

INSPECTION REPORT

WILLIAM MARTIN CE NURSERY AND INFANT SCHOOL

Harlow

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115101

Acting Headteacher: Mrs V Philpott

Reporting inspector: Mr G D Timms
21038

Dates of inspection: 2 – 3 December 2002

Inspection number: 247532

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery and infant
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Tawneys Road Harlow Essex
Postcode:	CM18 6PW
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E- mail address:	admin@williammartin-inf.essex.sch.uk
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev A Watson
Date of previous inspection:	12 – 15 January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

William Martin Infant School has 158 pupils on roll including 52 part time pupils in the nursery class and 21 full time pupils in the reception class. A further intake of nursery and reception children is admitted at the start of the spring term. At the age of seven, the majority transfer to the junior school that shares the site. The percentage of pupils whose mother tongue is not English is above average and there is a small amount of support for pupils at an early stage of learning English. Attainment on entry to the nursery is below that normally expected, especially in language skills, although there is a range of ability. By the time they enter reception they have made good progress although their attainment is still below average. Few pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual time. Thirteen per cent of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and this is broadly in line with the national average. The main needs identified are emotional and behavioural with some learning difficulties. Just over 1 per cent of the pupils have a statement of educational need and this is below average. The pupils come from a range of social backgrounds and a broadly average proportion of the pupils (14 per cent) are entitled to free school meals.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a good education for the pupils and this has been maintained although there has been a lengthy period of temporary management since the previous headteacher left. The standards in English and mathematics are above average in Year 2 and pupils make good progress when compared to their attainment on entry. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall but the school requires a stable management for further improvement. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and very good in the Foundation Stage. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in literacy and numeracy are above average and the pupils make good progress.
- The quality of the teaching is good throughout the infant classes and this has a positive impact on progress and pupils' attitudes.
- The quality of education in the nursery and reception classes is very good and the children make good progress.
- The learning support assistants provide high quality support for the teachers. They are effectively deployed and have a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- The provision for information and communication technology is very good. Teaching is good and there is a very effective curriculum planning.
- The school provides very good care and effective support for the pupils.

What could be improved

- The school needs an effective senior management team and a more extensive role for governors in holding the school to account.
- The links with parents through effective communication and consultation are not strong enough.
- The provision for children's outdoor play is not sufficiently well developed.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1998. Since then, the school has been through a very difficult time, including the death of the previous headteacher. This resulted in a lengthy period of uncertainty about the future but, although there have been many changes to the staff, the overall level of improvement has been satisfactory. The key issues raised related to the provision of appropriate schemes of work and developing the role of the subject leaders. The school now has appropriate schemes of work in place, based on the latest curriculum changes, and the teachers' planning ensures some progression in the learning of skills. The subject leaders in English, mathematics, information and communication technology and the Foundation Stage provide good leadership in those subjects. In addition, the information and communication technology provision has greatly improved, as have the library resources. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced with some success. Improvements have been made to the condition of some classrooms and toilets, and money is earmarked for this to continue. With the recent appointment of a new headteacher completed, the school is likely to continue improving further in the future.

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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
reading	B	B	C	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
writing	A	A	B	B	
mathematics	B	B	D	D	

Overall, children make good progress in the nursery and reception classes. When they begin Year 1, the majority have achieved the appropriate levels expected in all areas of learning, and a few exceed the expected level. The national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2002 showed that in writing, standards were above average, while in reading they were average. In mathematics, the 2002 test results were below average. Although these results were below those normally attained by pupils, this was due to the cohort containing a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The majority of the children tested in 2002 had made good progress throughout the school, as is shown by the improvement made against their attainment on entry to the reception class, and by the number who reached or exceeded the targets set for them. When compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, the test results in 2002 were above average in writing, average in reading and below average in mathematics. Since the last inspection, the results in the Year 2 national tests have been consistently better than those found nationally, and this represents a considerable achievement when the below average attainment on entry to the school is taken into account.

The evidence of the inspection is that standards by the end of Year 2 are still above average in reading, writing, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. The present Year 2 pupils are on line to exceed the results found last year, helped by the small teaching groups set up by the school for English and mathematics this term. The recent introduction of a system of tracking individual pupils' progress now enables teachers quickly to identify pupils who are underachieving so they can provide appropriately targeted work. The presentation of pupils' work varies and is inconsistent between classes, as is the amount of work completed.

Standards in information and communication technology have risen with recent improvements to the resources and accommodation, as well as the very effective coordination of the subject, the improved teaching and very good deployment of a knowledgeable and enthusiastic learning support assistant. During the inspection, the school was preparing for Christmas, and the standard of pupils' singing, in assemblies and in class groups is very good. They have a good understanding of the Christmas story, and also understand aspects of other festivals such as Diwali.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The pupils are very enthusiastic and approach all tasks with evident enjoyment.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory, although the management of poor behaviour is inconsistent.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils use resources confidently and most appreciate the need to tidy away. They have good relationships with the teachers.
Attendance	Good. The latest figures show that attendance rates are above average.

Incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour at break and lunchtimes are often the result of a lack of good resourcing for play. The school is aware of this and plans to improve the provision have been drawn up.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Very 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 teaching throughout the school is good overall, and often very good in the nursery and reception classes. The teaching in English and mathematics is good and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced successfully, although the high turnover of teachers recently has left the school with some staff who have only a basic knowledge of these schemes and who require further training in these subjects. However, these staff bring other strengths to the school and the use of more experienced staff to act as their mentors is successful in ensuring that most lessons are well planned and taught.

In the nursery and reception classes, the teaching is planned carefully around the nationally agreed areas of learning, at a level appropriate for the ages of the children. Good learning habits are fostered and children make good progress from when they start at the school. Activities are well matched to the learning objectives and good relationships are developed, which are maintained in Years 1 and 2. The learning support assistants provide very good support for teachers in a range of ways. They are often very effectively deployed by teachers to observe and evaluate pupils' learning when the teacher is teaching the whole class. Individual expertise and knowledge is used well in, for example, the information and communication technology suite and in the nursery. In small group work, they often support the less able pupils or those with special educational needs very effectively. Overall, the support assistants have a very positive impact on the pupils' learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The planning ensures that all aspects of the National Curriculum are taught at an appropriate level and the Foundation Stage curriculum has been very effectively introduced.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The very effective coordinator oversees the good level of support provided for these pupils, although the provision for those with behavioural difficulties needs to be reviewed.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The small proportion of pupils whose mother tongue is not English are well provided for and their individual needs are considered appropriately to ensure they are fully included.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory, overall although the provision for pupils' cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The staff have a good knowledge of the pupils and their needs. There is a caring ethos throughout the school.

There are some good opportunities found to enrich the curriculum through visits and visitors. The extra-curricular provision is good and a range of after school clubs is provided. The recent introduction of a system for assessing pupils' progress throughout the school is providing staff with useful information enabling them to address any identified underachievement.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory, overall. The management requires some improvement although the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have worked hard to maintain the good aspects of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. More needs to be done to become familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of the school and to evaluate how well the school is doing.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The interim management has continued monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, and provided support where needed.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The provision of the library and computer suite has greatly improved the resources available for pupils.

The school tries hard to provide best value in its work.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and are making good progress. • The school expects children to do their best. • The teaching is good. • They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over a quarter of the parents do not feel well enough informed about how well their children are getting on. • They do not feel the school is well led and managed or that the school works closely with them. • A significant proportion would like to see a more interesting range of activities outside of lessons. • A number of parents feel that the pupils' behaviour is not very good.

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive comments. However, the lack of certainty over the management of the school has resulted in a significant number of parents feeling that more could be done to keep them informed and involved in the school. Now that an appointment has been made, this issue needs to be addressed. The range of activities outside lessons is good and pupils' behaviour is largely satisfactory although there is room to improve this further through better consistency and the planned playground development.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards in literacy and numeracy are above average and the pupils make good progress.

1. When the children enter the nursery, the attainment of most in aspects of literacy and numeracy is below that expected. Only a few are able to write their names. They make good progress through the early stages of the areas of learning and are close to the level expected when they start the reception year. Further good progress results in the majority of the children achieving the expected early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, and in mathematical development, by time they start Year 1.
2. The picture of attainment in the national tests in reading and mathematics has been one of consistently above average results. In writing, results have often been well above those found nationally. This represents good progress overall, and very good progress in writing from the pupils' below average attainment on entry to the school. These positive standards have been maintained during the period of interim management, until this year when the attainment was below average in mathematics, average in reading, but still above average in writing. This was largely because of a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, resulting in fewer pupils reaching the higher levels, although a similar proportion as the previous year reached the expected level for their ages. These results were the same when compared with schools that take pupils from similar backgrounds.
3. Year 2 pupils followed up the reading of poetry with some written work in the style of one of the poems. This resulted in some effective work linking colours to everyday objects. In their phonic work, pupils are able to draw up comprehensive lists of words using some pairs of letters such as 'ar'. This work is effectively extended through pupils recognising that there is another word in 'charm' – 'arm' – and one pupil is able to point out that harm is also a word within the word. In another good lesson, Year 2 pupils wrote poems based on the structure of a text read the previous day. The teacher cleverly linked this work to spelling patterns with vocabulary such as 'could', 'should', and 'would'. Good use was made by a teacher of the look, cover and write technique using individual whiteboards. This gave pupils a chance to recall the spelling patterns and enabled the teacher to see who was successful and who was still struggling.
4. Year 2 pupils use their number skills to solve a range of mathematical problems. They can recognise patterns and use these to make predictions. For example, the less able can find colour patterns and work out the next in the sequence accurately. Higher attaining pupils have tasks that are more open-ended and are able to suggest ways of colouring in different patterns and systematic sequences.
5. In Year 1, pupils use a 100 square to count in two's forwards and backwards. They are developing a sound understanding of the calendar, days, months, and dates. In one good problem-solving lesson, Year 2 pupils are able to use three dice to create a calculation resulting in 12 as an answer and using three digits. They work well in pairs and share their ideas and answers appropriately, although the standard of presentation varies and some is very untidy.
6. Year 1 pupils have improving listening skills and they are able to read and sound out letter sounds satisfactorily. They can recognise when a sound is incorrect, which the teacher does deliberately using a puppet. In one lesson, they were able to explain the differences between the book they had read together and the taped audio version to which they then listened.

The quality of the teaching is good throughout the infant classes and this has a positive impact on progress and pupils' attitudes.

7. The overall quality of the teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good, with a significant proportion that is very good. Very little of the teaching is unsatisfactory and this reflects positively on the staffing as there have been significant changes to teaching staff and senior management over the past two years. In particular, teachers from overseas are bringing their own strengths and positive attitudes to the school, although they do not have the grounding in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies that English-trained teachers do. The school addresses this by providing them with support in their planning and mentors so they have other staff they can turn to as necessary.
8. The school has worked to address perceived weaknesses in the teaching over the past two years. This has resulted in extra staffing to create small groups in English and mathematics for a term for the present Year 2

children. This is giving teachers more opportunities to work on a one-to-one basis with pupils, helping them to achieve the standards they are capable of and to make good progress. The success of this is reflected in the progress evident in the smaller groups and by the parents' comments in support of the move.

9. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. In Year 2, teachers model writing skills well before asking pupils to do the same. Good opportunities are taken to make appropriate teaching points about the size of pupils' handwriting. The best teaching also provides opportunities for pupils to reflect on their work. For example, in one good Year 2 lesson they were asked to look at a poem silently for a while and think about the words used. The coordinator for pupils with special educational needs provides very good support in some lessons. For example, in one lessons she sat with one of her identified pupils during the register and first part of the lesson, helping the pupil stay on task and focused and to take a full part in the discussion. This is good and effective use of her time.
10. The teachers use resources well, sometimes providing imaginative ways of undertaking tasks. For example, in one good science lesson, pupils used clay to test the effects of different forces and after observing and recording their findings then used the clay to create an imaginative medal or pendant. Due to the well-planned and resourced lesson, the pupils were well behaved and actively involved in their work. A productive working ethos was created. Good use of individual whiteboards in Year 2 enabled the teacher to observe how all pupils' responded to questions, rather than just those putting up their hands. The planning identifies activities appropriately varied to provide sufficient challenge for pupils of differing prior attainment.
11. Teachers are good at recognising when pupils have spent long enough sitting listening and are flexible enough to alter their lesson planning slightly to take account of this, especially on days when the weather is poor. Plenary sessions at the end of lessons often provide a good conclusion and opportunity to return to the objectives to see if they have been met. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, two higher attaining pupils explained how they had approached a problem solving activity and this enabled them to share their learning with others and to consolidate their learning through the need to explain what they had done. The teacher also used errors effectively to extend pupils' understanding of counting on and making a number.
12. Where the teaching is less successful, the management of pupils with behavioural problems is less consistent. The transfer between activities in a class, or moving from one lesson to another is noisy and results in some loss of the productive working atmosphere. The lesson planning is not detailed enough to make clear the learning objectives intended and this results in lessons with no clear purpose. For example, in one physical education lessons, very little direct teaching of any skills took place, groups were too large and pupils made little progress in their learning. However, this is rare and, especially in the core subjects, the planning is sufficiently detailed to enable teachers to share clear learning objectives with the pupils, enabling them to understand what they are going to learn.
13. Pupils' attitudes are often largely good and often very good. Although there are exceptions, including some difficult and challenging pupils, the majority are very enthusiastic learners and enjoy the tasks provided in lessons. As they get older, they develop good skills of sharing and collaboration.

The quality of education in the nursery and reception classes is very good and the children make good progress.

14. The coordinator of the Foundation Stage is very enthusiastic and has a good level of expertise. She is a very good role model for other staff and has a very good action plan for the future development of this aspect of the school's work. The planning for the Foundation Stage is well organised and based on the nationally agreed areas of learning. A particular focus is the personal, social and emotional development of the pupils as the school recognises this area as a weakness when many of the children start school. Very good use is made of registrations and other class discussion times to introduce and consolidate appropriate rules and children quickly respond positively to the adults in each class. For example, in the reception class the teacher shares the planned timetable with children so they are aware of what is happening throughout the day. In the nursery, sensible distinctions in activities are made between the older children who will be in a reception class next term, and the younger ones.
15. The nursery classroom offers a colourful, exciting environment in which children can play and learn. The room is well prepared for each session with activities set out on tables and resources easily accessible. Displays are bright and consist of a lot of vocabulary and numbers to help familiarise children with reading and counting. Children respond to the teachers and the nursery nurse quickly and politely, as, for example, when called to a mat session for story or registration. Good opportunities are taken to discuss numbers in

everyday situations and to discuss the calendar and the weather with children. This is extended through the introduction of an Advent calendar, and good opportunities for children to talk about the calendars they have at home. Children have opportunities not just to learn about the Christmas story but also to act it out in a very effective role-play area.

16. Outdoor play is an important part of the curriculum in the nursery and in reception. Children in the nursery have some large toys to ride and play with. They have a 'police station' and dress up for this role play which follows on from a visit from a local policeman. This play gives a good level of independence to the children. They are able to change their shoes without excessive support, for example. The reception class also have a lot of time outdoors, although their activities have a more specific educational direction and purpose, and are closely related to the class work and teaching activities. For example, during the inspection children used the programmable robot, trying to be as accurate as possible in making it move a certain distance. Other children used number cards to order sequences.
17. Staff work very closely with children on adult-directed activities. For example, in one session children made toast and spread it with their choice of butter, honey or jam. During the activity the nursery nurse led a very good discussion aimed at developing children's speaking and listening skills. In another activity, children compared potatoes and other objects to discuss whether they were smaller or larger, thus developing their mathematical vocabulary. Displays of work show that children have collected information about fruits and created a pictogram. A range of good artwork involving printing, collage and paint, shows how their creative development is encouraged.
18. The planning for the reception class is based on a good understanding of the different ways children learn, and the activities are clearly designed to develop a range of skills. For example, some activities are planned to use pupils' visual or auditory skills, while others are for those who need reinforcement through practical, hands-on experiences. In one very good numeracy lesson, children were exploring the concept of 'more than' or 'less than' up to nine. The teacher made very good use of practical equipment, including sweet lollipops and number cards, to keep children interested and involved. She extends this work well by using a child to take the teacher's role. The group activities are well targeted to individual pupils' prior attainment. Higher attaining children work on recording numbers using dice, with support. The less able work with the teacher, threading beads but with the emphasis on counting more than or less than nine.
19. In a literacy lesson, children learn the sounds of letters from planned activities based on a local phonic scheme. Good use is made of letter fans so that all children try to answer the question rather than just a few putting their hands up. This successfully keeps all involved in the session. Children are encouraged to self assess how well they do through a 'thumbs up' system. The children are becoming increasingly knowledgeable and confident using initial letter sounds.
20. In music, reception children can sing tunefully songs they have learned for Christmas. In one very good lesson in the nursery, children were able to walk in an appropriate style for the music being played. They learn about simple percussion instruments. The very good teaching results in excellent behaviour and the lesson is very well managed and appropriate for the ages of the children. They sing action songs well after a brief rehearsal. The very good specialist teaching provides a good set of ideas and skills for the class teacher to follow up in the next lesson.
21. A major strength in the provision is the very good relationships created between staff and children. This gives the children confidence to take a full part in activities and to try out different ideas. In the nursery, a calm, productive but purposeful and active ethos is created and children play together with growing cooperation. In reception, a further strength is the very good use made of the outdoor environment for activities closely linked to the class work. For example, in a numeracy lesson, children ordered number cards and described if they were greater than or less than nine.
22. In the reception class, the teacher shares the learning objectives with children so they are clear about what is expected from them. This helps create a productive working atmosphere within the class. The assessments made of children's progress include very good evaluations of lessons and assessments of individual's learning. Very good opportunities are found for children to speak and listen through class discussions. In one such session, children discussed being kind to each other, linking this particularly to the outdoor activities. Some children discuss photographs of friends, saying why they are friends and what they like about them. The teacher introduces a theme through the very good use of a puppet character who was unhappy at school, getting children to offer suggestions as to what should have happened, or what they would do in similar circumstances.

23. Parents are encouraged to join a reading session with their children once a week at the start of the session. This is well supported and helps create an ethos where books are respected and seen as important. A significant number of parents are involved, including grandparents and male family members. This is very successful and adults and children enjoy the books together. It also provides an opportunity for parents to speak to staff about how well their children are progressing.

The learning support assistants provide high quality support for the teachers. They are effectively deployed and have a positive impact on pupils' learning.

24. The team of learning support assistants are a valuable resource for the school and provide added value to the school's work in many ways. They have good relationships with the children and are capable of working with groups or individuals. The school makes very good use of their individual expertise. For example, one support assistant with particular skills and interest in computers has responsibility for supporting the teaching in this subject and for maintaining and organising the computer suite. This results in much more effective and efficient use of the available resources than might otherwise be the case.
25. Another of the most effective ways they are deployed is to observe pupils during whole class teaching sessions. They make very useful notes for the teacher about particular pupils and the way they respond to the session by, for example, noting how often they answer or ask questions. They also focus on social or behavioural issues, observing who lacks attention or fidgets with neighbours rather than taking a productive part in the lesson. This provides teachers with very valuable information when they are planning future work.
26. Many of the support staff work with pupils with special educational needs, providing very effective support and helping such pupils to be fully included in all activities. For example, in one Year 2 lesson, the learning support assistant effectively enabled a boy with emotional and behavioural difficulties to take a full part in a practical activity involving the use of forces on clay. In an English lesson, support enabled a boy with learning difficulties to take a full part in writing a version of a colour poem. In one English lesson, the learning support assistant made very good notes on a record for a pupil's individual education plan about how well he achieved his specific targets and objectives during the whole class session.

The provision for information and communication technology is very good. Teaching is good and there is very effective curriculum planning.

27. The school has worked hard to develop the teaching and learning in information and communication technology since the last inspection. The subject coordinator is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic and has a very good action plan for further developments in the subject. Staff have undertaken appropriate training and are now more skilled in using the available software. However, the high turnover of staff means that training is an on-going need. The planning shows that information and communication technology is regularly used in lessons, especially with regard to regular skills teaching in the computer suite. The use of computers in the classroom, especially during literacy and numeracy lessons is less well developed.
28. The nursery children have access to computers and these are used for activities appropriate for their level of prior attainment. In one session, a girl explored the effects she could create with a basic art package. She used the hardware confidently and clearly understood how the movements of the mouse were reflected on the screen. Other information and communication technology in the nursery is evident in the use of telephones in role-play areas. The reception class children are able to program a robot toy confidently and can make it move the distance they intended.
29. In a Year 1 literacy lesson, pupils worked on a prepared text to click and drag jumbled words to make sentences using text boxes. The support assistant has a very good relationship with the pupils; this helps encourage them to listen closely and follow her instructions. She explained the task well and pupils were clear about what they had to do. She then supported the less confident ones during the activity very effectively helping them to take a full part in the lesson. A good extension activity was provided for the early finishers and higher attaining pupils. The pupils' literacy skills were consolidated through the use of capital letters and full stops to guide them to where the sentences would begin and finish.
30. Year 2 pupils take their word-processing skills further through the developing use of the keyboard to make capital letters, use the space bar correctly and to use the arrow keys to edit text. They are able to print their work when they are satisfied with the final product. This work linked effectively with the class literacy work, writing poems in a given structure.

31. Year 2 pupils use computers effectively in a numeracy lesson to record their findings to a problem using a graphics program. This enables them to consolidate their mouse skills and knowledge and understanding of the screen icons, buttons and tools available. They work well in pairs and, although using the software for a mathematical purpose, are able to explore different effects, thus extending their information and communication technology knowledge. Pupils have created some abstract patterns in the style of Mondrian and these are very effective. Links to history and geography work are made through computer drawings of buildings seen during a visit to Harlow.
32. The school has started an information and communication technology club outside normal lessons. Although this is limited by the available hardware, the support assistant who runs the club has a good rolling programme which will enable most of those interested to take part during the year. This club is used to extend the basic skills taught in lessons and give pupils the opportunity to create designs and pictures with art software and to merge pictures and text using publishing software. For example, one group produced a version of the story of Goldilocks and the three bears. The final part of the rolling programme involves children producing a PowerPoint presentation on aspects of school life.

The school provides very good care and effective support for the pupils.

33. The school has a very caring and inclusive ethos. This has been maintained since the last inspection, although there is some inconsistency in dealing with pupils with challenging behaviour patterns; the school has recognised that this is a growing issue and needs to be addressed. For example, very good links with a local counselling service has enabled some children to benefit from this work. School administration staff provide exceptional support to teachers when dealing with medical matters and very good records are kept.
34. In the nursery, during a very good personal, social and emotional development activity, children were asked to say something they liked about one of the class. This regular activity involves all pupils thinking about each other in a positive way. For example, they said things like 'I like her smile' or 'She waves goodbye to me'. This is very effectively built on in the reception class, where children are also asked to think of a friend and to say why they are friends and what it is they like about them.
35. In a registration session in Year 1, the teacher offered good opportunities for pupils to talk about matters of interest to them, especially relating to their weekend activities. In particular, this enabled a number of them to talk about their families' preparations for Christmas. Registration periods are also used effectively to reinforce polite responses to questions.
36. In one Year 2 class a good display of a 'friendship tree' makes the point that it is not just children who are friends in the class, but the different adults who work in there as well. Classrooms have rules displayed, often created with the pupils. In one Year 1 class, these focus on the need for class teamwork.
37. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school has adapted the buildings to accommodate children with physical difficulties and this work is to be extended in the future. The special needs coordinator is appointed jointly with the neighbouring junior school and this provides pupils with a good link when they transfer schools.
38. In assemblies, reflective music is played as pupils enter. In one assembly, this consisted of plainsong. Birthdays are celebrated and children given the opportunity to talk about their presents and parties. A silent moment is provided for personal reflection, as the acting headteacher described it 'a small part of the day when the whole school is in silence'.
39. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The school makes a good attempt to introduce pupils to different cultures and faiths. Recent work has included learning about the festival of Diwali and pupils created effective pictures representing light effects and designed mehndi hand patterns. Music from different cultures is played in assemblies. In one birthday assembly, for example, a Kenyan birthday song was played.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The school needs an effective senior management team and a more extensive role for governors in holding the school to account.

40. The school has been through a difficult time over recent years with the sad loss of the previous headteacher after a long-term illness. The governors appointed the present acting headteacher to that post after she had taken over that role on and off for some time. In addition, an acting deputy headteacher was also appointed from the staff. Unfortunately, however, this has resulted in a lengthy period of uncertainty about the future of the school, partially caused by the difficulty in recruiting a permanent headteacher.
41. Together with the changes to staff over the past few years, and the need to recruit overseas teachers on a temporary basis, this has made it difficult to maintain the settled and successful level of management that existed at the time of the last inspection. A senior management team exists but rarely meets. However, the acting headteacher and deputy headteacher, although with little experience of the roles, have worked very hard, as have the rest of the staff, for the benefit of the pupils. Good decisions such as those regarding music provision, the work of the special needs coordinator and the developing work on tracking individual pupils' progress and achievement, have been made. Even so, the management of aspects of the school's work has suffered, largely through a lack of effective communication, both within the school and with parents. The recent appointment of a new headteacher will provide a good opportunity for the school to review the existing management structures and make decisions about their appropriateness and how they can be improved.
42. The governing body does not have sufficiently effective systems for holding the school to account and for monitoring and evaluating how successful it is, and this is something they have recognised and plan to address. They do not receive detailed enough reports on developments within the school and there are insufficient opportunities for governors to visit the school, talk to pupils and staff and report back to the governing body.

The links with parents through effective communication and consultation are not strong enough.

43. A significant minority of the parents (twenty-six per cent of those who returned the inspection questionnaires) do not feel that they have sufficient opportunities to meet with teachers, especially in the nursery class, to discuss their children's progress. Over twenty per cent of those who returned the questionnaires feel that the school does not work closely enough with parents. In addition, the feeling at the meeting for parents was that communication between home and school is not as good as it was, although they praised the monthly newsletter. Very short notice is sometimes given of future events.
44. The inspection findings do not support the perceived lack of opportunities to meet with nursery teachers. At the start of each session, parents bring children into the classroom and once a week they can stay for a time and read with their children. During this session and at the start and end of the day, many conversations between staff and parents were noted. The narrow entrance to the room, and the positioning of the cloakroom and the water tray does cause some congestion.
45. Parents feel that the school does not listen to their complaints or suggestions and that not enough action is taken when issues regarding behaviour or queries about changes to normal practice, such as the planned changes to the organisation of pupils by age in the nursery, or the grouping of Year 2 pupils for literacy and numeracy. The parents' association is poorly supported. Parents who help in school would welcome more guidance about what is expected of them. There is insufficient curriculum information given to parents about what their children will be learning.

The provision for children's outdoor play is not sufficiently well developed.

46. The school shares a large site with the junior school. Although there is a good, well-maintained and used adventure play area, the hard play space is small. The edges to the playground are muddy and there is excessive litter at the end of play times, which suggests that pupils are not demonstrating sufficient respect for their school and that this aspect of their social development is insufficiently emphasised. Inappropriate equipment is used during breaks and there are insufficient suitable resources for play times.
47. The school has plans to expand the play space available and to create a separate ball play area and quiet area. Money is earmarked for this. The reception class teacher creates many opportunities for well-planned outdoor activities and play but the class lacks a secure and suitable space for this. Further training of midday

supervisors is needed to ensure they are well managed and deployed and to add further value to their contact with the pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

48. To improve further, the newly appointed headteacher, staff and governing body should:

- ❑ Improve the management of the school by: **
 - Creating an effective management structure;
 - Improving the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning to ensure sufficient consistency in the provision;
 - Develop the role of the governing body in holding the school to account.
(Discussed in paragraphs 40 to 42)

- ❑ Improve the communication and consultation with parents to encourage their involvement in their pupils' learning.
(Discussed in paragraphs 43 to 45)

- ❑ Improve the outdoor facilities for educational activities and play, as planned. **
(Discussed in paragraphs 46 and 47)

*** The school is aware of these issues and has plans to address them*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

22

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

14

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	5	11	5	1	0	0
Percentage	0	23	50	23	4	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 four percentage points.

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	132
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	19

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	20

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	28	33	61

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	25	25
	Girls	30	30	31
	Total	55	55	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (89)	90 (96)	92 (94)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	26	26
	Girls	30	30	30
	Total	55	56	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (86)	92 (92)	92 (89)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	80	0	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	23	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.8
Average class size	26.4

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	262

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	49.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.4

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	591 703
Total expenditure	555 875
Expenditure per pupil	2527
Balance brought forward from previous year	42 162
Balance carried forward to next year	77 990

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	184
Number of questionnaires returned	121

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	31	6	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	51	35	7	2	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	47	12	3	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	36	10	4	17
The teaching is good.	54	35	7	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	42	21	5	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	41	7	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	44	45	3	1	7
The school works closely with parents.	34	38	17	4	7
The school is well led and managed.	26	36	16	12	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	45	7	3	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	41	14	2	11

Other issues raised by parents

This represents a well above average return rate and reflects concerns of parents over the loss of the previous headteacher and the length of time taken before appointing a permanent replacement.