

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **POWERS HALL INFANT SCHOOL**

Witham

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114944

Headteacher: Mrs Annette Griffin

Reporting inspector: Ms Ruth Frith  
2490

Dates of inspection: 05 – 09 May 2003

Inspection number: 247513

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Spa Road Witham
Postcode:	CM8 1NA
Telephone number:	01376 512 605
Fax number:	01376 501054
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of Chair of Governors:	Mr R Lane
Date of previous inspection:	02 February 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2490	Ruth Frith	Registered inspector	Science Foundation Stage Educational inclusion Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9779	Suzanne Smith	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20063	Gerard Slamon	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Mathematics Physical education Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
27243	Ian Thatchell	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
23805	Margaret Lygoe	Team inspector	Art Design and technology English Music	
32387	Peter Wakeman	Team inspector	Geography History	

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London WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Powers Hall Infant School, designated Nursery and Speech and Language Unit is a larger than average size community school for boys and girls aged three to seven years. There are 269 pupils on roll, including 52 children in the nursery who attend part-time. In the nursery there are six designated places for pupils with special educational needs and four places for children identified through social services. The school also offers enhanced speech and language provision for ten pupils who receive most of their education in a separate unit housed in one of the classrooms. Most pupils who attend this unit live quite a distance from the school. The main school serves an urban area consisting of both rented and privately owned housing in the town of Witham. The percentage of pupils receiving free school meals is slightly below the national average although the headteacher believes that some parents do not claim their entitlement. On entry to school, overall, pupils show levels of attainment well below those seen nationally for children of the same age, particularly in the areas of language, literacy and communication. Currently, 61 pupils are identified as having special educational needs with a further 27 pupils being monitored closely because of perceived difficulties with their learning. Sixteen pupils have a Statements of Special Educational Need, including ten in the Speech and Language Unit. Pupils have a wide range of difficulties, including 19 pupils who receive additional support to develop their speech and communication skills. A very small number of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds.

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

Powers Hall Infant School, Designated Nursery and Speech and Language Unit is a good school with a supportive and caring ethos which promotes effective learning and enables pupils to flourish. Pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching is good, and effective support is given to those pupils who experience difficulty with their learning. Standards are rising in most areas and senior managers have identified good strategies to improve teaching and learning across the school. Pupils in Year 2 are currently attaining average standards in listening, reading and mathematics and below average standards in writing and science. Leadership and management of the school are good and the school provides good value for money.

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

- The friendly and caring ethos evident in the school encourages children to settle quickly and develop good attitudes to learning.
- Pupils achieve well and standards are rising in most subjects.
- The quality of teaching is good and support staff make a positive contribution to the pupils' learning.
- Teaching and support for pupils with special educational needs, including those in the Speech and Language Unit, are good and help them to make good progress.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good and helps to develop pupils' good behaviour and personal education, and fosters very good relationships.
- The school is well led and managed.
- Staff have developed effective links with parents who, in turn, have positive views of the school.

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

- Standards of attainment in writing, science and history.
- The way staff assess what pupils know and can do and use this information to plan future work.
- Attendance.

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

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

Improvement since the last inspection has been good and staff are continuing to develop their practice and raise standards. The school has successfully addressed most of the key issues arising from the last inspection in 1998 but more work is needed to improve procedures for assessment and the use of information gained from these to plan appropriate work. Staff also need to continue to develop pupils'

awareness of life in a diverse, multi-cultural society. The quality of teaching has improved as teachers increase their knowledge of the subjects to be taught in areas such as mathematics, information and communication technology and religious education but more focus is needed when teaching scientific investigation and enquiry. Senior management roles have now been clearly defined to ensure a better understanding of whole school issues and school development. The subject leaders' roles have also been developed and this has helped to ensure that the quality of provision is monitored more rigorously. Curriculum requirements are now met for the teaching of information and communication technology and religious education.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

In the nursery and reception classes, children achieve well. They are likely to reach the standards expected nationally for children of that age in mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development by the time they move into Year 1. However, a significant number of children are unlikely to reach the expected standards in communication, early reading and writing skills. Although they make good progress, attainment on entry is well below average and it is difficult for the children to reach national standards in such a short time. They are already reaching the national targets for their personal, social and emotional development and attain higher than average standards in some aspects of physical development. In the 2002 national tests, Year 2 pupils achieved standards which were average in reading, below average in writing and above average in mathematics. Results of the 2002 teacher assessments for science indicate below average standards overall because fewer pupils than expected attained a higher Level 3. Similarly, standards in writing were lower because no pupils gained a Level 3. Overall, these results indicate an improvement in standards since the last inspection in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's trend of improvement over the last five years has been higher than the national trend, particularly in reading and mathematics. This was recognised nationally by the school receiving the School Achievement Award for the last two years.

Evidence from this inspection indicates that most pupils in Year 2 achieve well but standards remain below average in speaking, listening, writing, science and history. Standards are average in all other subjects apart from in art and design where they are above average. Differences in attainment between last year's test results and the levels that pupils are working at now is related to the particular pupils in each cohort, for example, the increased number of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 2. Pupils with special educational needs, including those that attend the unit, are well supported and make good progress towards their targets. Higher-attainers generally receive work which develops their learning at an appropriate rate but in some aspects of science the work is insufficiently challenging. No significant difference was noted in the progress and attainment of girls and boys during the inspection although in the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2002, girls did better than boys in reading and writing and boys did better than girls in mathematics.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	On entry to school, children are keen to learn and they develop good attitudes. They are interested in what they do and want to speak about their achievements.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils respond well to the high expectations of staff and most are polite to adults and each other. Behaviour is good.
Personal development and relationships	Good personal development. Pupils become increasingly more responsible as they progress through the school and become sensitive to the needs of others. Relationships between pupils and adults and amongst pupils themselves are very good.
Attendance	For the last academic year, attendance rates were well below the national average.

The pupils' good attitudes, behaviour and personal development, together with their very good relationships provide a good basis for learning and make a positive contribution to the standards achieved. The unsatisfactory attendance of some pupils has a detrimental effect on their learning.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and 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 has improved significantly since the last inspection as the percentage of very good or better teaching has increased and no unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Teachers and support staff work well in the nursery and reception classes providing children with a good range of activities which develop their attitudes to learning well. Children quickly settle in school and become familiar with the teachers' expectations and the routines of the day. Teachers recognise the well below average attainment on entry of some children and focus on developing their speaking, listening, early reading, writing and mathematical skills. In Years 1 and 2, teachers have developed the National Numeracy Strategy well and the teaching of mathematics is good. This has helped to raise standards. Teachers have been less successful in developing the National Literacy Strategy to meet the needs of the pupils and teaching of English is satisfactory overall. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length and insufficient writing is done in subjects such as history, religious education, design and technology and science. Also, although teachers encourage pupils to form their letters correctly in handwriting sessions this is not followed up in their other lessons. In science, teachers do not always clearly develop pupils' skills of enquiry and investigation or provide sufficient challenge for the higher-attainers and these affect the pupils' progress. Similarly in history, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to research topics and develop their skills of historical enquiry. The school's valuable additional support for those pupils with special educational needs results in these pupils achieving in line with their abilities. Teachers manage pupils very well and use a good range of teaching methods to maintain the pupils' interests.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Overall, staff provide a satisfactory range of learning opportunities although in Years 1 and 2 there are some weaknesses in the provision for writing, history and some aspects of science.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs, including those in the Speech and Language Unit, is good. Their needs are identified well and the curriculum adapted, when necessary, to enhance their learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good and provision for their cultural development is satisfactory. There is a need for staff to continue to develop pupils' awareness of life in a multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff support the social development of pupils very well. Procedures to monitor and promote their academic progress and attendance need to be further developed through improvements in the way teachers assess pupils' learning. There is a need to develop written procedures to formalise some aspects of health and safety.

Staff have developed good links with parents and provide them with good quality information. Parents have positive views of the school and satisfactorily contribute to their children's learning at home and at school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher, who is in her second year at the school, has worked hard to gain the confidence of staff, parents and governors. She has developed the role of senior managers well and they, in turn, have clear responsibilities in relation to school improvement and monitoring.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and are now more pro-active than they were in the past. Statutory requirements are met apart from a few minor omissions in the written information presented to parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has a system of monitoring and target setting which is guiding school improvement and raising standards.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school manages and uses its resources satisfactorily overall and there are some strengths in the way it uses its budget to support pupils with special education needs. Correct financial procedures are followed and staff and governors obtain the best value for their spending.

There are sufficient suitably qualified teachers to ensure that class sizes are not too large. Support staff are experienced and make positive contributions to the pupils' learning. Resources are generally satisfactory with improvements in provision for information and communication technology and shortages in some areas of special educational needs and the teaching of geography. Accommodation is satisfactory overall and recent developments to partition classroom areas have resulted in a quiet, calm

atmosphere. The library area is limited and restricts opportunities for pupils to develop their independent research skills.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like school and make good progress.</li> <li>• Provision for pupils who attend the Speech and Language Unit is good.</li> <li>• The staff help children to become responsible and this encourages them to behave well.</li> <li>• Pupils receive the right amount of work to do at home.</li> <li>• Teaching is good and children are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• Parents feel comfortable talking to staff about any queries they might have and feel well informed.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>• The entrance area to the school which is now cramped and gets congested.</li> </ul>

Inspectors endorse the positive views held by parents and the regard they have for the school. They looked closely at the issues raised by a very small number of parents but believe the range of extra-curricular activities to be satisfactory for pupils of this age. The school has already begun to look at how the entrance to the school can be improved and has reserved sufficient funds to complete the work.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children are admitted to the nursery after the age of three and although some children are achieving levels expected for their age, a significant number are not, particularly in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Children make good progress in the nursery and reception classes because the teaching is good and they are well motivated by the good range of activities offered. By the time they start in Year 1, children currently in the reception classes are likely to reach national standards in mathematical, creative and physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Their standards are likely to be below those seen for children of the same age nationally in communication, language and literacy because their attainment in these areas is low on entry to school. Children are already reaching the national targets for their personal, social and emotional development, and attain higher than average standards in some aspects of physical development.
2. Results of the 2002 standard assessment tests for pupils in Year 2 indicate that, in comparison with all schools, pupils' attainment was average in reading, below average in writing and above average in mathematics. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was broadly average for reading and mathematics but no pupils attained a Level 3 in writing. Results of the 2002 teacher assessments in science indicate that the number of pupils reaching the expected level for their age (Level 2) was average but the percentage reaching the higher Level 3 was below average. When compared with pupils from similar schools, pupils attained below average standards in reading, well below average standards in writing and above average standards in mathematics. These overall results indicate an improvement in standards in reading and writing and a levelling off in mathematics from the previous year. They also show an improvement in standards in reading, writing and mathematics compared with those at the time of the last inspection. The trend of improvement over the last five years has been higher than the national trend, particularly in reading and mathematics.
3. Evidence from this inspection indicates that standards in English of pupils currently in Year 2 are below those expected for pupils of this age. Achievement overall is satisfactory although some pupils are underachieving in writing. The school has identified the need to raise standards in writing and the strategies adopted are beginning to bring improvements. For example, it is expected that some pupils in the current Year 2 will gain a Level 3 in their national writing test this year whereas, last year no pupils did. The school has developed a good range of strategies to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills, but because attainment in these areas is well below average on entry to school, a significant number of pupils are not likely to reach the standard expected for their age on leaving the school. Standards in reading are broadly average and pupils benefit from the good focus on helping pupils to learn the sounds that letters make (phonics) and use this when reading unfamiliar words.
4. The overall standards for mathematics of pupils currently working in Year 2 are broadly average and standards for numeracy are above those expected for pupils of this age. There is a strong emphasis on the good teaching of numeracy and pupils make good progress as a result of this. Higher-attainers are appropriately challenged and make good progress in line with their abilities. Any differences in the attainment of this cohort and that of the last Year 2 reflect the abilities of the particular pupils in each year group. For example, there is currently a high number of pupils with special educational needs who although they have made good progress are unlikely to reach the national standard expected for pupils of this age.
5. The percentage of Year 2 pupils working at the level appropriate for their age in science is broadly average and they achieve satisfactorily. This reflects the findings of the last inspection. However, overall standards are below average because few pupils are attaining a higher level, particularly in the areas of scientific investigation and enquiry. The work set to develop pupils' learning in these

areas is sometimes confusing and consequently, pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Higher-attainers are not sufficiently challenged and this affects the overall attainment levels for pupils in Year 2.

6. Pupils in Year 2 are currently reaching average levels of attainment in design and technology, geography, information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education. Standards are above average in art and design and the area of the physical education programme relating to games' skills. In both these areas, pupils make good progress because skills are taught well. Pupils also sing well because the quality of teaching is good and they have regular opportunity to sing with a piano accompaniment. Standards are below average in history because insufficient time is allocated to the subject and pupils do little written work to consolidate their learning.
7. Although differences in the attainment of girls and boys have been noted in national test results for seven-year-olds, no significant differences were seen during the inspection. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is small. As a result, it is difficult to analyse accurately trends of attainment and progress of these pupils. Nevertheless, inspection findings show that these pupils are supported well, have full access to the school's curriculum and their progress is similar to that of their peers.
8. Pupils of higher-attainment are sometimes appropriately challenged and reach standards in line with their abilities. However, in some subjects such as science and history, the work is insufficiently challenging and consequently their progress is unsatisfactory. Insufficient evidence is available to make a judgement on the progress of gifted and talented pupils in Years 1 and 2. Pupils with special educational needs who receive support in lessons or who have individual or group lessons, make good progress. They reach levels of attainment which are below the levels of attainment for pupils of their age, but which still relate well to their ability levels.

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

9. As at the time of the last inspection attitudes to learning are usually good throughout the school. Pupils are enthusiastic about the range of activities offered both in lessons and through the various lunchtime clubs provided for them. Inspection evidence confirms the views of most parents that their children enjoy coming to school. Pupils are confident and happy and this results in an effective environment in which they flourish as good learners. Although most try hard, even when they find work difficult, they are usually confident to ask for help when they need to. Pupils like and respect staff. This, together with the high expectations that teachers have of pupils, results in them working industriously, doing their best and wanting to achieve. Despite this, they are sometimes careless about the presentation of their work. Pupils grow in self-esteem in response to the system of awards that acknowledges achievement in all aspects of their lives at school, for example, when they try really hard before asking for help. When provided with opportunities for working independently there is a satisfactory response. However, investigative skills are not well developed, partly because of limitations in library provision.
10. Most pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude to learning. When working individually or in a small group with the support of a teacher or learning assistant they show good levels of confidence. They persevere with challenging tasks and enjoy the sessions.
11. Standards of behaviour in lessons are good. Pupils usually respond well to the consistently applied strategies used to manage their behaviour and this results in a calm and positive environment in which learning takes place. In the lessons seen, behaviour was always at least satisfactory, and often much better. Pupils respond well to the high expectations of their teachers. Their involvement in agreeing rules for their own classrooms ensures they know what is expected. There were no fixed term exclusions during the last year, although there was one that was permanent. There were sound reasons for this that left governors with no alternative. At lunchtime, behaviour is good. Pupils are well mannered and polite to staff on duty. Recently changed dining arrangements have resulted in reduced crowding in the dining room and a consequent improvement in standards of behaviour. Pupils clear away after themselves responsibly and leave very little litter. School premises are treated with respect. In the

playground, most pupils play and socialise happily, although a few, usually boys, are over-boisterous and this leads to more 'bumps and spills' than are necessary.

12. The school has built on the very positive relationships seen at the time of the previous inspection and these are now very good and one of its strengths. The mutual respect evident between teachers and pupils has a good impact on learning as it results in high levels of co-operation and a desire to please. Throughout the school there is a good sense of community and pupils are supportive of, and helpful to, their peers. Circle time contributes well to this as pupils grow in confidence about sharing their worries and expressing their views about how to resolve conflict. They progressively develop an understanding of how their actions impact on other people and when there is a need to apologise. In lessons, pupils usually listen attentively to what others have to say and rarely interrupt. This results in most being confident to answer questions or to share their work without fear of ridicule. For example, in a mathematics lesson seen during the week of inspection, pupils were happy to demonstrate different patterns to their peers. Pupils work together well; they collaborate effectively, use their imagination and engage in meaningful discussion. When asked to take responsibility, for example as class monitors, they discharge their duties with pride. There is a positive response to the newly formed school council. Pupils value the opportunity provided to express their views and opinions about matters affecting the school community. Understanding of the wider community in which they live, together with the lives of other people, develops well through the work pupils do for charity.
13. Levels of attendance for the last school year are slightly below those at the time of the last inspection. Since that time standards achieved nationally by similar schools have risen overall. At 91.6 per cent attendance is well below the national average and impacts on pupils' learning. The number of parents who take their children on family holidays during term time is high. Other reasons for absence include families that are experiencing social problems, some parental condoned absence and a higher than usual proportion of sickness. Unauthorised absence is above that usually seen at 0.9 per cent for the last school year. This is higher than at the time of the last inspection and the trend for the current year shows a continuing rise. During the week of the inspection, the large majority of pupils arrived on time for the start of the school day. There are a few who are regularly late.

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

14. The school has significantly improved the quality of teaching since the last inspection and this has helped to enhance the progress which pupils make and the standards that they achieve. Teaching is good and, of the lessons observed, very good or better in a fifth. There has been an increase in the very good or better teaching and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Staff have been encouraged to develop their teaching and support of pupils and they regularly share their expertise and good practice.
15. The quality of the teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is good overall and occasionally very good or excellent. This good quality teaching helps children settle quickly into school routines and is an important factor in the way children develop good personal, emotional and social skills. Staff work well as a team and share a consistent approach to teaching and learning. In the nursery and reception classes, planning is good and reflects the national guidance for teaching children of this age. A good range of activities is provided which maintains the children's interest and supports their learning. There is a good balance between direct adult teaching and activities which encourage the children's ability to make choices and work independently or with each other. The support staff give valuable help to children which develops their confidence and ability to learn.
16. These good features are systematically built upon in Years 1 and 2, where the teaching is also good and often better. Teachers are focusing on developing the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and the recent focus on raising standards in writing is beginning to bring about improvements. Staff have placed Year 2 pupils in sets with pupils of similar ability. This has helped to reduce the numbers in the classes and helped teachers to focus on a narrower range of

ability within each set. Teachers develop the pupils' basic skills in a coherent way. They have satisfactorily adopted the National Literacy Strategy and the teaching of English is satisfactory. Aspects of this strategy have helped to develop pupils' reading but teachers need to adapt it more to improve the pupils' writing skills. Currently, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length or across all areas of the curriculum. Also, the teaching of handwriting is mainly effective in the handwriting lessons and pupils do not transfer the skills learnt here to their other writing.

17. Teachers have successfully used the National Numeracy Strategy to raise standards in mathematics overall but particularly in numeracy. The quality of teaching is good as children are appropriately challenged and respond enthusiastically to well-planned activities. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this effectively, as in a very good Year 2 lesson when teaching helped pupils to think deeply and respond well to the challenges set.
18. Across the school, teachers' planning is generally good although in some lessons the needs of higher-attainers are not well met. Teachers clearly identify what is to be learnt and, in the best lessons, share this with pupils. This means that the pupils are sure about what they should learn, and at the end of most lessons have the opportunity to reflect on the progress that they have made. A good range of teaching methods is used to gain the interest of the pupils and ensure that they are involved in their learning. For example, in a very good Year 1 session, pupils were taught through a variety of activities which focused on developing their listening and speaking skills. Good progress was made from a low base as pupils were kept well motivated when they changed from whole-class activities to working in groups.
19. In the best lessons, expectations are high, the pace of learning is good and pupils are challenged. Overall, teachers have good subject knowledge although there are some weaknesses in how they develop pupils' writing and how they teach scientific investigation and enquiry skills. Teachers generally use time and resources well, and support staff are well deployed. This makes efficient use of all resources available.
20. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is very good and this has a significant influence on how staff successfully manage the pupils in their care. The resulting good behaviour means no time is wasted and pupils sustain good levels of concentration. Teachers and learning support assistants are very skilled in recognising when some individual pupils with special educational needs require additional support before they are likely to disrupt learning and quickly divert or attract their attention. This results in the needs of individual pupils being well met and pupils maintaining a good pace of learning without disruption. Learning support assistants and nursery assistants work well alongside class teachers and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
21. Teachers are encouraging and supportive and this results in most pupils becoming confident, keen to answer questions and put forward their views. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils and encourage them to improve and work harder in lessons if they think they can, or give additional support when learning becomes difficult. Teachers comment on pupils' work in lessons and sometimes in their books but pupils are not clear about how they can improve because targets have not been set. Staff work hard to improve the environment by displaying pupils' work. This supports the children's sense of self-esteem and encourages them to work harder. Provision of homework is satisfactory and supports the work done in school, particularly in English and mathematics.
22. The quality of teaching is good in mathematics, geography, music, physical education and religious education and satisfactory in English, science and information and communication technology. Insufficient teaching was observed to make an overall judgement of teaching in design and technology and in history.
23. The school is beginning to recognise the needs of higher-attaining pupils but in some lessons they are not being appropriately challenged and consequently do not make the progress of which they are capable. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson, pupils were all given the same



activity. Whereas the average and below average attainers were given appropriate support to make observations and record their findings, higher-attainers could have been encouraged more to express their own ideas about finding out about things and record their observations in a variety of ways. Staff have begun to identify gifted and talented pupils and are aware of how their needs could be met. This has not been done for pupils in Year 2. Pupils from minority ethnic groups are well supported, so that they are included in all class activities and progress at a similar rate to their peers, in line with their levels of attainment. Teachers are aware of the possible differences in the needs of girls and boys, use a good range of teaching methods to meet these needs and provide a range of reading books to maintain their interests.

24. The standard of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. When pupils are given appropriate support within well-planned lessons much is achieved. In classes or ability sets pupils with special educational needs who receive additional support, and work related to their ability, make good progress. The teachers and support staff involved build up a good relationship with these pupils and, with gentle encouragement, take every opportunity to extend their knowledge and understanding. However, in some classes observed, the work expected of pupils did not meet their abilities. The quality of teaching for pupils in the Speech and Language Unit is good and together with the work undertaken by speech therapists and support staff is the most important factor in raising pupils' self-esteem and levels of achievement.

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

25. The curriculum meets statutory requirements for all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The school's provision for children in the Foundation Stage of learning and for pupils in the Speech and Language Unit, the teaching of basic numeracy skills, and the teaching of games skills in the physical education programme, are strengths of the curriculum. The main weaknesses in provision are that there are too few regularly planned opportunities for extended writing of English through the curriculum, and for the progressive development of pupils' investigative skills in science.
26. Time spent in lessons generally meets the nationally recommended time, but the school needs to ensure that the teaching of history is clearly identified within topic work so that pupils' skills and knowledge are progressively developed. The official frameworks of the national strategies are helping to strengthen provision for English and mathematics. Although basic numeracy skills are well taught in mathematics and in other subjects, the contribution that other subjects can make to the development of writing skills has yet to be fully exploited. The school has correctly identified writing and investigative science as areas for development in its current improvement plan. Provision for information and communication technology has been strengthened significantly since the last inspection when the school was not meeting statutory requirements for the subject. The much improved facilities and the training teachers have received, allow the school to teach the full curriculum more effectively. Computers now need to be used more regularly through the school day so that pupils can practise what they have been taught and apply their skills to support learning in other subjects. Provision for religious education has also improved since the last inspection. A well structured scheme of work is now in place, combining national recommendations with the programme of the locally agreed syllabus. The school has worked hard to adopt the schemes of work produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and to adapt them to the needs of the school. Teachers' planning shows effective links between the school's teaching programme and the National Curriculum attainment targets.
27. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities for pupils of this age and the school has plans to increase this provision. Football, the lunchtime club and the early morning Gym Trail, are well used to enhance the curriculum and to add to pupils' enjoyment. The school has developed good links with the local community and makes effective use of a range of trips, visits and visitors to support the curriculum. Visits to the local church, the seaside, the zoo, museums, local supermarkets and local walks are regularly undertaken. Visits from theatre groups, local police,

Christian youth organisations, the dog club and the road safety officer, give strong support to pupils' learning experiences and sense of citizenship. Satisfactory use is made of homework to support pupils' learning and to develop their independent learning skills.

28. The school is committed to the principles of educational inclusion. It successfully meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs by providing a good level of well-trained support. Teachers use this support well in ensuring that pupils with special educational and physical needs are able to participate fully in lessons and make progress similar to that of their peers. The curricular needs of pupils identified by teachers and the special needs co-ordinators become part of the pupils' individual educational plans which are discussed and agreed with pupils and parents to comply with the recommendations of the Code of Practice. Pupils are fully integrated and those who receive additional support generally make good progress. This works particularly well during literacy and numeracy hours and is a very efficient use of the teaching assistants. Pupils' individual education plans match their needs and the targets set are generally sufficiently specific and easy to measure. The national Code of Practice is met in the identification and assessment of pupils' special educational needs and continuing assessment is good. The school also complies with the Race Relations and Disabilities Acts and has systems in place to monitor their implementation.
29. There is a very good, detailed programme of personal, social and health education, which provides well for sex education and teaching an awareness of the misuse of drugs. Issues relating to these important issues occur within the personal, social and health education programme, science and other areas of the curriculum. The involvement of the health service, the community police and road safety officer in the programme ensures that pupils are made aware of health issues and given accurate facts as part of their preparation for adult life.
30. The school is forging close, constructive working relationships with the junior school to which pupils transfer. The jointly planned transition programme for Year 2 pupils helps prepare them well for the next stage of their education. Good links with the local college allow for the sharing of expertise in information and communication technology, for example.
31. The overall provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This underpins the work of the school and makes it a stimulating and supportive environment in which to learn and develop. The school is very successful in raising pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils are confident that they are valued and respected as individuals.
32. The provision for spiritual, moral and social development is very good and for cultural development is satisfactory. Assemblies are used very effectively to promote a sense of purpose and community. The presence and the active participation of all class teachers and many teaching assistants ensure that pupils are aware that assembly is an important part of the day. There are good opportunities for pupils to pray and reflect, and to sing together. Moral and social themes are tackled at a suitable level for young children. An assembly confidently led by the Speech and Language Unit illustrated the way in which all pupils have the opportunity to flourish and achieve well within the school community. The school is clean, tidy and welcoming. Bright and attractive displays make every classroom a pleasant place to learn, and pupils' work is clearly valued. All the staff provide very good role models in their relationships with each other and with the pupils. All pupils can be confident that adults will listen to them.
33. Staff have a consistent approach to behaviour in school and create a calm atmosphere for pupils to enjoy. Pupils are helped to understand right from wrong and to understand the impact of their actions on others. Good behaviour and attitudes are praised and explained so that others understand the importance of positive behaviour. The recently established school council offers pupils the valuable opportunity to contribute their views on aspects of the school. Pupils have good opportunities to work together in small and large groups. Links with the wider community are fostered effectively through opportunities to contribute to charities and through the links with a creche in South Africa. The latter helps pupils to understand other cultures as they receive photographs and see how these children live. Pupils also read books which are based in a range of countries and thereby learn about differences in the environment and how this affects diet and

housing. Pupils are taught about different religions and celebrate some key religious festivals. They hear music from different cultures and use artists' work to help them develop their own creative work. More needs to be done to prepare pupils for life in our multi-cultural society.

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

34. The school makes satisfactory arrangements to provide for the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Members of staff know individual pupils very well indeed and this, together with the positive relationships seen throughout the school, results in pupils developing as confident learners. Child protection procedures have been recently updated to meet local guidance and there is a suitably trained person with designated responsibility for dealing with any problems that arise. When needed, the school works closely with local support services and the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) visits the school regularly. Although induction arrangements are largely informal, new teaching staff are made aware of the procedures they need to follow in the event of concern. Other members of staff, including learning support assistants, are less secure in their knowledge of child protection procedures; although they know to whom they should report concerns. The school monitors individual children well. Reports are prepared for social services and case conferences attended as required. The police liaison officer visits regularly to work with pupils about personal safety issues. Security at the school is reviewed regularly, and there are good levels of supervision when pupils are at play.
35. Health and safety is a regular item for discussion at meetings of governors and the person with overall responsibility has been recently trained. Equipment and appliances used by the school are tested with sufficient regularity to meet statutory requirements. Fire drills are held each term and ensure pupils and staff are aware of emergency procedures. Safety matters are suitably addressed in subject policies and teachers ensure pupils follow safety procedures during lessons. The medical room is located where pupils can be supervised effectively when they are unwell. There are suitable arrangements for first aid needs and there are several staff trained to deal with immediate emergencies. There are well thought out arrangements for dealing with prescribed medicines. Procedures for staff to make an assessment of the risks involved before pupils are taken on trips and visits out of school are in place. Governors arrange a conscientious inspection of the premises once each year to identify possible safety hazards. This has not yet, however, been linked to a formal assessment of risk.
36. Although the school is aware of the need to monitor and raise levels of attendance, procedures to support this have been given insufficient attention and are poor. Registers are usually taken each morning and afternoon as required and kept centrally for use in an emergency. When pupils are late after registration, however, their presence is not recorded until the time of the next registration when the absent mark against their name is changed to record that they were late. The school telephones parents or carers on the first day of any unexplained absence. There is effective support from the EWO who visits the school regularly, checks on and follows up pupils whose attendance falls below 85 per cent. The school does not, however, make best use of the time available from the EWO by routinely identifying and following up problems before this stage is reached. Although attendance records are computerised, the levels achieved by the various groups that make up the school community are not analysed as part of a strategy for improving attendance, for example, by those with special needs, by gender, registration group and others. The impact of unsatisfactory attendance is not always made clear to parents in the reports they receive annually about their children's progress. This limits opportunities for the school to work with them about this. There are awards offered each term for pupils who manage to achieve 100 per cent attendance.
37. There has been a recent focus on improving behaviour and the school has in place good procedures for monitoring and promoting high standards. There is an effective behaviour policy that gives very clear guidance to staff about strategies to be used and steps to be taken to deal with misbehaviour. There is an emphasis on reinforcing positive behaviour and this successfully raises the self-esteem of pupils. Procedures are used consistently well in lessons, are effective and result in pupils being clear about what is expected of them. Although the exclusion of pupils

is rare, the school has suitable procedures in place to deal with this. There is no separate policy for dealing with the very few instances of bullying that occur, although parents are confident that staff will deal with it effectively should the need arise. The involvement of pupils in agreeing their own classroom rules ensures they feel ownership of these. Where behaviour causes concern the school seeks to work with parents to find a way forward. The school is continuing to work with lunchtime supervisors to improve behaviour management skills as a means of dealing with some over boisterous and unfocused play at lunchtime.

38. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress and achievement are inconsistent and overall are unsatisfactory. Whilst, for example, teachers assess pupils well in mathematics, in other subjects such as science, assessment practice is weak. There are no whole-school assessment and recording procedures for other subjects and although individual teachers use their own methods of assessing pupils' work, this inconsistent practice makes it difficult to monitor pupils' progress over time. Since the previous inspection good progress has been made in the collection and co-ordination of assessment information across the school in, for example, English and mathematics and the school is beginning to keep data that can track and predict pupils' progress from reception to Year 2. The school's use of a computer program to support this work is developing. However, routine dissemination of the information and consistent use by all class teachers is unsatisfactory and results in uneven and unsatisfactory curriculum planning, for example, for the higher-attainers in science. Also, teachers do not regularly set targets for pupils in subjects such as English or refer to these when planning activities. Consequently, pupils and parents are not always aware of how pupils can improve their work.
39. Pupils with special educational needs generally receive good support within the school, from teachers, non-teaching staff and pupils. Systems are in place to enable pupils to cope with difficult situations. Their progress is monitored and specialist support from a variety of external agencies is sought when needed and used effectively. Teachers assess these pupils' needs well and use the information to provide an appropriate curriculum.
40. Staff know pupils very well indeed and the personal support and guidance offered are very good. Home visits are made before children start in the nursery; this, together with a 'welcome to school' event ensure that most are confident and happy when they start at the school. The consistent, positive relationships with adults results in pupils being able to share concerns when they need to. Personal, health and social education incorporates effective guidance about such matters as diet, response to questions about relationships, care about drugs (for example medicines), and the responsibilities they have as members of a community. The programme of assemblies is used well to promote personal development and to raise self-esteem through the celebration of achievement in all aspects of their lives. Staff monitor the personal development of individual pupils informally, using circle time where needed, to deal with issues that arise. Annual reports to parents about their children's progress provide an effective evaluation of their personal development. There are suitable arrangements in place to introduce pupils in Year 2 to the junior school and this helps to ensure a smooth transition to the next stage of their education.

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

41. Those parents returning questionnaires and attending the meeting held before the inspection express very good levels of satisfaction with what the school provides and achieves. They are unanimous in saying that staff are approachable, that their children are taught well, are expected to work hard and that they make good progress. Almost all are positive about the way the school is led and managed and feel that staff work closely with them and that they are well informed about how their children are doing. They say their children like coming to school and are helped to become mature and responsible. Inspection evidence confirms these positive views. A few parents feel there are insufficient activities provided outside of lessons and some are unsure about what is provided. Inspectors are able to reassure parents that provision of such activities in relation to the age of their children is satisfactory and many pupils are enthusiastic about the interesting range of activities that teachers provide, particularly during each lunchtime.

42. The school has established a good partnership with parents. Home visits before starting in the nursery ensure staff know the personal circumstances of children well and establish positive relationships with parents at an early stage. The recently started mother and toddler group successfully introduces younger children to the school and develops positive relationships with parents. Those parents visiting the school for 'drop in' mornings are able to sit in on lessons and meet staff informally at break time. There are information events held for parents of children in Year 2 about arrangements for transfer to the junior school and about the tests their children take at the end of the year. Parents find office staff welcoming, they feel able to talk with teachers and are appreciative of systems that ensure telephone calls are returned. Newsletters are informative and provide parents with useful dates for their diaries. There is a home/school agreement in place that outlines suitable expectations for an effective working partnership. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents provide much of the required information, although some points have been overlooked. These include the need to provide for parents a summary of the school's results of testing at the end of Year 2 together

with national comparisons, a report on the progress made on the action plan drawn up following the last inspection, some of the information required about provision for disabled pupils and the terms of office of the governors together with information about by whom they were appointed.

43. Annual progress reports for parents usually provide an effective evaluation of what pupils know and can do in English, identifying for them areas that need to be focused on to support progress. In mathematics there is good information about what children are able to do but reports are less helpful in identifying what needs to be done to improve. This limits opportunities for parents to support their children at home. In other subjects reporting is more general with little evaluation of pupils' relative strengths and areas for development. The personal development of pupils and their attitudes are reported well. Although parents receive a full record of their children's attendance they are not suitably informed about expected standards and the impact of poor attendance on their children's learning. Results of their children's testing at the end of Year 2 are communicated to parents effectively. Consultations each term with teachers provide parents with good opportunities to find out how their children are doing and also to see their work. Most parents take advantage of these and also the opportunity to discuss the progress reports that are provided at the end of the school year. Parents of children with Statements of Special Educational Need are encouraged to attend and contribute to annual reviews, as well as the meetings each term to discuss progress towards targets set in individual education plans.
44. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved and informed at all stages of a pupil's assessment and review; contact is maintained at other times on an informal basis. Parents have access to class teachers, who have good communications with the special educational needs co-ordinators. This maintains a steady flow of information.
45. The involvement of parents and the interest they take in their children's learning have a satisfactory impact on the work of the school. Despite the school's best efforts there has been little interest from parents in forming a parent and teacher association. Parents do, however, support events organised by the school very well, for example the summer fair, performances and class assemblies. A few parents help out in the school on a regular basis in response to encouragement through newsletters and the governors' annual report. A large minority use the home/school book effectively as a means of two-way communication with their children's teachers. Most are confident to approach teachers and this results in the effective communication of problems and concerns.

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

46. The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior managers are good. The headteacher has successfully managed to maintain the good practice evident on her appointment to the school and has identified areas for improvement with a focus on raising standards. She has a good vision for the school and her leadership ensures clear educational direction. She is keen to

ensure that pupils are stimulated by their learning and achieve as well as they can. Senior managers share a good understanding of how young children learn and this is reflected in the school's practice, which encourages independence and learning through a good range of activities. These features are well demonstrated in the school, where an ethos of care and concern together with high expectations are evident. By the time pupils leave the school they are confident and sensitive to the needs of others. There is a good degree of mutual tolerance and respect, and racial harmony is evident. This reflects the school's commitment to equality of opportunity for all.

47. The headteacher has developed the roles of senior managers well by increasing their responsibilities for school improvement and monitoring. This is reflected in the change of title for this group from Senior Management Team to Strategic Management Team. There is no deputy headteacher in post but responsibilities are allocated to ensure appropriate coverage of duties should the headteacher be absent. This ensures the smooth day-to-day running of the school. Senior managers have a clear view of the school's strengths and priorities for development. The role of subject co-ordinator is developing and is good in some areas. However, in subjects such as English and science, co-ordinators need the opportunity to focus more closely on monitoring

achievement and raising standards. Co-ordination and management of special educational needs and the Speech and Language Unit are good. This ensures that staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and work together in teams to ensure pupils make good progress.

48. The school's aims of raising standards and improving the quality of education are increasingly reflected in its work. Since the last inspection, systems have improved to monitor pupils' progress and to evaluate the quality of teaching. This has brought about significant improvements in the quality of teaching and the standards which pupils achieve. There is a good culture of monitoring and target setting that keeps the school moving forward towards achieving its aims. The school improvement plan sets a clear agenda for improvement and is the result of a sound consultation process. The fact that some of the areas for development highlighted in this report have also been identified by staff confirm this positive aspect of management.
49. The school has successfully addressed most of the key issues arising from the last inspection and the school has made good improvement overall. More needs to be done to develop assessment practice and to prepare pupils for life in a diverse, multi-cultural society. Governors give full support to the school and they and the headteacher have worked hard to raise standards and involve parents and the community. Governors have sound levels of knowledge and are well informed, which helps them to be fully involved in discussions and developments. They undertake their duties diligently and fulfil their roles satisfactorily. They have become more pro-active over the last year or so and this helps them to fulfil the role of 'critical friend' more successfully. Governors, headteacher and staff continue to show a clear commitment to maintaining the pace of improvement. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities, although there are a few minor omissions in their annual report to parents and in the school's prospectus.
50. The area of special educational needs is well managed and the school has successfully introduced the new Code of Practice for special educational needs pupils. Any pupil who is giving cause for concern is assessed and suitable action taken, if necessary. All assessments and reviews are carried out accurately and regularly. The special educational needs co-ordinators administer the day-to-day organisation of pupils with the involvement of the headteacher and class teachers. They check that targets set in pupils' individual education plans are clearly linked to pupils' needs and addressed by class teachers and learning support assistants. Parents are involved at all stages and receive regular reports on their child's progress. The governing body supports and monitors the provision for pupils with special educational needs, and outlines the school's provision for these pupils, in its annual report to parents.
51. Recent changes to accommodation that have partitioned classroom areas have resulted in an improved environment that is calm and where there are few distractions for pupils. Further improvements are planned, particularly to the entrance of the school where there is congestion at

the beginning and end of the day because of the narrow pathway. The accommodation overall is sufficient to teach the curriculum and there is ongoing work to improve access for those with mobility problems. Limited accommodation for the library restricts opportunities for pupils to use this for independent research. The audio visual room is a particular asset and used well, especially for music. The special needs unit is an asset to the school, although space available is limited. Day-to-day maintenance and minor improvements are very effectively accomplished.

52. There is a satisfactory supply of learning resources overall to meet the needs of the curriculum. The quality is generally good, as is the storage that enables ease of access. There are areas of strength, for example, the use of the wildlife area for science, the outdoor play area for children in the nursery and reception classes, a range of musical instruments that is culturally diverse and enables pupils to make choices. The equipment for outdoor games is sufficient to ensure all pupils are actively engaged. In information and communication technology, resources have improved since the time of the last inspection and are now good. There is an overall shortage of resources in the unit for special education needs and for the teaching of geography. The range of books in the library is limited.
53. There is a good match of experience and expertise amongst teachers and support staff to teach the curriculum and to provide a wide range of learning experiences for pupils. The induction of new staff is informal, although arrangements for this, together with ongoing professional development, are under review as a result of the bid by the school for 'Investor in People' status. Staff new to the school have found the support received effective and helpful. There are usually good job descriptions for teachers, although some of those for other staff have not been reviewed recently. There are suitable arrangements for supporting newly qualified teachers. The training provided for nursery staff is good. There is good teamwork amongst staff throughout the school and this, together with positive relationships, results in staff working together well. The school's performance management policy is in place and is being used effectively as a tool for bringing about school improvement. Staff training needs are identified appropriately in consultation with the headteacher and this helps staff to develop their practice.
54. Financial planning is satisfactory and spending decisions are closely linked to the priorities for improvement. The school's needs are met in terms of resources for the classrooms and basic equipment. The monitoring and management of financial matters are of a high quality. There is sound forward planning for future expenditure due to falling rolls and other priorities. There is currently a generous allocation to employ a higher than usual number of classroom assistants to assist pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils. This spending is good value for money as the pupils are given effective support. The governing body is guided by the headteacher and administrative officer in the decisions made to draw up the annual budget.
55. The school has a carry forward of approximately ten per cent from previous years, most of which was inherited by the present headteacher. The norm for most schools is around three to five per cent, but the governors have decided that money should be reserved for specific improvements. Building projects are being investigated to ensure that the Speech and Language Unit and the nursery can be fully integrated into the main school and that access is more readily available for visitors and parents. This is entirely appropriate. Also, the school is aware that its current level of staffing is not sustainable and has drawn up budget plans for future staffing levels.
56. The school makes effective use of additional grants for pupils with special educational needs and other specific purposes. Governors meet regularly to monitor financial issues and evaluate the effectiveness of decisions made to improve standards within the school. All recommendations related to the last audit of the school's finances have been addressed. New technology is used very effectively to support school management and administration.
57. The school office is well run and provides a positive welcome for visitors. The school has good systems to ensure the cost effectiveness and best value principles for the goods and services that it purchases and appropriately seeks several quotations for major items of expenditure before making a choice. Staff and governors are less clear on other features of best value but analyse attainment in relation to other similar schools. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

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

58. Staff and governors should work together on the following areas to improve the quality of provision further and raise standards.

(1) Improve standards in writing by:

- providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length;
- planning opportunities for pupils to write more in other subjects;
- ensuring teachers demonstrate writing more;
- raising the expectations of pupils' handwriting in all of their work;
- using information and communication technology more systematically.

( Paragraphs 16, 83, 86, 98, 120, 138 )



- (2) Improve standards in science by:
- ensuring that higher-attainers are appropriately challenged;
  - increasing opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills, particularly the recording of their investigations;
  - developing teachers' knowledge of how to develop pupils' understanding of scientific enquiry and investigation;
  - improving planning so that pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication skills are developed systematically through science lessons.  
( Paragraphs 5, 8, 23, 96, 103 )
- (3) Improve standards in history by:
- ensuring that sufficient time is given to the teaching of history;
  - ensuring that higher-attainers are appropriately challenged;
  - reducing the amount of worksheets used and increasing opportunities for pupils to develop their own writing;
  - increasing the quantity of written work;
  - developing pupils' skills of historical enquiry;
  - developing the use of information and communication technology in history.  
( Paragraphs 6,8,26,120 )
- (4) Improve the way teachers assess what pupils know and can do and use this information to plan future work by:
- ensuring that information gained from assessing pupils is clear, presented in a manageable way and passed on to appropriate staff;
  - using information and communication technology to track pupils' progress over time;
  - encouraging teachers to use assessment information to inform their planning, set targets for pupils and tell them how to improve their work;
  - developing whole school assessment procedures for non-core subjects.  
( Paragraphs 21, 38, 87, 89, 103, 108, 112, 118, 122, 131, 136 )
- (5) Improve attendance by:
- monitoring levels of attendance for individuals and following this up with parents before reaching the stage of needing referral to the Educational Welfare Officer;
  - monitoring attendance levels of the various groups that make up the school community and use this information to develop strategies ;
  - ensuring parents are made aware of the school's expectation for attendance and of the impact of poor attendance on their children's learning;
  - establishing a system for recording pupils who are late as soon as they arrive.  
( Paragraphs 13, 36 )
- (6) Staff and governors are also encouraged to:
- Develop written procedures to formalise some areas of health and safety.  
( Paragraphs 35 )
  - Ensure that all the required information is included in the Prospectus and Governors' Annual Report to Parents.  
( Paragraphs 42, 49 )
  - Continue to develop pupils' awareness of living in a diverse, multi-cultural society.  
(Paragraph 33 )

Through the school development planning process, the staff and governors have already identified the need to develop their assessment practice and raise standards in writing.

## **SPEECH AND LANGUAGE UNIT**

59. The Speech and Language Unit provides good quality support for pupils with speech and language difficulties. The teacher in charge of the unit provides very good leadership and gives the unit a positive identity and purpose. This has made it an integral part of the school and a place where pupils, who may have been failing elsewhere, succeed. The progress made is good and often very good.
60. The unit was opened in 1997 and currently has 10 pupils from the County of Essex. The unit, one of several Speech and Language Units in Essex, caters for pupils from reception to Year 2. The pupils, who are brought to school by taxi from a wide catchment area, travel from as far away as Saffron Walden and Burnham-on-Crouch.
61. All the pupils in the unit have a Statements of Special Educational Need. They come here because they have particular speech, language or communication difficulties. In addition they may have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties or a varied range of other conditions. Each pupil has an Individual Education Plan which often includes sessions with speech and language therapists who work closely with the unit staff on issues such as communication, planning and the setting of targets within these plans. They also participate in the annual reviews of progress made by pupils with their parents or carers.
62. The quality of teaching is good overall and in combination with the speech therapists and support staff, is the most important factor in the good progress made by the pupils. In the lessons observed the quality of teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good. A key strength of the teaching is the shared desire to see that all the pupils are happy, confident, become enthusiastic learners and thereby reach their potential. Together with the learning support assistant, the teacher has been successful in creating an environment that is warm and caring and which offers the pupils a good quality curriculum matched to their needs, and which helps them to achieve success.
63. It is not appropriate to judge standards of work seen against national expectations as understandably the majority of pupils are working at levels below those expected for their age in English and mathematics. Nevertheless by the age of seven most pupils can write short sentences and use a capital letter to begin and a full stop to end. They enjoy listening to stories and taking part in guided reading sessions. They take discussion seriously and enjoy the challenge of presenting an assembly to the whole school. They also develop a secure understanding of number through a variety of games and activities. Pupils are able to recognise, match and add coins to 20p. Although standards achieved by the end of Year 2 remain low, they represent a considerable achievement for most of these pupils. For example, good progress in writing is shown in the improvement seen over time in their written work. Pupils' diaries show significant improvements in their handwriting and sentence construction.
64. A particular strength of the teaching is the way in which lessons are often short and the content modified so that the pupils can cope. In one lesson for example, the teacher had a short discussion about the different types of houses before the class went with staff to identify the different types of housing near the school, returning soon after to share their findings. Pupils in the unit were observed learning about sounds as part of their science studies. They enjoyed the activities, in particular identifying a range of musical instruments, and they were all keen to participate. The teacher's good use of her assistant and the speech therapist ensures that all pupils were fully involved identifying sounds and extending their listening and speaking skills. The good teaching and the work of the speech therapist are instrumental in making sure that many pupils make rapid progress.
65. Procedures for assessment are good. The school maintains extensive records of achievement for pupils in the unit, which contribute to their annual reviews. Speech and language therapists contribute to the identification and assessment of the communication and social needs of pupils.

66. The aim of the unit to return pupils to a mainstream school setting within 5 terms is frequently achieved. The pupils are very much a part of school life and are included in all aspects joining the main school assemblies, playtimes and lunchtimes. They also work closely with year one and share religious education, 'Friday Listening' groups and singing lessons. The pupils follow the same basic curriculum as other pupils in the school, which is initially carried out in the unit classroom. They work as a class, in small groups and individual settings as appropriate. Opportunities to integrate pupils into mainstream classes for work and social activities are part of the overall aims of the Speech and Language Unit to prepare the pupils to return to their mainstream classes. However the timing and amount of integration vary according to the needs of individual pupils. Occasionally mainstream pupils come into the unit for specific extra attention. Last year four pupils joined the unit's daily literacy lessons.
67. Since the last inspection the unit has maintained the good standards reported. Staff have reviewed the curriculum and assessment strategies to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the pupils admitted.
68. Although many of the pupils travel some distance to school, the headteacher and unit staff have been very effective in establishing close links with all the parents. An indication of this is the support that parents give by attending coffee mornings and class assemblies. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress, and they have access to the school at any time. They are fully involved in the annual review of their children's individual education plans and Statement of Special Educational Need.
69. There are good procedures for welcoming pupils into the unit and helping the parents to feel confident about their children's placements. Parents are given opportunities to visit, and receive 'welcome' booklets. Good procedures also exist for helping the pupils and their parents to prepare for the next stage of their education, which include visits to the school or special provision to which they will be going.
70. The accommodation is satisfactory. However the main teaching room is adjacent to the nursery, which limits any enlargement to the indoor and outdoor spaces. Resources are adequate and the headteacher reports that the school enhances the funds received for the unit to extend provision.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	62
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	39

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	11	36	14	0	0	0
Percentage	2	18	58	22	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	217
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	30

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	17
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	7	53

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.5

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	25	40	65

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	21	24
	Girls	32	35	40
	Total	52	56	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (84)	86 (90)	98 (94)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	20	23
	Girls	34	32	37
	Total	52	52	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (92)	80 (96)	92 (97)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

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

### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
151	0	1
0	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

No ethnic group recorded
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1
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0
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0
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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)	8.84
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.15
Average class size	23.55

#### Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

#### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.5
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.66

FTE means full-time equivalent.

### Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	786,392
Total expenditure	707,159
Expenditure per pupil	2,572
Balance brought forward from previous year	66,474
Balance carried forward to next year	79,233

### Recruitment of teachers

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

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	245
Number of questionnaires returned	49

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	18	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	69	31	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	53	4	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	59	0	2	6
The teaching is good.	67	33	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	43	2	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	82	18	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	39	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	49	47	4	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	63	33	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	41	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	33	12	4	29

### Other issues raised by parents

Parents with children attending the Speech and Language Unit were very positive about the quality of teaching and the support their children received. Some parents raised the issue of congestion around the narrow pathway to the school's entrance.



## **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**

71. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained the good provision identified at that time and has responded well to national developments for children in the Foundation Stage of learning. The quality of teaching is good overall in the nursery and reception classes and occasionally very good or excellent. Teaching is consistently good for communication, language and literacy, mathematical, creative, physical development and pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world. Teaching to develop pupils' personal, social and emotional development is often very good. Teachers and support staff have good understanding of how young children learn and successfully use this to develop the children's good attitudes to learning and good behaviour by the time they start Year 1. Support staff play an important role in developing the children's learning and in supporting their achievements. The curriculum takes into consideration the national guidance for the Foundation Stage and staff adapt it to meet the needs of the children. A key feature of the success of staff is their ability to reflect on their practice and develop new strategies and opportunities. This is demonstrated during the 'Open Door' sessions where children in the nursery and reception classes join as one to take part in a wide range of activities. Not only does this maintain their levels of concentration, but it also develops their independence. Staff have monitored this work and have found that individual children take part in a variety of activities and boys, in particular, take part in activities which they sometimes do not readily choose in a more formal session, for example, writing. Teachers use assessments of the children's attainment to inform their planning. Appropriate records are kept to monitor the progress that children make in all areas of learning.
72. Children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. They are well supported and the work for those that need additional help is well focused. By the time they start in Year 1, children currently in the reception classes are likely to reach national standards in mathematical, creative and physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Standards are likely to be below those seen for children of the same age nationally in communication, language and literacy because their attainment in these areas was low on entry to school. Children are already reaching the national targets for their personal, social and emotional development, and attain higher than average standards in some aspects of physical development.

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

73. Staff have developed a good induction programme which encourages parents to become involved in their child's learning and become aware of the policies and procedures in school. Relationships with parents are also good and improving, for example, with the recent introduction of the mother and toddler group. All these features contribute to the smooth and successful start to the children's formal education. Children are helped to settle in the nursery on a part-time basis and then into school routines full-time in the reception classes. A caring learning environment is created where children understand the structure of the day and by the time they enter Year 1, most have good attitudes to learning. Children are also encouraged to play and work with each other and consequently are helped to develop good relationships. They were observed working well together in the nursery when using the climbing equipment and in the reception classes when working in their mathematics lessons. Teachers and support staff make appropriate comments to encourage co-operation and children learn how to share and take turns. Children are encouraged to recognise the importance of keeping healthy and are aware of personal hygiene issues. This was demonstrated during snack time.
74. Staff act as positive role models on which children develop their own behaviour and working relationships. They exemplify how children should behave and the children's skills are continually developed through the positive interactions between staff and children. Girls and boys are encouraged to play together and take part in all activities so that they develop a good range of

skills across all areas of learning. The tasks ensure a good balance between teacher-directed activities and times when children are able to work without direct adult supervision. This develops the children's confidence and growing independence and initiative when they are presented with choices. This was particularly noticeable when nursery and reception children played and worked together during the 'Open Door' sessions when they are encouraged to move throughout the areas developing their own interests and skills, supported by effective teaching.

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

75. Although some pupils have average skills on entry to school, a significant number experience difficulty with speech and communication and also use a restricted range of vocabulary. Staff recognise this and work well as a team to develop opportunities for improvement. They provide an environment which encourages children's speaking and listening skills and supports the developing use of vocabulary. Some good examples were observed when a teacher was encouraging nursery children to talk about the story she had read by using soft toy animals to stimulate their interest. In a reception class lesson, children were encouraged to listen to others in the class as they retold the story of 'Handa's Surprise' in their own words. These examples show how the children are encouraged to respond to the adult and each other, develop their use of vocabulary and sustain good levels of concentration. Children's speaking skills are also systematically developed through the provision of specific activities, as in the imaginative play areas. Most pupils make good progress and have the confidence to speak with adults and each other although some are difficult to understand.
76. Most children are interested in books, handle them carefully and show enjoyment in a range of stories. Children have regular opportunities to listen to stories and they respond well. Children were seen in the nursery outdoor play area sharing books and commenting on the pictures. In the reception classes, regular sessions support children in their recognition of letters and the sounds that they make but standards in reading are below those seen nationally. Some children in the nursery can name their favourite stories and say that they read books at home and the higher-attainers in the reception classes read their books well with good understanding. All children are encouraged to read regularly with their parents at home, which has a significant effect on the progress that they make and the standards that they achieve.
77. On entry to the nursery, children develop their writing skills by learning how to hold the pencil correctly and recognising and writing their own names. They become aware of writing for different purposes through, for example, making marks on paper and placing their 'letters' in envelopes. These skills are developed in the reception classes when, for example, children were encouraged to write about what they had been doing, 'I was playing in the snow'. In one lesson observed, children developed their word building skills well but the activity restricted the development of their handwriting skills as they cut and pasted letters to make a word.

### **Mathematical development**

78. The children's mathematical skills and understanding are taught during specific sessions, and consolidated through daily play activities. Most children enjoy their work and respond well to the activities provided. In the nursery, children were encouraged to make snakes which related to the week's topic, whilst developing their understanding of length. Effective questioning by the teacher encouraged them to use the words 'long' and 'short' and resulted in one child saying that he had made a long, long, long snake. This indicated an understanding of comparative length as he placed it next to a 'long' snake. Other children counted confidently to ten and could identify circle, square and triangle shapes. In one reception class, the children's concentration and motivation were well developed due to the use of a good range of teaching and learning methods. The children enjoyed watching a video about shapes and then responded well to the teacher's questioning. When the teacher posed the question, 'I wonder how many square shapes there are on a cube?' they replied 'Count them!' In another good mathematics lesson, the pupils developed their data-handling skills as they made charts to show their favourite fruits and their favourite animals. Here, the teacher clearly explained what she wanted the children to do and then

encouraged them to work together to complete the chart. By the end of the session, children confidently asked and answered questions in relation to the data on the charts.

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

79. Children in the nursery develop their knowledge and understanding of the world through taking part in a range of activities. They find out about the jungle through reading books and playing with a range of animals. They also act out the role of explorer as they collect artefacts such as magnifiers and binoculars in response to 'reading' a list when packing their bags. This activity maintains their interest well due to the good support given by the nursery assistant. Children in the reception classes understand life cycles through sequencing picture of a baby, toddler, child and teenager and understand that frogs' spawn develops into frogs and chickens come from eggs. They develop skills of observation through looking closely at a range of fruit and talking about what it looks and tastes like. Opportunities are provided for children to assemble and take apart simple models, using a variety of construction kits. Their skills in using the computer are also developed through the use of a range of programs which also help to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Children celebrate key festivals such as Chinese New Year and Christmas and are beginning to understand the activities associated with them. They have a good understanding of stories from the Bible such as that of Noah. The good religious education curriculum meets statutory requirements and contributes positively to the children's spiritual, moral and social development.

## **Physical development**

80. Children in the nursery and reception classes get regular opportunities to improve their physical development through using wheeled toys, climbing apparatus and during formal physical education sessions. Children develop confidence well as the activities provided are suitable for the age and ability of the children and adults encourage all to 'have a go'. Some good teaching was observed in a reception class when they took part in a formal physical education lesson in the school hall. High expectations of the children's behaviour and independence were evident as they changed quickly and sensibly into their kit. The session started well as the teacher asked the children to feel the pulse in their neck before embarking on a range of activities. After the warm-up session and moving to music, children became aware of the effect of exercise on their bodies as their pulse rate increased and they became 'out of breath'. The teacher's good management skills and high expectations were used well to develop the children's team game skills and they reached standards above those expected for children of this age.

## **Creative development**

81. The children's creative development is successfully fostered through a range of activities. In the nursery, the children's work on display celebrates their learning and enhances the environment. Children develop their skills through sponge painting, leaf prints, bubble prints and colour mixing. They undertake a good range of activities which stimulates their creative development, for example, by joining those in the reception classes when making prints through painting the tyres of the bikes and riding them along an expanse of paper. Reception children develop their cutting and sticking skills further by making collages and hats. The role-play areas in the nursery and reception classes provide opportunities for children to play co-operatively and develop their imagination. They extend their language skills by re-enacting familiar situations or making up their own.
82. The children's responses are also developed through specific music sessions and through singing rhymes and songs. In one lesson, nursery and reception children sang a good range of songs and thoroughly enjoyed the activity. High standards were reached when the children sang in a two-part round. This was due to the high expectations of the staff, their enthusiasm for the activity and excellent teaching. The good knowledge and understanding of the teacher were used well to plan a lesson which met the varying needs of pupils and maintained their interest. A range of activities built their skills systematically and also helped to sustain their concentration. The rate of progress and enjoyment observed during this lesson is seldom seen with children of this age.

## ENGLISH

83. Standards have risen since the last inspection, although writing remains the weakest aspect of the subject. Standards overall are below average, with Year 2 pupils attaining below expectations in speaking, listening and writing. Standards in reading are broadly in line with expectations. When pupils enter Year 1 standards in all aspects of English are below those expected at this stage. Achievement overall is satisfactory, although not all pupils are achieving as well as they should in writing. The school has already identified writing as a priority in the school development plan. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with strengths in the teaching of phonic skills. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support, and the school benefits from the specialist advice of staff in the Speech and Language Unit.
84. The school places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. Many pupils entering Year 1 are identified as having weak listening skills, and these pupils follow a programme run in conjunction with the Speech and Language Unit. Almost half the pupils at present in Year 1 take part in the weekly lessons, working in small groups on highly focused activities. Progress in these sessions is good, and develops pupils' concentration effectively. There are good opportunities in many lessons for pupils to answer questions and to take part in discussions. Many pupils have quite a limited range of vocabulary, and teachers are careful to introduce and explain new words in all subjects. The teachers are very good role models for the pupils, speaking clearly and listening attentively when others speak. Pupils are reminded to listen while others speak, and whole class lessons are calm and well managed. By the end of Year 2, average and higher-attainers give appropriately detailed answers showing that they listen carefully. There is, however, a significant minority of lower attaining pupils whose skills are more limited.
85. Standards in reading are broadly average and reading is developed well during Years 1 and 2. The phonics programme is having a significant impact on pupils' ability to tackle unfamiliar words. The daily phonics sessions are brisk, involve all pupils and as a result pupils stay alert and interested. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils who need to work at a slower pace. Although all pupils take their reading books home, school surveys find that only one third read regularly to an adult. Time is set aside daily for reading in school, and teachers offer good guidance to pupils during group reading activities. In addition to phonic skills, other reading strategies are taught well. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, pupils were taught to use the context and pictures to work out a missing word. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are able to use simple reference books and have some understanding of how to use the contents, index and glossary. There is scope for the school to improve the range of books available in the library in order to develop pupils' skills further.
86. By the end of Year 2, standards in writing are below average. The school has been focusing on raising standards, and pupils' work shows some evidence of improvement. A few pupils are beginning to achieve at the above average Level 3. There remains work to do, however, to raise the overall standard. Although some examples of written work on display are neat and well presented, pupils' handwriting is often unsatisfactory. The regular handwriting practice is not having enough impact on pupils' writing in other lessons. Many pupils have developed poor habits, forming some letters incorrectly and holding their pencils awkwardly. As a result they find it difficult to develop a fluent joined hand. Phonic teaching, by contrast, is having a positive impact on pupils' spelling, and many pupils make logical attempts at spelling new words. Pupils learn to write for a range of purposes, but many produce quite short pieces or sequences of sentences. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to produce longer pieces of writing appropriate for their age. The longer pieces which are written usually take the form of stories, but pupils rarely write at length about topics covered in history, religious education, science or design and technology.
87. Assessment information is not being used to match work and expectations closely enough to the needs of groups and individuals. Objectives for lessons are general, and specific targets for improvement are not shared with individual pupils. Although whole class teaching about writing is satisfactory, teachers' interventions while pupils are working are often limited in impact. Teachers

miss opportunities to demonstrate writing and to identify aspects for individual pupils to edit and improve.

88. All classes have a daily literacy period which follows the suggested national strategy. Pupils in Year 2 are taught in groups organised according to ability, and benefit from working in groups slightly smaller than their normal classes. The highest attainers are challenged by teaching which is characterised by high expectations. Pupils are set in groups of similar ability in Year 2 and higher-attainers work together to develop their writing skills. This is a strategy developed since last year in response to the lack of pupils gaining the higher Level 3. It is likely that a few pupils will reach this level in the current Year 2 national tests. The support for pupils with special educational needs is good in both year groups, and teaching assistants give a good level of support. This helps those pupils to make good progress towards their targets.
89. Subject management is satisfactory overall. The subject manager has had some opportunity to monitor teaching and learning, and the school has already arranged some staff training on aspects of writing. Although satisfactory assessment procedures are in place, the information gained about pupils' writing is not analysed well or used effectively to focus on the next step for each individual. Also, no use of information and communication technology was seen in literacy or English lessons during the week. This needs to be planned so that pupils develop their skills systematically and at a good rate.

## **MATHEMATICS**

90. The overall standards attained by pupils currently in Year 2 are in line with those expected for their age. No difference was apparent during the inspection between the attainment of boys and girls. Standards in basic numeracy are above those expected for pupils aged 7, because there is a strong emphasis on this aspect of the subject and it is well taught. As a result, by the end of Year 2, most pupils understand how the place that a digit occupies alters the value of a number. They choose appropriate operations for addition and subtraction problems and recognise sequences such as odd and even numbers. Higher-attaining pupils are further challenged to add and subtract 2-digit numbers mentally, explaining their own strategies for working out  $10+64+62$ , for example, and to work out number problems using all four operations.
91. A significant number of pupils enter the school with well below average attainment in communication and literacy and, as a result, they find it hard to explain their work or to give extended answers. There is also a high number of pupils with special educational needs which affects their ability to use and apply mathematics. Eight pupils in this year's Year 2, for example, have statements of educational needs. Despite these difficulties, pupils achieve well and do a lot better in national tests than they did at the time of the last inspection. More pupils are now achieving at the expected level and at a level above that normally expected for their age than previously.
92. The school is strongly committed to raising achievement and is very well placed to succeed. This commitment is exemplified by the thorough analysis of its test results to identify any areas for development. The school has identified the weakness in using and applying mathematics, for example, and there is now a greater emphasis on this area of pupils' learning. The National Numeracy Strategy is firmly embedded and is well used to guide teachers' planning. Good assessment procedures are in place to measure the attainment and track the progress of individual pupils. The school plans to refine these procedures so as to make the tracking of pupils' progress more manageable and to set achievable short term targets for individual pupils. The subject is well led and managed by the co-ordinator who monitors teaching and helps teachers with their planning. All of these initiatives, including improved teaching, have resulted in better achievement. There is a strong commitment to educational inclusion, and boys and girls of all backgrounds and abilities are effectively supported to achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Teaching assistants are dedicated, confident and well prepared to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs.

93. The overall quality of teaching is good. It was very good in three of the lessons seen, good in two and satisfactory in two. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Common features of all lessons are teachers' good knowledge and understanding of the subject, very good management of pupils through high quality relationships, effective use of support staff and well-planned activities. However, in only a small number of lessons seen during the week, were learning objectives shared with pupils to give them an understanding of what they were to learn. The warm relationships established by teachers result in very good behaviour and attitudes to work. The peaceful learning environment and the strong relationships give very good support to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Boys and girls of all abilities work very well together, discussing their work sensibly in groups, appreciating each other's efforts.
94. Where teaching is good or better it has a brisk pace moving smoothly from one part of the lesson to the next, all pupils are challenged during mental mathematics sessions and they benefit from a high level of direct teaching at all stages of the lesson. As a result, they make good or very progress in their learning because the teacher and classroom support staff challenge them to explain their thinking as they work on tasks appropriate to their different abilities. In a very good Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils were highly motivated to contribute because the methods used by the class teacher required pupils to watch closely, to think deeply and to apply their knowledge of mathematical terminology. Pupils were highly challenged to discover answers to questions such as 'I have written a 2-digit even number, when I add the digits the answer is 6. What can my number be?' The squeals of delight when pupils got a correct answer reflected their interest in the subject and the inspirational teaching. In lessons that are otherwise satisfactory, some pupils are allowed to play a passive role during the whole class session and there is not a good enough balance between direct teaching and independent learning as pupils work on group tasks. Teachers keep the whole class sitting on the carpet for too long while they explain the different tasks, rather than challenging them at appropriate levels as they work in groups.
95. Work seen in lessons and in the analysis of pupils' work in their books and on display, shows that all aspects of the subject are given due attention and, as a result, the subject meets statutory requirements. Pupils are provided with a range of practical activities to consolidate their knowledge of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and their properties. They are given opportunities to measure length, mass and capacity using non-standard and standard measures. Programmable toys are well used to support pupils' learning in shape, space and measure as they distinguish between straight and turning movements, and recognise right angles as a measure of turn. In a very stimulating Year 2 lesson, pupils directed each other to move to a specific point on a grid using appropriate terminology such as *forward*, *back*, *quarter turn*. Due to the high quality teaching they went on to program the *ROAMER* to move in a specific direction. Data handling skills are appropriately developed and there is an increasing use of information and communication technology to support this aspect of the subject. Pupils are taught to use computers to collect data and to produce block graphs to communicate their findings when investigating how far vehicles will travel on different surfaces in science, for example. Mathematical skills are well supported by other subjects such as geography and design and technology. Satisfactory use is made of homework to consolidate pupils' learning and to develop their independent learning skills.

## SCIENCE

96. Inspection evidence indicates that the proportion of pupils in Year 2 likely to achieve the expected level (Level 2) is average. This is a similar judgement to that made in the last inspection. However, standards are below average overall as few pupils are likely to attain the higher Level 3, particularly in the area of the curriculum related to scientific enquiry and investigation. This is because the teaching here is sometimes confusing and the work set does not relate to the learning objectives. In addition, assessment practice is unsatisfactory since insufficient use is made of information about pupils' achievements when planning the next lessons. Because of the quality of teaching most pupils are able to reach a sound level for their age and ability. However, achievement for higher-attainers is unsatisfactory. Some inappropriate work which involved colouring and sticking did little to develop their learning.

97. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are satisfactory in most areas of the science curriculum and they are effective in the way they impart knowledge, for example, when teaching pupils about electrical circuits. In discussion, most pupils in Year 2 could clearly describe how to complete a circuit, could compare how bulbs worked in different circuits and the higher-attainers knew that the bulb does not light up when the circuit is open. The pupils' knowledge and understanding are further developed when a theatre group develops their understanding of electricity, particularly in relation to safety. A display of the pupils' work indicates that appropriate health and safety issues have been addressed as the pupils interpret these when creating posters.
98. Overall, the study of science does not contribute very positively to the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and computer skills. It was not clear how teachers planned to develop these skills in a systematic way. Little written work was seen during the lessons and in the pupils' books. This affected the pupils' ability to consolidate their learning and remember what they had done in science lessons previously but also restricted the time available for pupils to practise their writing skills across the curriculum. A display on electricity showed the use of pupils' information and communication technology skills but when spoken with most pupils could not remember using the computers regularly in science lessons. Numeracy skills were used when recording some observations, for example using tallying and bar charts for data-handling.
99. Although teaching overall is judged to be satisfactory, some good teaching was observed during the inspection in Year 1 and in the Speech and Language Unit. In Year 1, the lesson started well as the teacher assessed the pupils' understanding of growth in relation to seeds they had planted. Her careful questioning developed their thinking as they tried to think of ways to find out what plants needed in order to grow. One pupil offered the idea that one plant could be hidden behind a curtain and the other left near a window to see whether plants needed sun. The teacher followed this up by clarifying the difference between sun and light at a level that pupils could understand. She also extended their learning when she picked a plant and showed the pupils the roots. By the end of the session, pupils could identify the main parts of a plant and could describe their functions.
100. In Year 2, through their investigations in the local environment pupils know about habitats and the differing needs of various plants and animals. They know the external parts of plants and humans and can identify living and non-living things. In the two lessons observed, teachers managed their pupils well and created a purposeful working atmosphere that helped pupils concentrate on their work without interruption. Pupils were given the opportunity to work independently and with others. This supported their social development.
101. Learning support assistants and teaching assistants are used well to help pupils learn more effectively. They are briefed about their role by the teacher before the lesson and often work with a designated group of pupils to support and guide them. This was seen in a Year 2 lesson when pupils with special educational needs were helped to develop their understanding of habitats and record their ideas. Expectations were high but realistic thereby encouraging pupils to do their best according to their ability and understanding.
102. As they move through the school all pupils develop a good attitude to their work and are keen to succeed. They respond well and behaviour is good. For example, when using the school grounds during their study of minibeasts and their habitats, pupils behaved sensibly and carefully as they moved through the wild life area. Positive contributions were made to their spiritual, moral and social development during this activity as they found out more about their immediate surroundings and learnt to treat creatures and the environment with care.
103. The management and co-ordination of science are satisfactory overall. The newly appointed co-ordinator has a clear plan to improve provision and raise standards. Following monitoring of teaching and learning in all year groups, she has identified the need to improve practice in the areas of assessment, setting appropriate work for pupils of all abilities and a greater focus on the development of pupils' scientific skills of enquiry and investigation. With the headteacher, she has been working on developing assessment practice so that all teachers assess and record pupils'



achievements in a similar way and therefore make it easier to monitor and evaluate their progress over time. It is clear that the development of science has not been a particular priority of the school prior to her appointment but an allocation of time to develop the subject has resulted in a clear policy and programme of work which relates to the national guidance for science.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

104. By the end of Year 2 standards are above those expected for the pupils' age and pupils achieve well. This reflects the good quality of teaching that the pupils receive and represents good improvement since the last inspection. Shortcomings in the curriculum, identified in the previous report, have been tackled very successfully. The pupils now have good opportunities to explore a wide range of materials and are taught a variety of techniques. Information and communication technology is used effectively to support learning in the subject, for example, when Year 2 pupils confidently used a drawing program to draw minibeasts. Links with subjects such as science are generally good, and allow the pupils to make coherent links between different aspects of their learning. Teachers in the same year group plan together so that all pupils follow a similar programme of work, and teachers share their expertise. Overall, teaching is good.
105. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is good as the teachers build on the skills and techniques covered during the Foundation Stage. Pupils show increasing control and detail in their work. Year 1 paintings and chalk drawings of plants demonstrate good observation and very careful use of materials. The pupils benefited from working closely with either the teacher or teaching assistants, and from being encouraged to examine the plants closely before they started to draw. Activities are carefully planned to be interesting and motivating, and pupils respond very positively. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support, and as a result they progress at a similar rate to the others in their classes. At the start of lessons teachers demonstrate new techniques and explain tasks very clearly so that pupils understand what they are expected to do. In the Year 2 lessons, for example, the pupils showed that they had listened well as they worked on simple weaving and many produced very good work. Resources were well prepared, and Year 2 pupils described these as they chose from the materials, showing a good awareness of texture and appearance. "This is really rough", "soft", and "it looks like a caterpillar". The pupils worked hard, using strips of material, twigs and strands of ivy and there was a good atmosphere of concentrated work. Teachers intervened effectively to advise, guide and to help pupils improve their work. The end results were very pleasing and pupils of all abilities were proud of their work.
106. Pupils are given good opportunities to work on individual and group tasks, to discuss and improve their work and to complete tasks without rushing. As a result pupils work carefully and thoughtfully. Year 2 pupils co-operated well on group projects to create very large three-dimensional "minibeasts" for display.
107. The pupils are introduced to a range of different art and artists, although there is scope for the school to widen pupils' experience of non-western art. As part of their work on Australia, Year 1 pupils looked carefully at some aboriginal art and completed work in a similar style. Year 2 pupils have completed a variety of activities inspired by works by Paul Klee, Tom Slaughter and Van Gogh and are developing their own knowledge and preferences. One pupil confided that " I would like to have been Paul Klee but not Van Gogh, not because of Van Gogh cutting off his ear, but because I like Paul Klee's painting of faces best".
108. The subject is well managed and the subject leader has devised a useful way of checking curriculum coverage. The school has yet to introduce assessment procedures, and recognises that this is an area for development. Pupils benefit significantly from using good quality resources and from having their work valued and displayed well. The subject makes a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development through formal lessons and through the lively classroom displays.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

109. Standards of attainment by the end of Year 2 are broadly in line with those expected. Attainment in model making is stronger than the elements of design and evaluation. Only one lesson was seen in Year 1, so it was not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching. Comments are also based on a scrutiny of pupils' work and brief discussions with pupils. The school has

maintained standards since the previous inspection and has made satisfactory improvements in developing the curriculum to include more experience of food technology. Teachers in the same year group plan together, so all pupils have a similar experience as they move through the school.

110. Aspects of model making are taught well. Pupils are given good opportunities to learn to measure, mark, cut and join different materials. There is good evidence of the development of these skills as pupils move from Year 1 to Year 2. In a good lesson in Year 1, pupils worked carefully to cut and fold card to make cuboids. In spite of some difficulty, most persevered to join their models with sticky tape. The more able pupils completed the task successfully and independently. Others, including those with special educational needs received good quality support from the teacher and teaching assistant, and as a result they benefited fully from the lesson.
111. Models of houses completed by Year 2 pupils show that they have made good progress since Year 1. Pupils made basic wooden frames by measuring and sawing wood and joining the frames with glue before covering them with card. The pupils had some opportunities for individual choice in decorating their houses, and some pupils varied the roof shape. The finished products are robust and indicate sustained careful work. Aspects of design and evaluation are less well developed, and teachers do not exploit the skills developed during the literacy hour. Although pupils' drawings indicate their design intentions, there is little evidence of the labelling and simple sequenced planning usually seen in Year 2. Similarly, there is no evidence of the more able pupils recording evaluations of their work.
112. Subject leadership is satisfactory. The subject leader has not yet had an opportunity to monitor teaching, although this is planned for next term. The school has not developed procedures for assessment, but this is recognised as an area for development. Pupils benefit significantly from using good quality tools and materials.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

113. Three geography lessons were observed during the inspection. These together with a scrutiny of pupils' work, photographic evidence and discussions with pupils show that standards are broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2. Standards are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection.
114. Display work and photographs show that pupils make sound progress across the key stage. They develop their knowledge and understanding of the local environment through discussion and by drawing simple maps of their many excursions to look at local shops and other buildings. They understand the changing weather, such as if it is sunny, rainy or cloudy. Some assessment is undertaken in relation to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study but the school recognises the need to refine its assessment procedures further, in order to help teachers plan work to meet the needs of all pupils.
115. Display work is of a high standard and reminds pupils of geographical vocabulary and activities they have experienced. Year 1 classes had learnt their addresses and postcodes by sending postcards to themselves. This activity had been fully developed by the teachers, by taking the pupils to the post office to buy the stamps, visually representing the route, plotting the pupils' houses on a local street map and inviting a postman into school to talk about his job. An interactive display of the local environment has good quality photographs, which pose questions such as, "Have you posted letters in this postbox?" This develops pupils' awareness of the local environment and street furniture. Photographs of "Mama Cynthia's Creche", a South African Nursery with which the school has links, strengthened pupils' understanding of other cultures as well as requesting pupils to collect items that the African nursery lacks.
116. Teaching is good. Learning is effective because it links physical activities in the local area with class work. For example, in a Year 2 lesson pupils recorded a local walk they had taken the previous week. The teacher effectively used photographs to remind pupils of human and physical

features seen. Pupils then devised a simple key to record the main features on a map, enabling pupils further to understand the concept of symbols. Information and communication

technology was effectively used during the plenary session when pupils programmed the *ROAMER* to follow the route of the walk on a large-scale map. This reminded pupils of the vocabulary learned and assisted with their understanding of map orientation.

117. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. As a result, most pupils enjoy their geography lessons, asking and answering questions enthusiastically. They work well together in groups and in whole-class discussion, listen carefully to their teachers and to other pupils, and are confident when contributing their ideas and interpretations. They take care when recording their work and are keen to do well. Pupils are also keen to develop their ideas through discussion and are tolerant of the views of others. Pupils with special educational needs are included in class activities and receive good support from the learning assistants. This helps them to make good progress.
118. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory although there is a need to identify and develop resources. There has not yet been an opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in the classrooms. Assessment should also be further developed to inform teachers' planning and as a means to enable teachers to measure pupils' understanding of geography. Although there are some links with information and communication technology, these could be developed further.

## **HISTORY**

119. No lessons were observed in history during the inspection and examples of pupils' work were limited. Judgements are based on interviews with pupils, discussion with the subject leader and on a scrutiny of pupils' work. No judgements could be formed about the quality of teaching.
120. The school is in the process of including history in its topic approach to learning, which should enable pupils to have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils in Year 2 study transport and homes and identify the similarities and differences between then and now. In Year 2 the use of artefacts to promote pupils' understanding is good. A display of Victorian household objects challenges pupils to identify their use. However, pupils' drawings showed little regard for careful observation and some of the labels produced through the use of computers were spelt incorrectly. In other work, there is an over-reliance on photocopied sheets which do little to aid pupils' understanding of the past or include challenges for the more able. The quantity of work produced during the year was limited. Teaching opportunities to extend pupils' writing were missed which limited pupils' ability to develop appropriate vocabulary and to relate episodes from stories of the past.
121. Attainment in history is below that expected for the pupils' ages. This is below the standards in the last inspection and is probably as a result of a reduction in the time available for the subject. Although pupils are able to define history, the lack of time lines displayed in the school means that pupils have little support in developing their sense of chronology. They have difficulty relating historical people and events to their correct time and were unsure of how things have changed during their parents' lives. Most pupils spoken with thought that their parents had no radio or television and travelled by horse and cart.
122. Co-ordination of the subject is unsatisfactory but improving. The subject leader has not yet been given time to monitor the subject or to work alongside colleagues and so is unaware of strengths and weaknesses in teaching. There has been no scrutiny of the quality of pupils' work and consequently insufficient emphasis has been placed on pupils developing key skills and work habits. The school is not currently implementing the statements made about history in its prospectus. However, the subject leader has developed an action plan to address some of these shortcomings. Assessment, which has yet to be implemented, should raise the profile of the subject to make teachers give greater attention to pupil achievement. Resources are satisfactory and are clearly labelled and stored in an easily accessible central point. The use of information and communication technology to support the subject is underdeveloped.



## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

123. Standards of attainment are in line with what is expected for pupils at the end of Year 2, which represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards were below expectations. These improvements in pupils' attainment owe much to the in-service training that has increased teachers' confidence and competence in the use of new technology, and the school's investment in good quality computers and other resources. National guidance for the subject has been introduced and now informs teachers' planning. As a result of these initiatives, pupils are receiving more and better teaching in the subject. Pupils' work indicates that the required skills are taught through the year, but teachers' plans do not sufficiently identify how pupils can practise and apply these skills to support learning in other subjects throughout the school day. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning can be only satisfactory. When pupils were observed using the computers it was clear that keyboard skills had not been well practised and this slowed the pace of pupils' work. They spend too much time searching for keys and then tend to poke at the keys because they have not had the time to develop a good key-stroke style. Although teachers are more confident in teaching the subject, they now need greater confidence in pupils' ability to work independently, and to use assessment information to allow all pupils to develop at the rate of which they are capable.
124. Teachers in Year 2 lessons were making very good use of the ROAMER, a programmable toy, to teach pupils about position, direction and movements on a grid and map, thus supporting their learning in mathematics and geography. Pupils were enthusiastic and gained a good understanding of how to program the ROAMER to make it move in a required direction. They were successfully taught that instructions need to be sequenced, to enter short sequences, and to control the robot, by making it go forwards and back, left and right. The very good relationships established by teachers gives pupils the confidence to demonstrate their skills to others and to seek help when this is required. Pupils' enthusiasm, their good behaviour and willingness to discuss their work, made a very positive contribution to their learning. Although a significant number of pupils have little experience of computers outside the school, they readily describe what they have been doing in school.
125. When pupils were seen using the computers during the integrated afternoon, it was evident that they had been taught to log on, save, retrieve and print their work independently, changing font and size of letters to enhance their work. Teachers ensure that boys and girls of all abilities have full and equal access to learning opportunities and pupils were seen working happily together. Pupils in Year 2 were observed using a graphics program competently to make patterns and pictures of minibeasts, and then used their word processing skills to write a sentence about their finished picture. Teachers show pupils how to use a computerised art program, *Colour Magic*, teaching them how to draw straight lines both vertically and horizontally, and to fill in areas of the screen with different colours. Work on display and in pupils' books shows that information and communication technology is being used to support pupils' data-handling skills in mathematics. Having carried out an experiment to compare the rate at which a toy car moves on different surfaces, pupils were then challenged to represent their results graphically using a computer program. They use their word processing skills when writing short sentences such as *They did not have any electricity* when describing their work on the history of homes through the ages.
126. The headteacher is managing the subject in the absence of a co-ordinator. She has plans to appoint a knowledgeable teacher to co-ordinate the subject and, in co-operation with the local college, plans to provide training for teaching assistants so that they can support pupils' learning. The school is well placed to continue to raise standards by more regular use of computers, and to make increasing use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in other subjects of the curriculum.

## **MUSIC**

127. Attainment in music is in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. This is the result of good teaching, good support for those who need it and carefully planning. Standards in singing are good across the school.
128. Music has a high profile in the Speech and Language Unit. The pupils respond well to very good teaching during class lessons and they enjoy singing, with some pupils sustaining a simple tune well. The pupils benefit from joining the Year 1 for short singing lessons. Pupils from the unit sang confidently as they led an assembly for the whole school.
129. Teachers build effectively on the good start which pupils receive in the Foundation Stage. Classes in the same year group join together for a weekly singing lesson. Although these are large groups, the teaching is good and pupils perform well. Much of the success can be attributed to the active participation of all class teachers, and the regular opportunity pupils have to sing with a piano accompaniment. In the Year 1 session, the pupils sang a two-part song confidently and tunefully. They responded well to reminders about posture and showed good recall of a song learned the previous week. The Year 2 pupils sing with good control and tone. During their singing period, they enjoyed practising well-known songs with an animal theme, and successfully managed some complicated phrasing.
130. Year 1 and 2 also have class music lessons, but the time allocated is too short to allow teachers to develop concepts fully. Teachers in the same year group plan together so that pupils of a similar age follow the same programme, and staff can share expertise. These periods are carefully planned and are well organised. Lessons build effectively on previous work. In one good Year 2 lesson, pupils made good progress when they worked in groups to develop and perform a "storm" sequence. Pupils arranged symbols and followed these as they played percussion instruments. The teacher worked hard to ensure that all pupils were fully involved in the lesson. The final part of the lesson was very effective when the teacher encouraged pupils to suggest ideas for modifying the symbols to represent variations in the pitch and duration of the sounds. This lesson overran the allotted time of 20 minutes. A lesson in a parallel class, where the teaching had many good features, had to be cut short at the end of the day, and the teacher was unable to summarise learning.
131. Subject management is satisfactory. The subject leader has not, as yet, had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning. Resources are good, both in terms of quantity and quality. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory, in terms of standards and teaching. The school has yet to introduce a system for assessment and this is an area for development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

132. Overall standards of attainment at the end of Year 2 are in line with those expected for pupils aged seven. Standards attained by pupils in games' skills are above those expected because teaching of this aspect is very good and skills are progressively developed. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is better than it was then and, as a result, pupils are making better progress in their learning. They are offered a broad and balanced curriculum which is designed to promote their physical development and social interaction.
133. Lessons in dance and games were observed during the inspection. The quality of teaching seen was very good in two lessons and good in two. Teachers set good example to pupils by being appropriately changed for lessons. As a result, pupils bring their kit to school so that they can be fully included in lessons. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and teach the subject enthusiastically. They make pupils aware of the need to warm-up before taking part in activities and, as a result, pupils know about the effects of exercise on the body. The pace of teaching and learning is good so that the effects of the warm-up are not diminished. Teachers are aware of the

needs of boys and girls of all abilities and plan tasks which challenge them at appropriate levels. Pupils with physical disabilities are very well supported and are fully included

in lessons. The very good relationships established by teachers and their high expectations mean that pupils work safely and happily together and all enjoy the activities. As a result, lessons make a very good contribution to pupils' moral and social development.

134. By the end of Year 2, guided by supportive teaching, pupils have increased their confidence in physical control and mobility. They perform a range of movements including running and balancing, and gain a good awareness of space, and each other, as they work. In the dance lesson, pupils were seen planning and performing simple skills safely, showing good control in linking movements together. The school needs to consider the way in which it plans for dance within its topic work so that the teaching and development of skill are not restricted, and so that pupils develop and use contrasts in level, direction and speed to enhance their performances. In games lessons, teachers help pupils develop elements of play that include running, throwing, catching and control using hands and feet. For example, in very good Year 2 lessons, pupils were being taught to develop good ball skills, such as 'pushing' a ball down to make it bounce to an appropriate height. Pupils were given enough time to practise and refine these skills through an interesting range of activities. Direct teaching of skills is a strength of lessons. As a result, by the end of Year 2, most pupils engage in simple competitive striking and fielding games, using simple attacking and defending skills with good control and co-ordination.
135. The curriculum is enriched through links with the local football club which provides pupils with opportunities for football training twice a week after school. Class teachers identify pupils with weak co-ordination and these pupils are invited to attend the early morning 'Gym Trail Intervention Programme'. This is run by a high number of dedicated, well-trained teachers and teaching assistants, who provide a wide range of activities to improve co-ordination and mobility. This is another fine example of the school's commitment to its pupils and to educational inclusion. The school has plans to increase the number of extra-curricular activities to add to pupils' enjoyment and to further enhance the curriculum.
136. The co-ordination of the subject is good. There is a good range of resources for games which are well organised and readily available to teachers. The school has recognised the need to improve gymnastic equipment and is planning fund raising activities. There are no whole school formal procedures for assessment. The school needs to consider this in order to ensure a greater rate of progress for all pupils across the different elements of the subject.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

137. Standards in religious education match those expected by the locally agreed syllabus for pupils aged seven. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when overall standards were below those expected. A significant number of pupils enter the school with well below average levels in communication and literacy but they achieve well. Teachers feel well supported by the school's scheme of work which links the agreed syllabus with national guidance for the subject, and there is good coverage. Teachers ensure that the subject makes an effective contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. To this end, pupils are taught to respect all people and nature, to see themselves as important members of society, to recognise the difference between right and wrong, and to recognise distinctive features of different religions. Pupils' good behaviour, the constructive way in which they work together and the respect they have for each other and adults, reflect how successful teachers are in these areas of pupils' development.
138. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was invariably good. Teachers plan their lessons well, recognising the importance of giving pupils time to reflect and discuss. In this way, the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' speaking and listening skills. However, in light of the identified weakness in pupils' writing, teachers should look more closely at how pupils might record their work. Not only would this support their writing skills, but would help pupils more



easily to remember and recall facts they have been taught or have found out for themselves through simple research. There is some evidence on display of the use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in religious education. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well through very positive relationships and high expectations. Teaching assistants are confident and well prepared to engage pupils with special educational needs in discussion so that they are fully included in lessons.

139. Good quality assemblies, circle times and the personal, social and health education programme, give good support to pupils' learning in religious education. Pupils in Year 1, for example, were considering the theme of *Friendship* in their year group assembly. They listened attentively to the story of how Jesus chose his disciples, and the qualities he was looking for. The story was well told by the teacher who used pictures of the disciples to focus pupils' attention. This, together with a very good act of collective worship, deepened pupils' understanding of the importance and qualities of friendship. This theme was carried on in class religious education lessons at the end of which pupils could answer that a good friend shares with others, is a good listener, plays fairly and nicely, is kind, and looks after those who are sad and lonely. They also remembered the names of some of Jesus' disciples showing the attention with which they had listened in assembly. Planning and discussions show that pupils in this year group are taught about the beliefs and practices of the Jewish faith, and that different faiths share some common features such as festivals and caring for each other.
140. Pupils in Year 2 were considering the theme *caring for our pets and other animals* during the inspection. They had been studying Islam and the life of Muhammad, and teachers were building on pupils' prior learning to teach them about Muhammad's attitude to God's creatures. Pupils remembered that Muhammad was 'God's Messenger' and some of the stories from his life. In the year group assembly they considered the story of how Muhammad reproached travellers for leaving their camels in the sun without water while they themselves sat in the shade and quenched their thirst. The quality of the teaching in this assembly and in follow-up lessons gave pupils a good understanding of the moral behind the story and they were able to say that 'we should treat other creatures as we ourselves would like to be treated.' In this way teachers ensure that pupils not only learn *about* religion, but also *from* religion through the lives and stories of key figures such as Jesus, Moses and Muhammad.
141. The co-ordinator gives good support to teachers and manages resources well. Visits to the local church are well used to support learning, and the school is planning to visit other places of worship so as to further support pupils' understanding of the richness and diversity of other faiths and cultures.