committee closely monitors the school budget and ensures that the principal areas of expenditure are closely tied to the school's improvement plan. One exception to this is expenditure on resources for subject areas other than English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. In order to secure resources for their subject, curriculum co-ordinators submit a list of needs that is met from the budgetary allocation. However, this spending is not linked to the improvement plan nor to any decisions regarding priorities for development, so the school cannot be sure, in this aspect of its financial activities, that its resources are well directed. The high level of funding carried forward into the current financial year was accumulated in order to build and equip the computer suite. The project is almost complete and excess funds are now at an appropriate level. The day-to-day procedures for financial management and control are good and the experienced office manager has a good understanding of where to seek outside support or information when this is required. Specific grants are used for the purposes for which they were intended and the most recent auditors' report detailed only a few recommendations; these have now been implemented. The governing body is increasingly aware of its need to evaluate the impact of spending decisions on pupils' learning and there is scope for this to be further extended.
70. The numbers of teaching and support staff meet the demands of the school's curriculum well, and the budget has been wisely used to ensure that sufficient teaching assistants are deployed to support the wide range of learning needs among pupils in each class. The school subscribes to the Graduate Training Programme; this has ensured that pupils have benefited from the experience

newcomers to the profession have to offer, while they in turn have derived benefit from observing the teaching techniques of experienced staff. This measure is entirely within keeping with the school's strategy of taking full advantage of the expertise of staff to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. The school's procedures for the induction of new staff are good; new teachers feel well supported and almost always come quickly to understanding what is expected of them. Arrangements for the appraisal and performance management of teachers are very good; they are well structured and carried out sympathetically and professionally.

71. Accommodation is adequate for the number of pupils. The school uses available space well; classrooms and corridors are clean, bright and welcoming and staff work hard to create an attractive environment that is highly conducive to learning. The most recent addition to the building is the computer suite that will do much to improve the quality of teaching and learning in this aspect of the curriculum. However, certain areas of the school, including the hall and Reception classes, are sometimes pervaded by sound from the nearby activities of other groups of pupils and this militates against the creation of a quiet working atmosphere that is often required. The outdoor playground used by younger children offers a less welcoming environment than the rest of the school, while its linear shape makes it difficult for teachers to exercise close control during physical education lessons. Governors have plans to improve disabled access to the building.
72. The school's resources are generally of good quality for all subjects. However, those for history and art and design, are only adequate in quantity. Those for music are very good. The school is aware that its provision for computers currently falls below the recommended level for a school of this size and plans have been made to redress this shortcoming. The school possesses an adequate non-fiction library, regularly timetabled for class use but less frequently used by individual pupils for investigative purposes because it is not well sited. With the exception of the outdoor play area, resources for the Foundation Stage are very good. Visits are used adequately to support the curriculum for science, geography, religious education and history, while visitors sometimes share their expertise or interest with pupils, for example, when they are learning about history, drama or music.
73. Overall, the school applies the principle of best value well in its financial transactions. Taking into account its context, pupils' attainment on entry, its overall effectiveness and the good quality of education it offers, the school provides very good value for money.

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

Governors and the headteacher should consider the following when planning for school improvement:

- (i) Continue to raise standards in writing by providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in subjects other than English.

*(Paragraphs: 4, 24, 25, 97, 101, 126, 131, 132)*

- (ii) Ensure that a school handwriting policy is applied which gives greater emphasis to correct letter formation and pencil grip. Teachers must expect higher standards and better presentation of work. Pupils should be given some opportunities to redraft their work.

*(Paragraphs: 4, 25, 89, 98, 107, 114)*

- (iii) Apply the good monitoring systems for checking teaching quality developed in English and mathematics to other areas of the curriculum in order to make teaching even better and improve consistency between classes by:

- ensuring that all co-ordinators monitor teaching, especially in subjects where it is difficult to gather evidence out of lessons; and
- ensuring that all co-ordinators monitor planning, sample pupils' work and the quality of marking.

*(Paragraphs: 63, 74, 115, 119, 124, 128, 146, 154 )*

- (iv) Continue to monitor attendance closely and analyse absence patterns in order to improve the attendance rate further.

*(Paragraphs: 18, 51)*



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	69
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	43

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	6	15	28	17	0	0	0
Percentage	9	23	42	26	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	355
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	66

#### Special educational needs

	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	21

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	12

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	27

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

%
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#### Unauthorised absence

%
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School data	6.0
National comparative data	5.4

School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	49	65	114

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	45	46	47
	Girls	62	63	64
	Total	107	109	111
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 ( 88 )	96 ( 92 )	97 ( 98 )
	National	84 ( 84 )	86 ( 86 )	90 ( 91 )

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	44	46	48
	Girls	62	63	61
	Total	106	109	109
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 ( 89 )	96 ( 93 )	96 ( 96 )
	National	85 ( 85 )	89 ( 89 )	89 ( 89 )

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	324	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	5	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	5	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.75
Average class size	28.6

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	17
Total aggregate hours worked per week	417.5

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	802,417
Total expenditure	855,872
Expenditure per pupil	2,488
Balance brought forward from the previous year	139,914
Balance carried forward to next year	38,692

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7.12

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	355
Number of questionnaires returned	78

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	85	14	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	75	24	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	42	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	57	36	6	0	0
The teaching is good.	79	21	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	40	10	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	29	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	19	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	51	43	6	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	71	28	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	32	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	21	15	1	21



## **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**

74. Children join the Reception classes to start their full-time education in the autumn term following their fourth birthday. In the last inspection, the provision for children in the Foundation Stage was implied to be good, but there was no clear judgement. The current quality of provision is good. The good learning opportunities provide children with a very good start to their education. One of the strengths of the provision are the assessment procedures that are used effectively to identify and monitor children's progress. The way the school involves parents in their children's learning is another strong area. The weaknesses in the Foundation Stage provision relate to the outdoor area and the noise intrusion through the open plan classrooms. Children do not seem to mind and it does not appear to restrict their progress. The outdoor area, although well stocked is an awkward shape that makes it very difficult for children to freely explore and learn their physical limitations. However, the area is well resourced with equipment. The early years co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that teachers' planning is consistent. She does not systematically monitor the quality of teaching during lesson times to assist her colleagues in further developing their practice and improve the consistency between classes.

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

75. The very good teaching and learning in this area of learning successfully promotes children's personal, social and emotional development and is a major strength. Children make good progress and by the time they leave the Reception classes most children are well on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals. The good admission procedures ensure that plenty of time is given to parents and their children. The majority of children have attended some pre-school provision and have the opportunity to visit the school for a story time. The links with parents through inviting them to meetings before their child starts school ensures a happy start in the Foundation Stage. Consequently the children quickly settle in their new surroundings and very quickly begin to explore the variety of activities on offer. Children are given very good opportunities to play and work together and with the very good support of all adults they learn to take care of their own needs and become increasingly independent. Children are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can achieve. As a result, they respond well, make choices and develop mature attitudes to learning. Their behaviour is very good and they quickly develop a clear sense of right and wrong.
76. Children show great enthusiasm for learning and display high levels of interest and involvement in the experiences provided for them. By the time children join Year 1, they work together well, share resources fairly and take turns appropriately when using the equipment. However, at times in some classes, they do need reminding to help put the equipment away. They settle quickly to the more structured activities, such as literacy and numeracy and show ability to concentrate for appropriate periods of time. Most children attend to their personal hygiene appropriately and dress and undress themselves independently before and after physical education lessons.
77. Personal and social development is strongly promoted in all areas of learning and the planning is thorough. The broad range of activities provided for all children are used to very good effect. The well-established routines and caring nature of the provision allows all children to feel secure and to grow in confidence. Children are valued as individuals and are encouraged to share and talk about their feelings. All adults working with the children in the Foundation Stage provide good role models for the children, always treating each other and the children with courtesy and respect. This leads to trusting relationships and helps the children to develop an awareness of others. Staff also promote children's personal independence effectively. For instance, well-planned focused activities provide very good opportunities for the children to choose whether to work alone, in small groups or with an adult. The Reception teachers ensure that the children know what is expected of them and encourage them to become responsible for tidying up.



## Communication, language and literacy

78. On entry to the Reception Year, there is a wide variation between children's skills in expressing themselves, although there are several who are fluent and demonstrate that they have a broad vocabulary. Individuals are generally confident when framing questions for visitors and make sensible comments about their observations. A high priority is given to promoting language skills and the good teaching ensures children make good progress. By the time children end the Reception Year, a few are on course to exceed the recommended Early Learning Goals for communication, although the majority will meet the goals. In their language and literacy development most children are on course to reach the expected standards. Staff provide many good opportunities for children to communicate with each other and adults. The good teaching ensures all adults give time to talk with the children and encourage them to express their needs in words. All activities are carefully planned to encourage children to give verbal responses to questions and to extend their vocabulary. For example, as children explore paint with their hands, build with blocks and experience the excitement of working with coloured water, they are constantly encouraged to talk about what they are doing. All adults show children that they value their efforts at communicating. Consequently, the children take part in these activities with great enthusiasm.
79. The Foundation Stage environment is enriched by the signs and labels that reflect the importance staff put on the development of children's language and dressing up clothes and role-play areas are used well to stimulate conversation between children. The school intends to supplement the role play areas with costumes from other cultures. All children benefit from skilful individual support and lots of encouragement. The good teaching helps to promote early literacy skills and many children begin to recognise frequent words in their reading books. They show an awareness of rhyme, hear and say the initial sounds in words and know which letters represent some of the sounds. All children readily share books with adults and talk enthusiastically about their favourite books.
80. Elements of the literacy framework are introduced gradually and are used well to meet the needs of the children. An effective range of strategies used by teachers develops children's understanding of letter sounds well and many learn to use their knowledge to help them read and spell simple words, such as 'and', 'cup', 'man', 'hat'. Children are provided with many opportunities to develop an awareness of writing for different purposes, whatever their stage of development. Supplies of paper, pencils and crayons are readily available for children to use. Children learn to write under the teacher's script and use a writing book to help them. Children confidently 'have a go' at writing and use their knowledge of letter sounds to make plausible attempts at words. For example, a child wrote, 'Der Ssntr I wud lick a pasdasupaese and a Axn man paese'. (Dear Santa, I would like a play station and an action man please). Even those children who find learning more difficult, ascribe meanings to the marks they make and attempt writing random letter strings as a means of recording.

## Mathematical development

81. Children's mathematical abilities are average when they start in Reception. The good teaching and learning in the Reception classes successfully promote the children's mathematical achievement and consequently, most children are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception Year. All adults make good use of opportunities to talk 'mathematically' as children play. For example, while building with bricks, the children were asked 'What shape is this?' and 'How many sides does it have?' They learn to use language such as 'biggest', 'middle-size' and 'smallest' when building with the bricks. Every opportunity is used to promote the children's confidence in using numbers. For example, after sorting and counting out sets of different coloured 'lollipops', children recorded their work by colouring in the correct number of squares to match the colours and number of lollipops.
82. In the Reception classes, pupils recognise numbers to ten and count beyond 20 when for instance counting the number of children in the class. The more able children are familiar with the terms,

'add' and 'take away' and in practical activities and games confidently have a go at carrying out simple calculations with numbers up to ten. Most children recognise colours, name a triangle, circle, rectangle, cone and square and begin to describe their properties, such as a triangle having three sides and three points.

83. Mathematical development is well promoted through the use of number games and songs. The more formal activities for mathematics are introduced carefully to children through the framework for teaching numeracy. The work is well planned and children are encouraged to develop their mathematical ideas through practical experiences such as number games, building with bricks and making shape pictures. The direct teaching of mathematics when working with children in small groups is often imaginative and takes full account of the children's mathematical development. However, at times, the choice of different activities provided by teachers does not always support and draw out the mathematical learning that is being promoted in the focused teaching groups. Classrooms also effectively display numbers and encourage children to develop a greater understanding of vocabulary when making a man with shapes. The computer is used well to enrich children's opportunities in mathematics. Children with special educational needs, including those with statements have good support and tasks which are carefully matched to their needs. Children learning English are encouraged to use the correct mathematical vocabulary in their explanations.

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

84. Teaching is satisfactory overall and pupils achieve sound standards in their knowledge and understanding of the world. By the end of the Reception Year children are expected to achieve the Early Learning Goals.
85. Children learn about their senses through practical activities. For example, they develop observational skills by matching colour sample cards to colours in the school grounds and from listening to stories such as 'Elmer the Elephant' they learn that, elephants have grey skin. They listen to recorded music attentively and most can sing tunefully and keep to the beat. They have a small repertoire of songs, which they sing with enjoyment. Opportunities are made for children to investigate the sounds, which can be made using un-tuned percussion instruments including instruments from Africa. They listen hard to distinguish 'loud - soft' sounds. Through assemblies they begin to learn about the lives of notable people and places. The visit of a parent with her son (both dressed in traditional clothes) to talk about Eid and The Haj fascinated the children in one class, where they were also given the opportunity to handle very special objects, which they did with great care and respect. This experience, together with other religious activities contribute positively to children's awareness and understanding of their own and others' cultures and to the differences and similarities between them.
86. There is satisfactory attainment in information and communication technology. Children's skills are developing well. For example, they use a programmable toy to observe how simple programming can move an object forward or backward. Using a simple graphics program and a mouse many children know how to draw lines and flood areas with colour, demonstrating improving mouse control skills. Children select tools such as thick or thin brushes from a menu and make choices as to how to apply colour in spots or splodges or blocks. Learning in other areas is supported with computers, children can match letters and sounds to aid literacy and match sets of shapes in mathematics. During such activities, children click on the correct part of the screen with a mouse and follow instructions about what to do next.
87. Teachers' lesson planning indicates children are given appropriate opportunities to develop a sense of time through talk about their families and events of importance to them in their daily lives, in connection with learning about places in the immediate locality. Children learn about the weather through making simple observations. Current provision for the designated safe outside play area being not adjacent to the classrooms, seriously limits the opportunities for children to safely explore their world.

## Physical development

88. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in this area of learning. Children achieve broadly what is expected for them by the end of Reception. They show increasing control and skills when using the wheeled toys outdoors and develop an awareness of space around them. The outside play area is appropriately resourced and provides children with a suitable range of equipment for them to practise physical skills such as running, riding tricycles and jumping on and off boxes. However, this area is currently too small and has no covered area and a limited range of suitable clambering equipment. Staff make good use of the space, and the time outdoors is well planned as part of the weekly activities provided for the children. The Reception classes do not have easy access to their outside area, but each class is timetabled to do some physical activity twice weekly and all teachers make good use of the time available to develop children's physical skills. When the weather is good these take place outside. During the summer months children have the opportunity to have twice weekly swimming lessons. Teachers also use the school hall for physical education lessons. In these lessons, the quality of teaching is satisfactory and children learn to move with increasing control and co-ordination. In the lessons observed, the children showed increasing control over their bodies when using the mats or apparatus. Staff successfully develop children's confidence and teach them to become independent when changing their clothes before and after a lesson.
89. Good opportunities are provided for the children to develop their finer manipulative skills, by, for example, cutting and sticking paper and card, modelling with scrap materials, fixing jigsaw pieces together and using brushes for painting. They are also provided with an appropriate range of malleable materials, such as play dough and clay. Consequently, by the end of the Reception Year, the children demonstrate increasing confidence and control in the use of tools such as scissors, paintbrushes and glue spatulas. However, many children still experience difficulty in using scissors and this means that their pencil control is affected. A good majority of children make marks with a variety of materials and show increasing dexterity and control in drawing and writing. Incorrect '*pencil hold*' is insufficiently corrected and this has an effect on pupils' presentation when they reach Year 1.

## Creative development

90. Standards are satisfactory. Children enjoy using a variety of materials to draw, paint, make models and collages. When teaching is very good it fully engages children's imagination. A class watched spellbound, when their teacher showed them an African-made carrying basket and support ring. This exactly matched that depicted on the cover of the book '*Handa's Surprise*' (their Literacy '*Big Book*' of the week). Some children tried to balance the basket on their own heads. They repeated the song '*Sia Humba*' from assembly two days previously with extra joy. This lesson was an excellent example of planning linked to children's level of attainment and their natural curiosity and excitement. Parts of the book cover illustration came to life before their eyes. Music plays an important part in the programme offered to the children and they move spontaneously into song and recall words well. The school has a very good range of musical instruments but few were seen to be readily available in the classrooms for regular access. All children make progress in creative development. Most should reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they transfer to Year 1.
91. Classroom displays and photographs show children experience a wide range of creative activities, including art, music, cookery and imaginative play. They use a range of resources, tools and materials to explore their ideas in line with the planned content of lessons. They draw, paint and colour their pictures with enthusiasm. They are becoming competent at using scissors to cut and glue to 'fix'. Some children take more time than others to develop good scissor control. Most children can correctly identify and name colours and match them to the colours of other items in their classroom. The theme of 'colours' is reinforced through direct observation, speaking and listening, singing and exploration of the outside environment. Opportunities are arranged for children to express their own ideas and feelings through planned opportunities for speaking and listening. This reflective time successfully contributes to their spiritual and social development.

Children's learning is promoted by the skilful contribution of the classroom learning assistants working with teachers to encourage children, checking that everyone, including those children with special educational needs are enabled to participate fully. Staff are continually talking to those who are learning English to check their levels of understanding and involvement.

## ENGLISH

92. By the age of seven, standards in English are above the national average and are higher than those seen at the time of the last inspection. The reason for this improvement is that teachers now expect more from their pupils. They have developed rigorous procedures for assessing their pupils' progress and, because of this, acquire a good understanding of their learning needs. They then use this knowledge to good effect to plan the next stages of their teaching. The standards seen in reading and writing among seven year olds at this inspection broadly confirm pupils' results in this year's national tests.
93. Building on the good start they receive in the Foundation Stage, pupils make good progress overall as they move through Years 1 and 2. In listening and reading, progress is very good because the school has developed clearly defined approaches to ensure that pupils reach the high standards that are set. To achieve well in reading, for example, pupils learn and practise the right skills systematically and thoroughly, both at school and at home. Teachers have high expectations that pupils will listen carefully in lessons and quickly establish at the beginning of each session a calm, working atmosphere which ensures that pupils concentrate well. Behaviour is excellent. Progress in speaking is good; in many classes, teachers allow pupils to express themselves at length, allowing them sufficient time to think through their answers. Pupils also make good progress in their writing. The school has responded well to the criticism made at the time of the last inspection that pupils had too narrow an experience in this area of the curriculum; pupils now write for a wider range of purposes, both using their imagination and to report facts. However, there is still scope to offer more frequent opportunities for writing in science, religious education, geography and history lessons. Pupils of different aptitude and ability make equally good progress as they move through the school. Those with special educational needs are well supported in their work and are offered a similar English curriculum to that of other pupils. As a result, all are included in every aspect of the work of each class.
94. Pupils make good progress in speaking so that standards are above the national average by the age of seven. The good practices of encouraging pupils to speak confidently that are established at the Foundation Stage are continued as pupils move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English benefit from this approach and make very good progress. Very good support is given to both these groups of pupils by classroom support staff. By Year 2, a high proportion of pupils ask supplementary questions if they do not understand or need additional information, or will contribute freely to discussion. In such discussions, teachers encourage their pupils to speak at length by creating an unhurried atmosphere in which the contributions of all are valued and by often asking open-ended questions that do not anticipate the length and nature of their answer. In both year groups, teachers are at pains to ensure that those with special educational needs are included in class discussions and pupils with speech impairment sometimes contribute confidently to the oral work of the class. As a result of this good work, pupils across the school develop the confidence to speak without embarrassment to a larger audience, such as in assemblies or in the school nativity play.
95. Standards of listening are very good across the school. Teachers encourage all pupils to listen attentively when they are speaking, both by quickly establishing a calm atmosphere for concentration at the beginning of each lesson and by using the inflection of the voice well to maintain interest when they are reading a story or giving information. Questioning is used sensitively to capture pupils' attention and many teachers engage the pupils in a lively manner that holds their interest well. Pupils listen very closely during discussion in pairs or small groups and react sensibly to the views of other children. Teachers often take good advantage of this; in one lesson, for example, two pupils were asked to whisper explanations to a latecomer who had missed the beginning of a lesson. As a result of careful listening, that pupil was able to join in the class discussion without embarrassment. Pupils also listen very well in school assemblies and

their demeanour contributes significantly to the atmosphere the leader creates.

96. Standards in reading are well above those seen nationally and pupils overall make very good progress in their acquisition of reading skills between the ages of five and seven. Pupils in Year 1 continue to build on the good start they receive in the Foundation Stage. They are thoroughly taught the sounds that letters represent singularly or in combination and they begin to build up a good sight vocabulary of words that do not conform to regular spelling patterns. Teachers encourage pupils to attempt unknown words, with the result that almost all develop a confidence in reading and a desire to succeed. In Year 2, pupils consolidate their previous learning and become familiar with more difficult combinations of vowels and consonants. By the age of seven, some read confidently and fluently, deriving pleasure from reading and moving away from the need to concentrate on the constituent sounds of individual words. Most pupils learn to read successfully because they practise the skills regularly, both at home and at school. Pupils' reading records indicate a careful monitoring of their progress. Those who encounter difficulty, including those with special educational needs, receive good support in their efforts, both from teachers and from the well-trained classroom assistants. Pupils are well motivated to succeed in reading because teachers are alert to their learning needs and offer books that are well matched both to their ability and interests. For example, the school recently purchased books that especially appeal to boys in order to improve their motivation and this measure has had a significant impact on improving their standards of reading.
97. Writing standards across the school are above the national averages and have improved significantly since the last inspection, when they ranged from unsatisfactory to good. The reason for the improvement is that pupils are now expected to write at greater length for a wider variety of purposes and are encouraged to attempt words, without necessarily being certain of their spelling, in order to develop their fluency and confidence. At the same time, pupils are thoroughly taught the conventions of punctuation and spelling so that they become progressively more accurate as they move through the school. At five, for example, most pupils can write a caption to explain or comment on a picture they have drawn. At six, some can write a simple story with an introduction and satisfactory conclusion. By the time they leave the school, many pupils write at length on factual matters or imaginatively, linking their ideas coherently and sometimes commenting on the character or actions they are describing. However, pupils of average and higher attainment are not given sufficiently frequent opportunities to use their writing skills in other subjects, such as science, history and geography, nor do they use these skills enough to record information they have found for themselves in non-fiction books. There is also scope for all pupils to develop further a skill in refining or redrafting work, so that they are encouraged even further to improve upon their initial efforts. Pupils who are learning English write more complex sentences which are grammatically correct. Pupils with special educational needs are confident to 'have a go' and make good progress because their efforts are valued by the teachers and support staff.
98. The same systematic methods described in the school's approach to reading are seen in the teaching of spelling, so that many pupils spell simple words competently by the age of seven. From Year 1, pupils are taught to 'read, cover and remember' the words they are learning and this technique helps them to develop a good visual memory and establish good practice for learning spellings in later life. Across the school, pupils are actively encouraged to try words they have not previously encountered and grow in confidence in expressing themselves. As a result, standards in spelling are above average when pupils leave the school. By contrast, those in handwriting and presentation are only average and very few pupils produce neatly presented, fluent handwriting. Although there are regular handwriting lessons, pupils are not encouraged to apply what they learnt to their everyday writing and poorly-formed letters and poor pencil control often go unchecked. For example, some pupils in Year 2 still do not hold a pencil correctly and very few attempt to join their writing. Although pupils are sometimes offered a strong incentive to write neatly because their work is being presented for a particular purpose, this shortcoming in handwriting is linked to the relatively few opportunities that pupils have to refine or redraft their work.
99. Overall, the teaching of English is good. It is consistently good or better at Year 2 and a little more variable at Year 1, where satisfactory as well as excellent teaching was observed in the course of

the inspection. Taking the two year groups together, three quarters of the teaching seen was of good quality or better. Teachers across the school display a good understanding of how to teach the subject and the basic skills of reading and writing are very well taught in all classes. Teachers manage pupils well and know how to hold their attention by setting interesting work that is well matched to the ability of the different groups of pupils. The differences between the satisfactory lessons and those of better quality were that, in the former, teachers sometimes did not always take full advantage of the good learning opportunities they had created. However, almost all lessons proceed at a good pace because teachers employ a bright, but business-like tone that fosters a good climate for learning. In whole class discussions, teachers use questioning very well, both to challenge pupils to think and to determine their level of understanding. In one excellent lesson, pupils were themselves asked to formulate a question in different ways, the teacher exhorting them to refine the question to make it more interesting. This reinforced the pupils' understanding of the key words in the original question. Teachers have a good understanding of their pupils' learning needs, setting appropriately challenging tasks that engage their interest. Generally, teachers monitor pupils' progress well while they are working on a task, but sometimes they do not circulate as frequently as they might, so that they are unaware of how some groups have fared until the end of a lesson. However, those with special educational needs are always very well supported in their work, both by teachers and classroom assistants. The quality of marking in pupils' books is variable. In some classes, teachers encourage their pupils to greater effort through their comments, asking questions or offering a written remark that helps to add to the pupils' understanding. In others, marking is cursory and unhelpful, offering pupils little clue as to how to improve further. Literacy targets are rarely referred to when work is marked. Lessons are almost always brought to a good conclusion, the teacher summarising well what has been learnt or, in the best lessons, inviting pupils to show what they have done or recount what they understand.

100. As a result of this good teaching, pupils' learning is equally good. Pupils develop very good attitudes to learning, especially in reading and writing and concentrate well in lessons. They enjoy their work, applying themselves well when working independently, either alone or in pairs. The good working relationships that teachers foster encourage a busy atmosphere and ensure very few disruptions. As a result, pupils make good or better progress in the course of almost all lessons.
101. With the exception of handwriting and presentation, all aspects of the English curriculum are taught in sufficient detail and the national guidance for teaching literacy is applied well across the school. The school employs rigorous systems for measuring the attainment and progress of individual pupils and teachers use this information imaginatively for identifying weaknesses and targeting where improvements in teaching and the curriculum need to be made. The teaching of English is monitored regularly and staff are offered advice on their practice. As curriculum leader, the deputy headteacher has a very good understanding of how to develop the subject further and is well placed to oversee further improvements. Support staff are well trained and make a very positive contribution towards the school's success in raising standards. Resources for the subject are good; there is a good range of reading books in each classroom and there is an adequate non-fiction library, though this is not ideally sited for pupils to use it independently. There is considerable scope to extend the use of computers for pupils to practise their word-processing skills and for pupils to write more frequently in science, geography and history lessons. Drama is often used to enhance the curriculum and visiting theatre groups sometimes visit the school to share their skills with the pupils.

## **MATHEMATICS**

102. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain above average standards in numeracy and all other areas of the mathematics curriculum. All pupils achieve well. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make very good progress and develop good mathematical vocabulary which they can use to explain their thinking. Very able pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress because they are given challenging tasks that stretch them. In some lessons, pupils make very good progress. These findings are better than those of the last report and reflect the results of the 2002 National Curriculum tests. When the results over the past three years are

analysed, the trend has been consistently upwards, and matching this is the school's forecast for this year's results that predict well above average marks in the 2003 national tests. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented very well, and results have been steadily improving since its beginning.

103. Teaching and learning are good overall. Of the lessons seen, more than a quarter were very good or excellent, almost a half were good and just over a quarter were satisfactory. Teachers plan well and use methods that enable pupils to make good or very good progress. They provide well for all their pupils, including those who are higher attainers and those who need extra help. Likewise, pupils who have English as an additional language are well provided for and supported. The use of ICT is a strength of the teaching and enhances pupils' experiences and understanding very well.
104. Pupils learn well in all aspects of mathematics, such as Year 1 pupils learning how to use appropriate words when giving directions to a programmable toy. An example of this was a good Year 1 lesson where pupils were learning to use the vocabulary that would make the robot move. They showed good understanding of the differences between left and right and successfully made the robot move in the direction of a numbered house. This idea was further developed using a computer program that developed pupils' experience of right, left, forward and up as commands. Pupils were fascinated when the creature successfully '*ate the bugs*' on the screen. Teachers manage their classes well and as a result, pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards mathematics is good, with a significant number of lessons where they are very good. Pupils know the names of two and three-dimensional shapes and learn how to find out which is heavier or lighter when weighing objects. They understand the meanings of '*more than*' and '*less than*' and use their 100 squares when discovering number patterns.
105. Teachers ensure that mathematics is securely related to pupils' everyday lives. For example, they solve "*shopping*" problems and learn how to give change. One Year 2 class has its own class shop on the computer, which results in supercharged attention to the task and is a considerable motivating factor in their enjoyment of mathematics. Some Year 2 pupils focused on money problems during the week of the inspection. In a good Year 2 lesson, some higher attaining pupils talked about money very confidently and were very quick to provide the answers to '*shopping sums*'. They learn time sequences such as days, months and seasons and they use standard units when measuring length and add centimetres and metres. Pupils understand simple fractions and use graphs to measure the length of gnomes. The pace of lessons is usually good and this is exemplified in an excellent Year 2 lesson where pupils started with a brisk mental mathematics session involving counting numbers forwards and backwards to 100. Pupils explain their workings well and are able to describe the steps they took to arrive at the answer. "*Because I had it in my head and counted on,*" explained one pupil. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils developed their subject vocabulary well because of the skilled teaching about '*light*' and '*heavy*'. Teachers always share the learning intentions with pupils and revisit them during the session. At the end of a lesson there is usually a time when the whole class comes together to share what they have been doing in their groups. Teachers are confident with the National Numeracy Strategy and they apply it effectively.
106. The records of pupils' work and the results of the National Curriculum tests are fully analysed and these facts and figures help teachers plan for future focus on topics that may need revisits or more time spent on them. Teachers are particularly skilled at adapting their lesson when they realise that pupils have not quite understood the topic. For example, in a good Year 2 lesson, pupils were working on adding two digit numbers. The teacher, realising that some pupils had not really grasped this, extended the time spent on doubling and halving so that this led more easily into the new work. Pupils also track their own progress in mathematics using a computer program and work hard to beat their previous score.
107. The leadership of the subject is good and there has been good improvement since the last inspection. The co-ordinator monitors some mathematics teaching, and the assessment of pupils' work is very good. Teachers' marking is done well in some classes, providing a clear picture about the levels of pupils' attainment and giving help and encouragement for further improvement. However, the quality of marking is not consistent across Years 1 and 2 and this limits pupils'

progress. This aspect was also criticised in the last inspection. The presentation of pupils' work is weak; many books are messy. For the more able pupils this does not appear to affect their attainment; however, for the pupils who are not working at this level, it is very easy for them to get muddled when their work is untidy and poorly presented. Attainment in mathematics is continuing on an upward trend and there are strong indications that this will continue through to the 2003 National Curriculum test results.

108. Across the subjects of the curriculum, pupils use their numeracy skills well. For example, in geography, they carried out a survey of toys and recorded this by constructing block graphs. There has been good overall improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the rising standards of pupils' attainment, the overall good teaching and in the use of ICT.

## SCIENCE

109. In 2002, teacher-assessed standards at the end of Year 2 were well above the national average. Standards achieved by seven year olds have improved considerably since the last inspection, with a significant increase in the percentage of more able pupils achieving the higher Level 3. During the inspection standards in the current Year 2 were found to be above average overall with over a third of pupils working at the higher level. Progress in knowledge and understanding, as shown in end of unit tests, is good overall. At the end of Year 2, work samples and displays show that pupils have a broad knowledge and understanding of science. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their earlier achievements due to the good support given by the teacher and support assistants which help them communicate both orally and in writing. More able pupils are offered additional challenge in most lessons to develop their knowledge and understanding. Progress in experimental and investigative science is satisfactory. Pupils use their senses well and learn to look more closely, compare different materials and living things and orally communicate their findings. There was little evidence in work samples that pupils are making predictions, taking measurements and using simple tables to present their results. More able pupils are given insufficient opportunities to suggest how an idea may be tested, to carry this out and record for themselves.
110. By the end of Year 2 pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding of living things through a variety of experiences and visits they make. Many pupils have good background knowledge and subject vocabulary. They can name the external parts of the human body and a flowering plant and know that plants and animals need certain conditions to live. Pupils observe the life-cycle of the frog. They know that some materials are natural and others are man-made. They know by experimenting that twisting, stretching, squashing and bending can change materials. Pupils understand the dangers of electricity and join a simple circuit to light a bulb and know how a torch works. They know that sound is caused by vibrations and that magnetism is a force.
111. Pupils in Year 1 know that darkness is the absence of light. They can compare light sources and say which are bright or dull. Pupils are developing their understanding of forces and sort toys into groups depending on whether they move by pushing, pulling or both. They learn to care for plants and animals in the school environment and have planted trees in the local park and looked after pelargoniums provided by a local society. Such experiences add to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
112. Pupils show curiosity and enthusiasm as they work and share ideas and equipment within the group. They are keen to take part in discussions and pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are given good support so that they are fully included. Behaviour in lessons is excellent.
113. Teaching is good overall. Both lessons seen in Year 1 were very good and an excellent lesson was seen in Year 2. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and their explanations are effective in enabling pupils of all abilities to develop an understanding of scientific ideas and concepts. A strength of the teaching seen was the effective questioning which challenged and extended pupils' thinking. In the excellent lesson the teacher had the skill of breaking down the concept into small



parts which built up during the lesson and culminated in excellent evaluation and learning. She related the science taught to everyday applications which were relevant to pupils, using socks which stretched to fit a variety of footsizes and widths. A different approach to changing materials was used in another Year 2 class where pupils made springs out of different materials and tested them. There was good experimentation, investigation and oral evaluation, but nothing was recorded. Although staff develop subject vocabulary well the key words for each unit of work are not identified in the scheme of work. During the inspection teachers related work in science well to other subjects, such as design and technology, literacy and history. No use was made of ICT in science lessons during the inspection and no evidence was found in the work samples, although the school has several CD ROMs and planning shows these are that are used in other topics.

114. At present, work is recorded in several different workbooks and worksheets are collected in a file. This system makes it difficult to monitor progress over time as work is not often dated. Too many worksheets limit the development of writing skills for the average and above average pupils. Presentation of pupils' work is satisfactory in class displays but unsatisfactory elsewhere. Work is marked but few comments are made about what has been achieved or improvements that could be made. In some classes too many of the worksheets are unfinished. Pupils are given insufficient guidance when learning to draw and label their own diagrams of the apparatus they have used.
115. The subject co-ordinator has led the subject for just over a year but is now teaching in the Reception class and is no longer directly involved in the planning and teaching of the subject in Years 1 and 2; this makes monitoring more difficult. She has effectively revised the scheme of work, introduced end of unit tests and devised new assessment sheets which build up a profile of progress during Years 1 and 2. These are relatively new and provide a good basis for teacher assessments but have yet to be evaluated. Although work samples and assessments are collected on a termly basis no lesson observations have yet been made. The co-ordinator has provided training for staff over the last year in investigative and experimental science. She analyses national test results and makes adjustments to the curriculum where necessary. Science theatre groups visit the school but better use could be made of the local environment, especially the seashore, to enrich the curriculum. Resources for the subject are very good and a science safety policy has been developed which is emphasised well in all experimental lessons.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

116. In Year 2, pupils attain standards that are similar to those found in most other schools. This judgement is the same as the findings of the school's previous inspection. There has been a strong focus on art and design during the past year, culminating in whole school art and design days in which all classes took part. The pupils handle tools confidently and skilfully and use a variety of media such as textiles, clay, papier-mâché, pencils, printing techniques and wax resist painting to express their ideas. Collages with fabrics, which represent local landscapes, are vibrant and well constructed. Paintings are used well to illustrate literacy work, such as 'The Tortoise's Dream' and 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff'. Observational drawings and paintings of daffodils are of a particularly good standard. Work done in the style of Monet, Kandinsky and Picasso shows a sensitivity towards the artists' approaches. The pupils' use of paint to produce poppies in the style of Monet shows a good degree of skill. When studying Mexican art, pupils make plasticine models of patterns found in Mexican pots and textiles and translate their work into clay masks. This also shows a good degree of skill. They use apples to print pictures, one in the style of Andy Warhol, which was exhibited in a local competition. They show a satisfactory knowledge of line and tone, as shown by pictures of mountains linked to their geography project. They have an adequate knowledge about the works of other artists and can identify some features of the works of Monet and Kandinsky. However, although they recently studied Van Gogh's work, Year 2 pupils are unable to identify any facts about Van Gogh. They are quite convinced he lives in Southend! Pupils have lessons from local artists to support their learning. An example of this was the artist who worked with pupils to create paintings for the playground walls.
117. All pupils achieve satisfactorily as skills are taught progressively. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, especially pupils with co-ordination difficulties, who are taught skills

and often given additional time to practise and develop these. Pupils show good attitudes to their work; they concentrate hard, enjoy the subject and show very good creative development. Behaviour is excellent.

118. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teachers' expectations are good and work shows originality and imagination. Lessons are well planned and organised, with clear teaching points communicated at the start and effective support and guidance given on an individual basis once pupils are working independently.
119. Leadership in art and design is good. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and understanding. However, opportunities for formally monitoring lessons are not yet securely in place. In spite of this the co-ordinator monitored art outcomes during the summer and autumn terms 2001/2 and can draw on the individual art portfolios to look at pupils' progress. The scheme of work has been developed so that pupils receive a wide range of experiences and the skills are carefully outlined across all elements of the subject. The art and design policy is due for review in the autumn term 2003. The co-ordinator has a clear action plan. Although some teachers make evaluative notes on their lesson plans, she is aware that there is no consistent format for the systematic assessment and recording of individual skills. The school is introducing an assessment sheet that will be completed when the current Year 2 pupils transfer to the junior school in July 2003. Resources for art are good overall, with a variety of media easily accessed. The weakness in resourcing is the lack of pictures from Asian cultures such as Japan, China and India. The accommodation is satisfactory, although storage is difficult, most large pictures are stored in the small special needs office.
120. Displays are good and enhance the environment for learning, however, they would benefit from showing more pupils' work rather than photographs. Much of the work is cross-curricular. For example, in Year 2, pupils have produced good quality drawings of imaginary characters from the village of Tocuaro in Mexico. The use of information and communication technology is good. The school has had work displayed in the Southend Civic Centre, a local ice-cream parlour and a local art gallery. Artwork contributes well to pupils' cultural development through the study of African art styles and when they design Mendi hand patterns. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good, enabling pupils to fully access the curriculum with support and develop their vocabulary. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

121. By the end of Year 2 the majority of pupils achieve as expected for their age in designing, planning, making and evaluating and standards are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. The new co-ordinator has been in post for less than a year but is already having an influence on teaching and learning. She is currently changing the scheme of work and introducing new resources. A different approach to teaching the subject has been introduced. The emphasis is on building up pupils' skills and their knowledge of materials, which are later applied to a design project. Although teachers and support staff have been given training by the co-ordinator the full impact of these changes will not be seen on standards for sometime. However, pupils are already making more informed choices about the materials they choose and showing increased skill and confidence in their use of a variety of tools. Pupils have an enthusiastic approach and most work with care and try very hard to improve their skills. Behaviour is excellent.
122. Pupils in Year 1 were joining materials in different ways and deciding which would be most suitable for making a hand puppet. Teachers demonstrated the safe use of staplers and hole punches before pupils chose which joins to try. Pupils used the stapler sensibly and successfully but many had difficulty manipulating the hole punch. In one class a group tried to sew their material and found that they needed a lot of help and lots more practice. There was good evaluation in one class where the teacher had limited the number of different joins the pupils had made. They tested the joins for strength and one group also considered whether their fingers would pop through the spaces between the staples. There was evidence in display that pupils had designed and made a Christmas card with movable parts. Before making these they had

experimented with different papers and mechanisms and learnt how to safely score card. The finished products were of good quality as a result.

123. In Year 2, pupils were designing and making coiled pots, linked with their work in geography. They were using the knowledge and skills gained to make a pot that met specific design criteria. The pot had to be big enough to hold a small bag of sweets and was to be decorated with a Mexican design. Pupils in both the classes observed, had made coiled pots from salt dough the previous week. It was noticeable that the class with the oldest children in the year group had better manipulative skills and some of the youngest pupils in the other class had great difficulty in rolling an even coil. Some were given additional practice with plasticine before working with the clay. Teachers made good use of the salt dough pots for oral evaluation. Pupils suggested improvements such as making the coils thinner, enlarging the pot, using a tool to join the coils and smoothing the inside. In one class the teacher effectively used giant lego to demonstrate why coils should be joined in different places on every layer to strengthen the structure. At the end of both lessons most pupils had successfully achieved the task and written their own evaluation. Pupils with special educational needs, including the statemented pupils, achieved the task with appropriate support and were proud of the results. Displays of work with photographs showed a variety of vehicles pupils had made at the end of the previous term. There were good drawings and written descriptions of the making process showing the different joins and tools used and the method of scoring explained. They had gained knowledge about wheels and axles which had been applied to their designs. There was good quality written evaluation appropriate for the different abilities within the class. The photographs showed individuality of design and differences in the materials used. The completed vehicles were finished to a high standard. Only the most skillful pupils are taught to use saws, and are carefully supervised when cutting wood.
124. Teaching is good overall. Lessons are well planned, skills carefully developed and resources are used well. Questioning is good and promotes thinking and subject vocabulary is developed well. Teachers make good links with other subjects, such as literacy, numeracy, history, art and design, geography and science. Staff circulate well during lessons and intervene appropriately whilst allowing pupils to develop their own ideas. The co-ordinator is developing a good assessment system linked to the new scheme of work which clearly indicates the levels that pupils are working at as they use different materials. The new scheme of work covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum and new resources have been bought, such as tools and equipment for food technology and textiles. Resources are now good. The co-ordinator monitors informally at present and has not yet evaluated the effect of the new approaches on classroom teaching.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

125. Although only two lessons were seen in the course of the inspection, sufficient evidence was gathered by analysing work and through discussions with pupils to make judgements on their attainment in the subject. By the end of Year 2, standards of work are in line with those expected nationally and are similar to those noted at the last inspection. Pupils make sound progress in the subject as they move through Years 1 and 2. Much of pupils' knowledge and understanding derives from the discussion of visual resources. The progress of the older, higher-attaining pupils is restricted by a lack of expectation to write at length. Pupils with special educational needs also make sound progress in their lessons and receive good support from both teachers and classroom assistants. Pupils learning English are given good opportunities to learn and use geographical vocabulary in discussion and writing.
126. In Year 1, pupils are becoming familiar with their home and school environment and understand that other children may live in very different surroundings. They appreciate that certain features of their environment are permanent while others are more temporary and know that some buildings have, for example, a particular function in the community. They understand the importance of certain roadside features, such as traffic lights and post-boxes and begin to recognise the need to exercise care when using the road. As they move through the school, pupils grow increasingly aware of how their environment may differ from that of others by comparing their lives in Southend

with those of children in the Hebrides and Mexico. By the age of seven, average- and higher-attaining pupils are able to advance simple reasons for these differences in life-styles and express some knowledge of the climate and landscape of the regions they have studied. Furthermore, as they become more familiar with maps, pupils in Year 2 begin to develop an understanding of relative distance, knowing, for example, that France is much closer to England than Mexico. While pupils have ample opportunities across the school to develop a sound geographical understanding through discussion and the examination of visual resources such as pictures and photographs, average- and higher-attaining pupils do not always have sufficient opportunity to consolidate or demonstrate their knowledge by using their writing skills. Pupils sometimes record their experiences by drawing simple maps or illustrations with explanatory captions, but rarely are they encouraged to write a paragraph.

127. No overall judgement may be made on the quality of teaching. Only two lessons were seen, one of which was of very good and the other of satisfactory quality. This difference in quality resided principally in the use of time. In the latter, too much time was devoted to teacher-led explanation and discussion, leaving the pupils too little opportunity to work independently, while in the former, a relatively short whole-class discussion was followed by challenging tasks that were tailored to the abilities of different groups of pupils. As a result, they made very good progress. In both lessons, the teachers used questioning well, engaging their pupils to think about the geographical reasons for their chosen subject matter and encouraging them to offer explanations. Across the school, the quality of pupils' learning indicates that teachers have at least sound knowledge of the subject, that they offer clear explanations and have a good understanding of their pupils' levels of attainment. In some lessons, this understanding is used to full advantage because different work is set for pupils of different ability. Many pupils display a real interest in the subject; those observed and interviewed talked enthusiastically about what they had learned.
128. The geography curriculum covers all the required aspects of the subject, although more frequent opportunities could be offered to higher-attaining pupils to explore some of these in greater depth, for example, by discovering facts or offering simple explanations for the geographical features they have discussed. Through her attendance at planning meetings for both year groups, the subject co-ordinator has developed a clear understanding of the intended curriculum and rewritten part of the good scheme of work so that the particular learning needs of the pupils are better met. However, there is little systematic monitoring of teaching, so the school cannot be sure where particular strengths and shortcomings lie in this aspect of its work. Pupils' work is evaluated half-termly using a manageable assessment prompt devised by the co-ordinator. Resources for the subject have improved considerably since the last inspection and are now of generally good quality and sufficient in number. Visits are used satisfactorily to enhance pupils' understanding of the local environment, but the school does not yet use the Internet as a geographical resource.

## HISTORY

129. Little history teaching was observed during the inspection, but sufficient evidence was gained from discussions with pupils and staff and from examining work, to form the judgement that standards in the subject are in line with those seen nationally among pupils of seven. Pupils make the expected progress in the acquisition of knowledge and understanding as they move through Years 1 and 2. Much work in lessons is accomplished orally and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills more widely to record what they know and understand.
130. While they are in Year 1, pupils develop an increasing awareness of how life in the past was different from that they experience today. They learn, for example, that the toys of their grandparents were fewer and less sophisticated than they are now and that children more often devised their own amusements then. They begin to understand that people and places change over time and that special events, such as birthdays or anniversaries, are often marked by celebration. Pupils of higher aptitude and ability begin to comment on historical facts or examine the reasons behind them. One wrote *'toys were clockwork because there were no batteries'*. In Year 2, pupils display a growing awareness of the relative distance of past events; some, for example, understand well that the gunpowder plot preceded Victorian times and know that the first

world war happened relatively recently. A few pupils can explain clearly why poppies are worn on Remembrance Day and many have some understanding of their symbolism. Pupils of average and higher attainment in Year 2 make good progress in their learning when they are encouraged to record feelings associated with historical events. For one piece of work, for example, they were encouraged to write an imaginary letter home commenting on life in the trenches. One pupil recorded *'the trenches are very unhealthy and scary'*. Generally, however, such pupils do not use their writing skills sufficiently to secure their understanding and thus some learning opportunities are missed. Pupils with special educational needs make progress at a rate similar to that of other children and, in the lesson seen, they were well supported by the teaching assistant. Those learning English as an additional language achieve well.

131. As only one lesson was observed in the course of the inspection, no overall judgement may be made on the quality of teaching, although some conclusions may be drawn from the evidence gathered. Teachers clearly display adequate knowledge of the subject and, apart from the insufficient use of writing to support learning, basic skills are taught soundly. The quality of teaching in the lesson seen was good because the teacher had high expectations for her pupils' achievements and different tasks were set for pupils according to their levels of ability, a feature not always present in the history work seen across the school. The teacher used questioning very well to engage and probe pupils' thinking, encouraging them to speak at length and to offer simple justifications for their answers. As a result, all made good progress when they attempted the written task. Pupils interviewed in the course of the inspection and those observed in the lesson, displayed a real interest in the subject, attempting to suggest simple historical reasons for occurrences and asking relevant, sensible questions to clarify their understanding.
132. The history curriculum is well balanced and broad enough, with the exception of the lack of opportunities for writing offered to average- and higher-attaining pupils. Through her attendance at planning meetings for both year groups, the subject co-ordinator has gained a good understanding of the content of the teaching programme, but does not yet monitor systematically the quality of teaching itself. A helpful new scheme of work has been written, based on nationally suggested guidelines. Teachers record their pupils' progress half-termly, using the information they gather to build up a picture of the gains in their knowledge and understanding over the course of a year. Resources for the subject are of good quality, but limited in quantity. Visitors with particular knowledge and expertise are used well to enhance the curriculum and visits are sometimes made to museums and other places of historical interest, such as Southchurch Hall and Priory Park.

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

133. Standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress as they move through the school. Many are able to work at the computer as part of a small group without continual adult support. Pupils learning English are well supported by adults and also ask other pupils in their group if they have any difficulties. Teachers use ICT well as a tool to express and develop work in other curricular areas. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. A new scheme of work has been developed which builds on the work in the Foundation Stage and promotes continuity and progression through Years 1 and 2. All staff have had considerable training both with the co-ordinator and some provided by outside agencies with government funding. Staff knowledge and confidence has improved. A wide range of new software has been purchased which links with other curricular areas and this was being used in most of the lessons observed. The ICT room has just been completed but the equipment has not yet been installed. Once installed the school will have achieved the government target of one computer for every 11 pupils but further computers will be needed to reach the national 2004 targets. A broadband Internet connection is being made which will allow Internet access for pupils.
134. Currently, there are two computers in each class which are continually used to support learning. Most classes operate a rotational system to ensure that pupils have equal usage of computers. Each class has a designated ICT lesson each week where pupils are taught basic operations, such as using the keyboard and mouse, where new programs are introduced and where real-world applications of ICT in everyday life are explored.

135. During the inspection Year 2 pupils were entering instructions into a programmable floor robot (Roamer) to make it move along a predetermined route. This lesson was linked to work in geography and the pupils used a large floor map of a Mexican village. Most pupils had used the Roamer since Reception and knew how to make it move forwards, backwards, left and right 90 degrees. They consolidated their knowledge by entering a sequence of instructions to make the Roamer travel through the village following a specific route. The four groups all had different routes which were matched to the ability of the group. More able pupils learnt how to make the robot wait at the phone box before continuing on its journey. The most able pupils were encouraged to write down a program for the Roamer and were given small scale maps and mini-roamers to help them. They wrote the programs confidently but found that when they put their information into the robot they had missed out some parts in the sequence of instructions and the robot did not go where they expected. There was very good oral evaluation against the success criteria at the end of the lesson and pupils were clear about the difficulties they had found and the mistakes they had made. The teacher shared with the pupils they would be learning how to repeat instructions in the next lesson. Behaviour, concentration, co-operation and enthusiasm was very good throughout the lesson.
136. Class records, work samples and observations in other subjects showed that pupils can use the mouse well and know their way around the keyboard. They can use a wordbank to create sentences. They can use capital letters and full stops and use space, return and delete keys appropriately. More able pupils can change the size font and style of text, save work and retrieve it and print out work unaided. During the inspection there was little evidence of word processing. In a Year 2 literacy lesson, pupils showed knowledge of bold and italic text and the use of different font sizes when they were planning to write their own information book about animals. In English, pupils were 'finding information' using multimedia CD ROMs. In mathematics a counting activity was used to support mental arithmetic and a shopping program to support work on money. Standards of work achieved by the most able Year 2 pupils at the end of last year showed that many were achieving beyond expectations. They had scanned pictures from a book and added speech bubbles to give interest to illustrations of the Three Little Pigs. Video had been used to make animated sequences of Noah's Ark and a story about teddy bears. There was no evidence of completed work on graphs, or pictograms, although resources are available for this. At present access to the Internet is limited and mainly used by staff.
137. Year 1 classes were using the computer to generate familiar sounds that convey a message. Most pupils could identify the object which make the sound, such as a doorbell and a police siren, but found it difficult to write a caption to explain the message the sound gave. There were good examples in classroom displays that pupils had used a graphics program to paint with different colours and thickness of brushes. Some had filled shapes with colour and used spray and symmetrical effects when creating their pictures. In mathematics, sorting programs were used to develop an understanding of the properties of shape and the Roamer was used well in a mathematics lesson about direction. Some pupils successfully used a 'sound' bank to generate different words using the letter combinations they were studying. One class was using the graphics program in an art and design lesson on 'line'. Although there are cameras and tape recorders in all classes, pupils were not observed using these during the inspection.
138. The enthusiastic co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well. She provides good technical support and training for staff and as a consequence teaching is good. She has inspired staff to explore all the possibilities for using the Roamer whilst computer resources have been limited and is rightly proud of what has been achieved. There has been no formal monitoring of teaching as yet. Resources are good and well organised to support the required curriculum. The new assessment system is effectively monitoring pupils' progress as they move through the school and information is used well to plan work to meet the needs of the different ability groups. Support staff have been well trained and are used effectively in lessons. The co-ordinator has ambitious plans for the development of the subject and the new ICT suite. Initially she will work alongside staff to provide training during lessons. At present the school does not employ a technician. Plans are in place for when the new suite is operational.

## MUSIC

139. By the age of seven, pupils attain average standards in music overall and well above average standards in singing. Similar standards were seen in the school's last inspection. Pupils really enjoy their music making and their achievement is good. All pupils achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs achieve at least as well as others and show considerable enthusiasm.
140. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with some that is very good. The school makes very good use of the headteacher's subject expertise. The organisation of the curriculum results in pupils having good opportunities to develop their musical skills and to reach high standards in singing. The pace of lessons in some classes is good. Teachers plan well and this results in good singing and appraising of music. Pupils have listened to music from around the world, including Russia, Kenya and China.
141. Younger pupils have a confident approach to performing all musical tasks. This builds well on their earlier musical experiences in the Foundation Stage. They sing well, showing good control of pitch, dynamics and rhythm. When using drumsticks to follow or create rhythmic patterns, they are adept at inventing ways to remember what to play. They nod, tap fingers or silently count. They respond wholeheartedly to their music making. When Year 2 sing, they perform a '*voice warm-up*' with much enthusiasm as they learn a new song. Pupils including those who are learning English, have a good knowledge of traditional music terms, use the names of notes and know their relative value. Pupils achieve different effects with a good range of un-tuned percussion instruments. Composition skills are carefully taught in Year 2 as pupils use percussion instruments to create their own music. Teachers record pupils' contributions and the use of information and communication technology is satisfactory. There are good opportunities during assembly times to further pupils' knowledge of musical styles and gain knowledge about the lives of famous composers.
142. The co-ordinator is the headteacher. The leadership of the subject is good. She is a specialist and has clear plans for further development in music. There is a clear policy and scheme of work in place. Monitoring of the subject takes place informally through the headteacher's own teaching of the subject and her observations when helping teachers in their lessons.
143. The standards have improved since the last inspection, especially in singing. There are good links with art and design and physical education. Resources are very good. The main music resources are stored in the hall, but each year group is equipped with resources to ensure accessibility when the hall is used for other activities. Noise from the junior school hall intrudes during some assemblies. The subject is enriched by the many opportunities pupils have to perform to an audience. For example, pupils participate in the local music festival, the movement festival, the county dance festival and the choir sings at Christmas. Talented pupils confidently sing solos in concerts. The staff has benefited from high quality in-service training from an external music specialist and this has improved teachers' skills. The subject continues to make an important contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as at the last inspection. Recorders are not taught in the infant school, as the junior music specialist prefers pupils to start in Year 3. Parental involvement is very good in musical activities, as exemplified by their attendance at the Christmas concert and at the outdoor whole school concert held at the end of the summer term, '*The Last Day of the Proms*'. Parents and carers also join the school for an annual assembly for each class; they also enthusiastically attend one of the three harvest festivals. Children from the on-site pre-school provider and junior pupils attend these concerts. Music is used very well to promote community involvement.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

144. As only one complete lesson was seen in Year 2, no overall judgement can be made about standards of physical education in the school by the time pupils are seven. However, sufficient evidence was gained from lessons in Year 1 and from discussions with staff and a review of

documentation, to draw conclusions about some aspects of progress and teaching in the subject and on the quality of the curriculum.

145. Pupils make the expected progress for age in the subject during Year 1. They understand the importance of having a safe space around them in which to move and are generally aware of the need to warm up gently before engaging in more vigorous exercise. They use their bodies well to make different shapes by stretching, curling and twisting and begin to explore the possibilities of linking these shapes into a single, smooth sequence. They react well to the atmosphere the teacher creates, for example, by making larger, more animated movements or gentler, more refined ones in response to the rhythm of a tambourine. Pupils build on this work in Year 2, exercising greater control over their bodies, for example when balancing on two points and building up longer sequences of movement in pairs or small groups. Almost all pupils make equally sound progress in the development of their physical skills and those with special needs are very well supported in their efforts. In one lesson, for example, the teacher's assistant was working with a child on a specific programme to improve his co-ordination and he made very good progress. Results suggest that pupils make at least good progress in their acquisition of swimming skills because they are regularly and thoroughly taught by an appropriately qualified teacher. This aspect of its work is a strength of the school's curriculum in physical education. Parents appreciate the high priority given to swimming and water safety, living so close to the sea.
146. The quality of teaching was good in two of the three lessons observed and very good in the third. The difference between the good and very good teaching resided in the degree to which subject knowledge was exercised. In the very good lesson, the teacher urged pupils to refine and improve upon their initial efforts, demonstrating the ways in which particular shapes or movements could be achieved and encouraging them to respond to her suggestions for improvement. In all lessons, teaching moved at a brisk pace and pupils were offered an appropriate range of movements to practise, with sufficient time to explore each. Generally, teachers offer the right balance of instruction, explanation and exercise, ensuring that pupils are not inactive for too long a period. They manage their pupils very well, creating an encouraging, but busy atmosphere to which pupils respond well. In every lesson, teachers pay due attention to matters of safety. Pupils respond well to this good teaching, listening carefully and heeding the advice and instructions given. They make particular effort when they are expected to improve upon their performance. Pupils work sensibly in pairs, planning shared movements and demonstrating these to others without embarrassment. Teaching assistants provide good support, encouraging those for whom they are responsible to join in activities and offer physical help where this is necessary.
147. All aspects of the curriculum for physical education are taught, but insufficient time is allocated to indoor activities in the winter. No class was timetabled for more than a single 40 minute lesson in the course of the inspection and this reduces to about 20 minutes of activity when changing times are taken into account. The subject co-ordinator, with a particular expertise in dance, has revised the scheme of work for the whole curriculum. This is a document helpful to teachers in their lesson planning. A useful, straightforward assessment procedure has been devised to help teachers to evaluate their pupils' progress. The time given to the co-ordinator for monitoring has not been used to focus on teaching, an important omission in a subject where there is little evidence of pupils' achievement and progress beyond the lesson. The school makes good provision for teaching its pupils to swim, making good use of facilities offered by the adjoining junior school. Pupils take part in local dance festivals and sponsored events and work in the subject is linked closely to the 'Healthy Schools' project. Resources for the subject are mostly good. There are many new items of apparatus and small games equipment.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

148. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the school in religious education and their attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Year 2. Those learning English as an additional language achieve well and some are able to enrich discussion through their knowledge of different cultures. Pupils are gaining good knowledge of a variety of different faiths and learning about the way in which beliefs affect the



way people live their lives. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development within individual lessons and over time.

149. Teachers use a variety of approaches including stories, discussion and religious artefacts to good effect to motivate pupils and develop pupils' understanding and knowledge. Year 1 pupils know the story of the creation and have made interesting displays in their classrooms. They know that Christians and Jews believe that God created the world and that these stories can be found in their holy books. They can tell the story of Noah's Ark and explain why we should care for animals and the environment. During the inspection pupils were reading a story from the Buddhist religion and discussing how we should treat animals. They were able to suggest that vets, 'Animal Hospital' and God look after animals. They knew how to care for pets. As well as homes, toys, food and water they were able to suggest they needed 'love'. They sensitively and maturely were able to suggest how you would show love to a cat. Pupils were absorbed in the story 'The Swan' and asked questions, such as, 'what does judgement mean?' and this was answered by another pupil who said, 'decide what to do'. In discussion pupils were able to give opinions of the characters making judgements about who was kind and unkind to the bird. They finally decided that the unkind character wasn't all bad because he helped to look after the bird in the end. From lessons in the previous term they had a good understanding of naming ceremonies in Sikh and Christian religions. They had looked at special clothing worn by members of different religions and some had dressed in Sikh clothing.
150. In Year 2, pupils were finding out about Guru Nanak by looking at two different religious pictures; some thought he was praying, others said he had a kind of sun behind his head but they were all sure he was a special holy man. In another class where the story had been read in the previous lesson pupils had remembered that 'Guru' means teacher and that Nanak had founded the Sikh religion. They knew that Nanak had meditated. One pupil explained that meditation means 'emptying your mind of everything'. The teacher talked the pupils through a meditation experience very well and afterwards pupils were willing to share their feelings and experiences with the class. One described being happy and having fun with friends from her other school, another described wonderful smells of cakes cooking and another saw a rainbow of her favourite colours, silver, gold and purple. All pupils, gained from this reflective experience. Earlier in the term pupils had studied weddings and were able to describe the main events in Christian and Sikh weddings. They had celebrated Harvest and distributed produce in the local community. Later in the term they had celebrated the Jewish festival of Hanukkah, making cards and drawing the special candlestick. They all took part in a dramatic presentation of the Christmas story.
151. Pupils' behaviour in religious education lessons and assemblies is excellent and they are very interested in the subject. They enjoy hearing stories from a range of different faiths and are interested to learn about the religious practices of their own and other religions. They are respectful as they explore issues relating to religion and can compare and contrast similarities and differences between a number of religions at a level appropriate for their age. For example they knew that Jesus was a teacher who travelled around with a group of friends. They also knew that Sikhs celebrate the birthday of Guru Nanak and Christians celebrate the birthday of Jesus. They show a caring attitude towards others less fortunate than themselves by sending Christmas presents to children in third world countries.
152. The quality of teaching is always at least good and very good use is made of artefacts, books, real experiences, music, art and drama activities to bring the material alive for pupils. Teachers plan their lessons in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus and are careful to teach the meaning of specialist vocabulary and symbols. Very good opportunities are given for pupils to develop their speaking skills by answering questions and contributing ideas to discussion. Opportunities are missed for pupils to explore their thoughts in writing. Worksheets are used unnecessarily for average and above average pupils, which limit their learning. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported both in discussion and with the activities which are appropriate to their needs. Written work is kept in a number of different books and folders making it difficult to monitor pupils' progress over time. Work is generally acknowledged with a tick but evaluative comments are rare. There is no assessment system to monitor pupils' progress towards the attainment targets of the syllabus at present, but a general comment is made on the annual report.

153. Assemblies are used very well to enrich the religious education curriculum and make the subject relevant. They celebrate, as a whole school, a range of festivals from different faiths, such as Divali, Eid and Advent. Three very good assemblies were seen during the inspection which were 'family occasions' and added considerably to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A Year 1 assembly linked well with their history topic on toys. The teacher had visited Kenya and talked about the toys which Kenyan children make for themselves. There were gasps of wonder when she demonstrated a movable toy made out of a wire coat hanger. They also enjoyed playing traditional instruments to accompany an African song they knew. A local poet joined another assembly to read a poem about 'What Keith had for Christmas' and the children were somewhat relieved to find that the carrot, conker and string were for a rabbit not a boy! It also helped them to appreciate how fortunate they are. There are good links with local places of worship and the local clergy, which enhance the subject further.
154. The focus on religious education in the school's curriculum makes an important contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils develop an understanding of other ways of life, both in other parts of the world, and multicultural Britain. It helps to create racial harmony because pupils have the opportunity to reflect on their own and other peoples' beliefs and to look at how this might impact on their own behaviour and attitudes.
155. The co-ordinator has been in post since September and has a clear idea about the changes needed for improvement. She teaches in Reception and is no longer involved in the planning for Years 1 and 2. The scheme of work in Year 1 has been revised, following the analysis of a staff questionnaire. A portfolio of children's work and photographs is being assembled. She also gives advice and help to colleagues on the teaching and content of their lessons. The monitoring of teaching and learning in the subject currently is unsatisfactory. The range of artefacts and books to enhance and enliven the subject is good and well organised and has improved since the last inspection. There are very good links with other curriculum areas except for ICT.