

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ROWANFIELD INFANT SCHOOL**

Cheltenham

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115592

Headteacher: Ms C Barnard

Reporting inspector: Ms A Coyle  
20603

Dates of inspection: 25<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> November 2002

Inspection number: 247565

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Alstone Lane Cheltenham
Postcode:	GL51 8HY
Telephone number:	(01242) 515334
Fax number:	(01242) 515334
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs D Wright
Date of previous inspection:	30 <sup>th</sup> October 2000

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20603	Ms A Coyle	Registered inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Foundation Stage English as an additional language Education inclusion	How high are the standards? How well are the pupils taught? How well the school is led and managed What should the school do to improve further?
9769	Mrs M Morrissey	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27324	Mrs D Crow	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Music Physical education Special educational needs	
18370	Mr K Johnson	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Ltd  
7 Hill Street  
Bristol  
BS1 5RW

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>4 - 8</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>9 - 10</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>10 - 12</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>12 - 13</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>13 - 14</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>15 - 16</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>17 - 21</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>22 - 34</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Rowanfield Infant School is situated in a residential part of Cheltenham serving the surrounding area consisting of local-authority and privately owned properties. The school is a similar size compared to other primary schools nationally; there are 97 girls and 101 boys in the school aged between four and seven years. Children are admitted at the beginning of the school year in which they are five and there are currently 67 in the reception classes. Attainment on entry is very low overall because children's language, literacy, mathematical, personal and social skills are very limited. Six per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, which is much lower than the national average, and all of them speak English fluently. Thirty per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals and this is higher than the national average. Twenty-three per cent have been identified on the register of special educational needs, which is similar to the national figure. These pupils have moderate learning needs, emotional and behavioural needs, attention deficit, speech and communication difficulties and physical impairment, and two pupils have statements for their needs.

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

Rowanfield Infants is an improving school in which the staff provide a welcoming environment for the pupils. Standards have risen slowly since the last inspection and are now in line with the national expectations by Year 2 in most subjects, except English where they are still too low. The teaching and learning are good overall and the good leadership and management of the headteacher and governors help to ensure sound value for money.

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

- Pupils make good progress in their learning and show good attitudes to their work.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. It is often very good and occasionally excellent.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Good personal support is provided for pupils and there are good procedures for child protection.
- The good leadership and management of the headteacher and governors are helping the school to raise its standards, with the aid of a good school improvement plan.
- The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities for its pupils.
- The quality of information provided for parents is good.

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

- Standards are below those expected nationally in speaking, reading and writing by Year 2.
- The curriculum for children in the reception classes is not linked closely enough to the Stepping Stones contained in the national guidance or extended sufficiently to help them attain the Early Learning Goals before embarking on their studies of the National Curriculum in Year 1.
- Levels of attendance are well below the national average.

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

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

The school was last inspected in October 2000, when it was judged to have serious weaknesses. Since then, all of the shortcomings have been addressed and improvement has been good. The management of the school has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now good because the new headteacher, who was appointed in 2001, has introduced many positive changes over the last two years that have helped to move the school forward. Monitoring procedures are now clear and the good school improvement plan is linked well to financial considerations, as well as to raising the standards pupils attain. The roles of the subject co-ordinators have been developed to a satisfactory level overall and the provision for the most capable pupils is now sound. The quality of teaching and learning has improved because the headteacher has monitored lessons carefully. The staff have worked hard to address the previously low achievement of pupils, especially in English and mathematics, by implementing the

National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies successfully. Standards have risen slowly as a result and the school has received the nationally recognised 'School Achievement Award' for its improvement. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has been greatly improved and is now good. Reports to parents are satisfactory. The school's capacity to improve even further is good because the senior managers and staff are all strongly committed to the education of the pupils.

## 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	E	E	C
Writing	E	E	D	C
Mathematics	E*	D	D	C

**Key**

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

The above table shows an improvement in standards over the last two years overall, rising from well below the national average in 2001 to below average in 2002. Although pupils attained standards that were well below the national average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics by the time they left the school in 2002, the results matched those of similar schools. The teacher assessments for science show that standards were in line with the national average. The inspection evidence largely concurs with these results and finds that standards are still rising; they are currently in line with the national expectations by Year 2 in most subjects, although there are still weaknesses in speaking, reading and writing.<sup>1</sup> The continuing trend of rising standards is because the quality of teaching is good overall and the school has devised realistic targets for improving pupils' attainment still further, which it is on line to achieve. Most pupils do well in relation to their capabilities and those with special educational needs make as much progress as other pupils because they are supported well by staff.

Children in the reception classes increase their knowledge and skills well. From a very low starting point, due to the significant numbers who have very poor skills on entry, they make good progress by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage.<sup>2</sup> Most children attain the Stepping Stones set out in the Early Learning Goals<sup>3</sup> in knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development. They achieve well in relation to their capabilities, although standards are lower than expected in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and personal, social and

### <sup>1</sup> ON LEVELS

By the end of Year 2, pupils are expected to attain Level 2 in all National Curriculum subjects. Those who achieve Level 3 are therefore attaining above the nationally expected levels.

### <sup>2</sup> FOUNDATION STAGE –

This stage of learning refers to children aged between three and six years. In this school, it refers to children in the reception classes.

### <sup>3</sup> ON EARLY LEARNING GOALS

From September 2000, QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority), have introduced a set of 'Early Learning Goals for children's learning'. These goals are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the end of the reception year in the areas of learning: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development, and personal, social and emotional development.

emotional development by the end of the reception year.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen to do well and show good interest in their work. They have sensible attitudes to learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Pupils are usually well behaved in lessons and at playtimes, but a few lose concentration easily and disrupt others.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Pupils are willing to take on responsibilities and often relate well to each other.
Attendance	Well below average. Although attendance levels were far lower than the national figure last year, they are beginning to improve because the school monitors and promotes attendance well.

Pupils show good attitudes to their work. They form good relationships with each other and are tolerant, and the school does its best to encourage good attendance.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Reception	Years 1 and 2
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good throughout the school overall. Children in the reception classes are provided with a good start to their education and the teaching is mainly good. It is occasionally very good in personal, social and emotional development and often excellent in physical development. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching is good overall; it is sometimes excellent in science and occasionally very good in English, mathematics, design and technology and music. Teaching is rarely less than satisfactory. Of the lessons observed, six out of ten were good or better and one out of every four lessons was very good or excellent. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection, when there was a significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching, and makes a strong contribution to pupils' good attitudes to their work. Literacy and numeracy are taught well and pupils use their skills appropriately in other subjects, which enables them to make good progress in the learning of basic skills. Lessons are usually managed well and learning support workers provide good guidance for pupils with special educational needs.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum, as well as religious education. However, the curriculum for children in the reception classes is not focused closely enough on the Stepping Stones contained in the national guidance or extended to help them attain all of the Early Learning Goals before embarking on their studies of the National Curriculum in Year 1.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school responds well to the Code of Practice for these pupils. <sup>4</sup> The provision is organised and managed well by the headteacher.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Not applicable. All pupils speak English fluently.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Satisfactory. The school makes appropriate provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Adults are good role models for their pupils.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. The school cares appropriately for pupils' health, safety and welfare. Pupils' personal support and guidance are good.

The school's partnership with its parents is satisfactory and a good range of extra-curricular activities helps pupils to extend their skills. The procedures for child protection are good.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The highly committed headteacher has introduced good monitoring procedures and a good school improvement plan. The senior managers and staff support her well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors take their responsibilities seriously and fulfil statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The headteacher and governors evaluate the school's performance well, taking effective action to address issues where necessary, and the subject co-ordinators are developing their roles appropriately.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school uses its resources appropriately and expenditure is linked carefully to raising standards.

The good quality leadership has a positive effect on the school. Hard-working staff and sufficient resources help to make the school a positive learning environment for its pupils. Satisfactory attention is given to obtaining the best value for money.

---

<sup>4</sup> **Code of Practice** – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

## 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.</li><li>• The school expects children to work hard and do their best.</li><li>• The school is well led by the headteacher and staff are very approachable.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No areas identified.</li></ul>

The inspectors agree with the positive comments made by parents. The school is improving because it is led and managed well by the headteacher and governors and the teaching is good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Most children in the reception classes make good progress and are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. However, many children begin with very poorly developed skills in personal independence, social skills, language, literacy and mathematics. This is confirmed by the teachers' assessments undertaken in the first few weeks of the autumn term, which indicate that standards in these areas are very low compared to those of most four-year-olds in other schools. Children make satisfactory progress in these areas but are unlikely to achieve the expected standards in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and personal, social and emotional development. Nevertheless, they are provided with a good start to their education overall in a safe, secure environment.
2. Pupils' performance in the 2002 National Curriculum tests for Year 2 was well below the national average in reading, with only 77 per cent at Level 2 and just 19 per cent reaching the higher Level 3. In writing, standards were below average overall, with only 83 per cent attaining Level 2, and none at the higher Level 3. When compared with those in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, the results were average in reading and writing. These results represent an improvement since the last inspection and the current findings show that pupils are benefiting well from the structured approach of the National Literacy Strategy. However, standards are still too low in all areas of English, although most pupils have made good progress since joining the school and basic literacy skills are taught well across the curriculum. By Year 2, pupils' reading and handwriting and the quality of their written work are weak. Speaking skills are limited because their vocabulary is not sufficiently developed.
3. In the 2002 national tests for mathematics, standards were below the national average at the end of Year 2 and in line with those of similar schools. The results show that only 87 per cent attained Level 2 and 17 per cent attained the higher Level 3. However, the inspection findings do not concur with these results but indicate that standards have improved since last year. They are currently in line with the national expectations and basic numeracy skills are taught well. They are used appropriately across the curriculum and computers are used satisfactorily to support numeracy and help pupils play simple number games.
4. In the teacher assessments for science in 2002 the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 matched the national average and those of similar schools; 92 per cent attained Level 2 and 26 per cent attained the higher Level 3, with girls and boys doing equally well. The evidence gathered during the inspection shows that standards currently match the expected levels by Year 2. Pupils make good progress overall and literacy and numeracy skills are used appropriately to help them increase their knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts.
5. The standards achieved by pupils match the national expectations in all other subjects. Pupils' learning is promoted well generally and subjects are used well to link with topics. Pupils' progress in learning is good overall in relation to their very low starting point on entry. From the time children join the reception class, they are taught well to build on their skills. Pupils' academic progress is maintained as they move through the infants. The targets set for last year were met in English and mathematics. In addition, the school has devised realistic and challenging targets for improving pupils' attainment still further, which it is set to achieve.
6. No significant variations were identified during the inspection between the progress of girls and boys with special educational needs and those of other capabilities or ethnic backgrounds because the school works hard to raise the standards achieved by all pupils. The progress of pupils with special educational needs has improved well since the previous inspection because good support, based on detailed knowledge of individual pupils, raises their confidence and

achievement. They make good progress towards the targets in their individual educational plans because teachers set work at an appropriate level and learning support workers have good knowledge of pupils' individual needs, assisting them well during lessons.

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

7. Pupils' attitudes to school are good; this is an improvement since the last inspection. Children in the reception classes make a positive start to their school life through well-planned entry procedures, which are sensitive to the needs of each child. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 arrive punctually at school, settle quickly, apply themselves to tasks enthusiastically and are well prepared for the start of lessons. Pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes to work and this has a positive impact on their learning. Teachers ensure that they are fully included in lessons at all times.
8. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is satisfactory overall and often good. Pupils understand the school's 'Golden Rules' and are beginning to absorb the values transmitted to them by teachers who are good role models. However, a significant number of pupils with special educational needs do not behave well and show a lack of attention, and there are times when behaviour deteriorates to an unsatisfactory level. The two fixed-period exclusions during the last year were as a result of the poor behaviour of a small number of pupils. Teachers are consistent in the use of the school's rewards and sanctions and through these methods, with much understanding and kindness, issues are resolved with the least possible disruption to lessons. No incidents of bullying were observed and pupils are confident that any will be dealt with swiftly and sensitively. The sound standard of behaviour in the school contributes to the improved ethos of learning and is helping to increase the opportunities for pupils' personal development.
9. Relationships across the school are good. Pupils have a genuine respect for their teachers, which is reciprocated. This creates an environment of care and security where work and learning can progress. Parents' views support this and they are pleased with the improvement noticed in the last two years.
10. Personal development is satisfactory. All classes have monitors who return registers to the school office daily and for some reception-aged children this is a challenging task which they are proud to accomplish. In lessons, pupils often work well together and are able to share resources. One particularly good example of this was seen in a Year 2 physical education lesson using the adventure playground when pupils worked sensibly in groups, sharing equipment well.
11. Attendance is well below the national average. Absence figures include a significant number of pupils who are absent for medical reasons. The school is working hard with the support of the education welfare officer and the school attendance officer to reduce the rate of unauthorised absence but it is too early in the school year to see any significant improvement. Most pupils arrive punctually for school and any lateness is recorded, with appropriate action taken if this is persistent.

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

12. The quality of teaching is good overall throughout the school. Of the lessons observed, six out of ten were good or better and one out of every four was very good or excellent. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection, when there was a significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching, and makes a strong contribution to pupils' good attitudes to their work. There were very few unsatisfactory lessons. Teaching is occasionally excellent in science and sometimes very good in mathematics, design and technology and music in the infant classes. It is occasionally excellent in physical development for children in the reception classes.
13. Teaching and learning are good overall for the youngest children in the school. Teachers of the reception classes have a clear understanding of the needs of this age group, as well as children's individual needs, and they plan good activities for them to develop their skills. For example, during dance activities the teacher's very good choice of Beethoven's '*Moonlight Sonata*' and her

whispered voice helped the children to respond to quiet, flowing refrains to create mood and rhythmic responses. Good links are forged with other areas of the curriculum when teachers use numbers well to reinforce counting, and stories and songs, such as *'Peace at Last'* and *'Five Little Owls Went Flying One Day'* to help the children to improve their knowledge of rhymes. They enjoy learning, which contributes to their growing levels of confidence, particularly for many who enter the school with very poorly developed communication and social skills. Quiet times and the end of lessons are used well to help children consider their successes and all adults have a kindly, calm approach to which the children respond well and begin to flourish. Lessons are lively and organised well, with plenty of colourful resources for children to use. However, although planning is good for most areas of learning, it is not focused closely enough on the Stepping Stones contained in the national guidance for communication, language, literacy and mathematical development but to the formal National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Although this is appropriate for the most capable children, it is not suitable for the majority who struggle with the skills of speaking and communication, listening, early reading, writing and numeracy.

14. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning in English is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and the National Literacy Strategy has been implemented appropriately in the infant classes since the last inspection. The improvements to teaching have resulted in higher expectations and a better pace to lessons, with more challenge provided for the most capable pupils. Basic skills are now taught well to ensure that pupils make good progress in learning, and the good links with other subjects include the study of religious texts like *'Noah's Ark'* and discussions about the story *'Can't You Sleep, Little Bear?'* The teachers are skilful in identifying ways to interest and motivate pupils in learning, particularly by including pupils with special educational needs in question-and-answer sessions and by praising their responses. Pupils undertake work that makes increasing demands on their knowledge and understanding and, as a result, they learn well and standards are rising slowly.
15. The basic skills of numeracy are taught well in mathematics. The use of ability setting has been a key factor in raising standards and improving the quality of pupils' learning in Year 2. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and levels of attention. Pupils are treated with respect and teachers use praise well to enhance self-esteem and confidence. A particular strength is the improved planning for numeracy lessons, which sets clear learning targets for oral and mental work and the main lesson activity. As a result, teaching is brisk and focused well on what pupils will know by the end of the lesson. Teachers evaluate their work daily to assess progress and plan for the next stage of learning. Lessons are made interesting because the staff use learning resources well to help pupils understand new ideas. For example, a demonstration to pupils in Year 1 of the transfer of cubes from one jar to another helped them to understand the principles of subtraction. The use of computers has been improved since the last inspection to support learning across the curriculum. For example, interactive whiteboards are used well to maintain interest and extend pupils' learning.
16. Teaching and learning are good in science and sometimes excellent when the teacher's skilful questioning and very good use of praise lead to a significant increase in pupils' learning about light sources, based on the theme of 'Day and Night'. It is satisfactory in all other subjects, although a lack of training in design and technology has resulted in some patchy subject knowledge amongst staff. Good links are made between subjects such as English, art and design, and history through stories about Grace Darling and Florence Nightingale and practical work on computers, using the work of the artist Mondrian as a starting point. The work produced by pupils is displayed well throughout the school and helps to provide a stimulating environment for pupils, staff, visitors and parents. Generally, good learning is a result of the teachers' strong subject knowledge and a good emphasis on key concepts.
17. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. This aspect has been improved well since 2000 because teachers and learning support workers provide pupils with appropriate work and individual education plans have clearly focused targets. Pupils' progress is monitored carefully to make sure they make good progress towards their targets. The co-ordinator ensures that parents are kept fully informed of their children's progress at all times. Teachers and learning support workers are fully aware of the needs of pupils and support them well.

18. Generally, the quality of teachers' daily planning has improved well. It is good for most subjects and identifies learning intentions clearly. Teachers assess pupils' work more effectively than they did at the time of the last inspection and the information is used appropriately to provide support for pupils to overcome difficulties. However, although marking is sometimes good and pupils are often guided well by teachers' written comments, this is inconsistent across the school. All pupils have reading homework regularly and this helps them to increase their skills at home with parents and carers. Learning support workers are well deployed, particularly in English and mathematics, and they work in good partnership with class teachers. They know what they are expected to do and they enable pupils to make good progress.
19. The management of pupils is good and the strategies to improve behaviour are enforced suitably. This helps to ensure that time is used well in lessons. Teachers promote a classroom atmosphere that encourages hard work, as well as a good sense of fun. In the best lessons, the teachers motivate the pupils so well that learning is fun. For example, good praise like '*You're a science star!*' celebrates pupils' success and inspires them to achieve well. Most pupils usually listen attentively to the advice given, so that constructive criticism leads to better attitudes. However, the poor behaviour of a few pupils is not always checked well enough and, when this happens, it slows down the pace of learning. Many pupils have a limited vocabulary and not enough opportunities are provided for them to develop their speaking skills through discussions about their work so that they can improve.

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

20. The school provides an appropriate curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2, which includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Sufficient time is allocated to individual subjects and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented appropriately, which is an improvement since the last inspection. However, the curriculum for children in the reception classes is not wholly appropriate for communication, language, literacy and mathematical development, or sufficiently extended to enable them to achieve all of the Stepping Stones before embarking on their studies of the National Curriculum in Year 1. This is because the school has introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies too early in the reception classes and most children are not ready to attempt the work because they have not yet reached all of the Early Learning Goals.
21. The quality of curricular planning for pupils in the infant classes has improved and is now satisfactory. The importance of healthy growth and development is taught through the science curriculum. Pupils learn about personal development, including awareness of the harmful effects of some medicines and drugs, when the 'Life Education' mobile classroom visits the school annually. The locally agreed religious education syllabus provides a sound basis for pupils' learning about Christianity and other religions. Sound opportunities for pupils to practise literacy and computer skills result in steady progress in reading and information and communication technology. Letter sounds are taught well and in subjects such as religious education, history and geography pupils practise sequencing and re-telling stories like 'Noah's Ark' and 'The Great Fire of London'. Pupils develop good strategies for mental calculation because of the strong focus on this during numeracy lessons, but opportunities to apply number skills in other subjects are not a regular feature of planning.
22. The school has improved the provision for extra-curricular activities since the last inspection. There is now a good range of clubs for pupils. These include science, a recorder club and country dancing, as well as a 'Breakfast Bookworm' club run by learning support workers. French and sewing clubs also add to the opportunities pupils have to foster their interests and skills. Pupils' learning is enriched by visitors to school, such as professional musicians, and by the school's visit to the theatre for the annual pantomime.
23. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. This has improved well since the

last inspection, when it was a key issue. The school policy takes account of the Code of Practice, and its recommendations are being implemented appropriately. Pupils have full access to the curriculum and are included in all aspects of school life. This has a positive effect on the progress they make. Individual education plans are of good quality and are used well by staff to set clear and manageable targets for learning. The school monitors carefully the progress of all girls and boys to identify any under-achievement. Additional sessions are provided to boost literacy and number skills for groups of pupils in Year 2, whilst those capable of higher achievement have more challenging work planned for them.

24. The school has sound links with other schools. Work undertaken in partnership with them and the local community adds to the quality of the curriculum. The school welcomes visitors from local churches, who help with assemblies. A recent visitor talked to pupils about life in India, as well as giving them good insights into what life is like for Indian people who live in England. The sound links with the adjacent junior school benefit the pupils; for example, junior-aged pupils in Year 6 act as 'mediators' to help the infant pupils improve their physical skills at lunchtimes. Students from a local grammar school also visit to help pupils with their reading. The sound links with the nursery mean that pupils settle quickly when they start in reception classes because they feel secure in familiar surroundings.
25. The school has maintained the satisfactory provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development since the last inspection. The appropriate opportunities for quiet reflection at the end of assemblies, religious education lessons and class discussion times help pupils to think about their feelings and emotions. They discuss the qualities of friendship and loyalty as well as thinking about 'inner' feelings of jealousy and forgiveness. Sometimes pupils listen to pieces of music such as *'Carnival of the Animals'* and describe their thoughts and feelings about it. In Year 2, pupils shared their ideas to make up prayers of thanks after discussing things like family and friendships, which they value most in their lives. Spiritual development is promoted more strongly in some classes than others where opportunities tend to be incidental rather than woven into the curriculum. Nevertheless, the school meets its requirements to provide a daily act of collective worship and prayers.
26. The school has a clear moral code of conduct, which most pupils follow consistently. They see good role models in teachers and support staff who deal sensitively and fairly with their needs. The useful opportunities in lessons for pupils to think about moral issues, such as bullying, help them to think how best to deal with situations. Teachers promote open and secure environments where pupils can express their views and personal values. However, on occasions some pupils do not respond well to others because they are not sufficiently aware of the effects their actions may have. Pupils are encouraged to work in groups and for the most part do so co-operatively. They are helped at lunchtimes by supervisors, teachers and junior pupils to play harmoniously and develop their skills and interest in games.
27. Pupils' social development is fostered satisfactorily. A sense of responsibility is nurtured by giving pupils simple duties to carry out. They are encouraged to be tolerant and to care for others. This was reflected in a lesson when a few pupils in Year 1 went to bring the spectacles for a group member when they noticed she had forgotten to wear them.
28. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils learn about their own cultural heritage through history lessons. They find out about Victorian life and observe Regency architecture on their walks around Cheltenham. Pupils are made aware of notable people who had local connections, such as Edward Wilson who was a member of Scott's Antarctic Expedition. Pupils learn about different cultures when studying life in India and welcoming visitors to come and talk to them. Celebrations of 'Hanukkah' and 'Diwali' give pupils insights into different ways of life. African drummers recently visited the school, giving pupils the opportunity to experience a different art form.

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

29. The school cares appropriately for the health, safety and welfare of all pupils. The staff place



suitable emphasis on providing a healthy and safe environment where pupils' personal development is a priority. Good pastoral care is provided by class teachers and supported by the headteacher. Pupils are well known to all staff as individuals and are confident they will be given help and support if they need it.

30. Child protection procedures are good. The school has an agreed policy that is well known to the staff. The designated officer has good working relationships with all relevant support agencies and overall this provides good protection for all pupils. Health and safety provision is good, monitored by the headteacher for the governing body. The school has a comprehensive health and safety policy that meets statutory requirements. Risk assessment is up to date and all equipment is well maintained with recorded checks. The clear notices support the procedures for fire evacuation and fire drills are conducted regularly and logged. First-aid provision is good; training is up to date and a designated officer and other staff hold current first-aid certificates. The school promotes healthy and safe living through a programme for personal, social and health education and across the curriculum. The school has good relationships with a range of outside agencies and works successfully with them to secure pupils' welfare.
31. Procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are satisfactory. The school's code of behaviour is understood and is used consistently by teachers within the school policy. As a result, pupils understand the expectations of good behaviour and this helps create an environment in which lessons can progress with the minimum of interruption.
32. Procedures for monitoring attendance are satisfactory and well known to staff. Registers are correctly and systematically marked and monitored for absence and punctuality. However, levels of attendance are still well below the national average; the predominant reason is medical and the headteacher is working with the support of the education welfare officer and the school attendance officer to improve this and raise the attendance levels.
33. The school has improved its procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic performance. They are now satisfactory overall and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Personal development is good and makes a positive contribution to the standards the pupils reach. The procedures for checking pupils' attainment in literacy and numeracy are good; they are used effectively for target setting and are helping to raise standards. The procedures for checking other subjects are being developed.
34. The procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs are good. The class teachers and the co-ordinator set appropriate targets for the pupils. The procedures for assessing the needs of pupils are good and are used effectively. Individual educational plans are updated regularly and targets for learning modified accordingly. Learning support workers effectively support pupils with statements of special educational needs and they make good progress towards targets set. Outside agencies, such as the team supporting pupils with visual impairment and the educational psychology service, are involved where appropriate, which effectively supports pupils with additional needs. Annual reviews for pupils with statements are carried out appropriately and their needs are fully addressed to help them make good progress.

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

35. The school partnership with parents is satisfactory. Staff have worked hard to increase the involvement of parents since the last inspection. Parents' views of the school are now good and they are suitably involved in their children's education. A few parents listen to children read during lessons and work as general classroom helpers.
36. The quality and quantity of information provided for parents are good. Through a range of methods, including the school prospectus, school policies, parents evenings, newsletters and full end-of-year reports, there is clear communication between home and school. All prospective parents receive good information before the pupils' entry and this contributes to their successful induction, helping them to settle quickly into the school community. Pupils' annual reports contain more useful information than they did at the time of the last inspection and are now satisfactory. The

governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus provide useful information for parents and meet legal requirements.

37. Since the last inspection, a parent-teacher association has been founded. It arranges a good number of fundraising events to help provide funds for resources such as the adventure playground. Social events for both children and parents are supported well. Many parents considered the Jubilee celebrations to be a great success. Efforts are now focused on reviving the nature-reserve pond for curriculum use.
38. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully informed and involved at all stages. The teachers inform parents at an early stage if there are concerns about children's learning. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress. Parents of pupils with statements of special educational needs are appropriately invited to attend annual reviews.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

39. Leadership and management are good. Since the last inspection the school has appointed a new permanent headteacher who provides good leadership. She has a clear awareness of the school's current performance in all areas and receives good support from all staff. Under her leadership, staff work conscientiously as a good team, committed to the education of the pupils. They promote equality of opportunity consistently for all children and the school provides good support for pupils with special educational needs. These strong features give the school a clear sense of purpose and, as a result, the provision has improved since the last inspection in 2000, when there were many weaknesses in management. The aims are reflected in the school's work and pupils are constantly encouraged to strive for success.
40. The roles of the senior management team and the co-ordinators have been improved well since the last inspection. All subjects have designated co-ordinators who manage their subjects appropriately. They take responsibility for curricular development and overseeing the standards pupils attain. The co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science manage their subjects well. In addition, co-ordinators have been appointed for areas, such as the Foundation Stage and assessment, and the senior teacher and team leaders manage the overall provision for year groups. The management of the provision for special educational needs has improved well over the last two years and is now good. The co-ordinator ensures that all pupils with learning difficulties receive the support they need. She reviews the teaching and learning regularly and this has a positive effect on the progress pupils make.
41. The governing body makes a good contribution to the management of the school. It meets regularly and the committee structure is well established and works effectively. Governors fulfil all statutory duties appropriately. The committee for special educational needs is well informed and fully involved in monitoring and supporting the work of the school.
42. A good school improvement plan identifies detailed priorities and action plans for aspects of the school over a one-year period, and sets out longer-term developments over three years. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. All staff and governors have been consulted in the production of the plan and this is used to determine the focus of in-service training and the use of school resources. The good systems for school self-evaluation help to ensure continuous school improvement.
43. Monitoring procedures have been developed well over the last two years by the headteacher who reviews the teaching and learning regularly. She also monitors the rate of pupils' progress and the standards attained in literacy and numeracy and adapts the provision effectively to ensure continued improvement in these areas. Formal observations are completed on all members of staff, including support staff. Records are kept of these observations and individual targets for improvement are identified clearly. This has led to improvements in the quality of teaching, so that the pupils now have good-quality learning experiences throughout the school.
44. The school has a sufficient number of qualified teachers. It places a high priority on the additional support given to pupils and the number of learning support workers is good. They are deployed well to help raise the standards in the school. The procedures for performance management and professional development are effective. The provision for in-service training is targeted carefully to link with the school improvement plan, although the lack of training in design and technology has resulted in some shortcomings in teachers' subject knowledge. Nevertheless, all staff work closely together and act as good role models for the pupils. The clerical, cleaning and catering staff go about their work diligently; each makes a significant contribution to the life of the school and all help the pupils to become accustomed to routines.
45. The school's accommodation is good. The hall is used well for whole-school assemblies and physical education, and most classrooms are spacious. The well-stocked library is situated in the main entrance area to enable easy access for pupils and a separate dining hall allows for lunch to be set and cleared with no disruption to lessons. Separate areas for the school office, staff room and headteacher's office link the classes, and corridors are decorated well with pupils' completed

work. The grounds include a separate, fenced outdoor area for the youngest children and hard-play surfaces. The quality, range and accessibility of resources to support learning are satisfactory overall. The ratio of computers is appropriate and pupils have easy access to them. The good resources for pupils with special educational needs are targeted effectively.

46. Financial planning and day-to-day administration procedures are satisfactory. The governing body's finance committee is actively involved in examining major spending decisions and relating them to the school's priorities. The school has a surplus of funds for which the reasons are well documented. The large but diminishing carry-forward is being managed appropriately to maintain staffing levels and to provide support for pupils through the employment of an increased number of learning support workers. The headteacher applies for any available grants that may support areas of development within the school and these are targeted well and used appropriately. Funding for pupils with special educational needs is used appropriately to employ support staff and to purchase equipment and materials. The school applies best value principles appropriately and these are strongest in seeking cost-effective purchases. The unit cost for each pupil is similar to the national average and pupils make good progress during their time in the school, due largely to the good-quality teaching and effective use of resources. The school provides sound value for money.

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

47. The headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) raise the standards of attainment in English, by:

- providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their vocabulary and improve their speaking and communication skills; and
- increasing the extent to which pupils develop their style of handwriting and the overall quality of their written work;

*(Paragraphs 2, 19, 61 - 66 and 71)*

- (2) improve the curriculum for children in the reception classes by:

- linking it more closely to the Stepping Stones for communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development; and
- extending the opportunities for children to help them all attain the Early Learning Goals before embarking on their studies of the National Curriculum in Year 1.

*(Paragraphs 13, 20 and 48 – 59)*

- (3) raise the levels of attendance.

*(Paragraphs 11 and 32)*

There are a few minor areas for the school to consider that relate to improving the inconsistent marking of pupils' work, improving the poor behaviour of a small number of pupils, providing staff training for design and technology and improving the use of computers across the curriculum. These points are noted in paragraphs 16, 18, 19, 44, 69, 77, 78, 81, 85 and 89.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	9	15	17	2	0	0
Percentage	6	20	33	37	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 two percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	198
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	60

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	46

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	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3

National comparative data	5.6
---------------------------	-----

National comparative data	0.5
---------------------------	-----

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	40	37	77

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	31	35
	Girls	28	33	32
	Total	59	64	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (77)	83 (86)	87 (89)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	36	36
	Girls	31	32	35
	Total	62	68	71
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (83)	88 (91)	92 (84)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

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

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
186	2	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
7	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
0	0	0
0	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	25

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

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	131

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001 / 02
	£
Total income	474,514
Total expenditure	485,875
Expenditure per pupil	2,324
Balance brought forward from previous year	84,433
Balance carried forward to next year	73,072



**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0
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	197
Number of questionnaires returned	29

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	21	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	45	0	0	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	48	3	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	59	3	0	0
The teaching is good.	55	45	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	34	7	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	17	0	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	41	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	45	45	0	3	7
The school is well led and managed.	55	41	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	69	28	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	59	3	0	3

*(NB: Not all parents responded to all questions, therefore totals may not add up to 100)*

### Other issues raised by parents

None.



## **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**

48. Children are admitted into the reception classes during the school year in which they have their fifth birthday. Before starting school, most children have opportunities to mix with other children in the nursery situated on the school's site. However, they enter the school with very low levels of linguistic, mathematical, personal and social skills and are unlikely to meet the expected goals in these areas by the time they complete the reception year because they have much to learn. Since the last inspection, the school has developed the use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies for children in the reception classes. However, the curriculum is not wholly appropriate for communication, language, literacy and mathematical development or sufficiently extended to enable them to achieve all of the Stepping Stones before embarking on their studies of the National Curriculum in Year 1. This is because the school has introduced the strategies too early for these children and most are not ready to attempt the work because they have not yet reached all of the Early Learning Goals. Nevertheless, all adults provide a wide variety of activities and they offer calm and consistent approaches that make a significant contribution to the children's learning.

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

49. Children are unlikely to reach the expected goals by the end of the reception year, although most make satisfactory progress and those who cannot yet communicate well verbally still take part in activities. However, the children's very low attainment on entry means that they have much to learn. Many children have special educational needs and significant learning difficulties, including emotional and behavioural needs, as well as speech and communication difficulties. They learn routines with the help of staff who all interact well with them. As a result, most children enjoy sharing experiences with each other. Adults make a point of joining the children, modelling actions and language; for example, by reinforcing good manners and the children's spoken vocabulary. The children listen and check with adults that they are making correct choices. The positive interaction between adults and children and the constant reinforcement of good behaviour have a good effect on the children's developing independent skills. For example, with a lot of help they put on their coats before going outside and take them off to hang them in the correct places. During carpet activities, children usually wait patiently for their turn and follow instructions. However, many children find difficulty in sharing and taking turns. They are unsure of how to play well together and sometimes snatch away objects such as scissors. All are able to form a queue to go outside or to the dining room and some are beginning to hold knives, forks and spoons reasonably well when eating their lunch. Members of staff praise the children for their good manners and encourage them to say *'Please'* and *'Thank you'* at appropriate times. Registration periods are conducted within a calm, welcoming ethos and staff are kind and considerate to all children, saying *'Good Morning'* to each individual in turn and insisting on similar responses. This helps to create a smooth start to the day and set high expectations of behaviour. All children take turns to return the registers to the office and do so with pride, showing responsible attitudes and knowledge of where to put them in the office trays.
50. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Suitable opportunities are provided throughout the school day and in all areas of the curriculum to develop personal, social and emotional skills. Children with special educational needs are supported closely and quiet times are used well to help them consider their successes. However, although teachers plan opportunities for children to share their feelings, the low levels of communication skills inhibit the children's ability to discuss topics and there are too few activities for them to take part in imaginative play in the home corner to help them increase their social skills. Nevertheless, adults encourage all children to take part in activities and ask them to use complete sentences when responding to questions. Children are challenged to learn and all adults know them well, making evaluative assessments of what they can do. They make good use of the information gained from parents about their children's accomplishments before starting school, such as the ability to dress and undress themselves, the

use of a knife and fork and any personal preferences. The system for keeping records of children's progress follows on consistently from their nursery education in the form of 'I can' sheets and colour-coded files for each reception class are maintained well, according to the appropriate Stepping Stones for the areas of learning.

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

51. The majority of children are unlikely to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year because their skills are very limited when they first start school, particularly in speaking and other forms of communication. Several children have language delay and some are often silent. Nevertheless, all adults work hard to develop children's skills and, as a result, they make satisfactory progress. Most are beginning to acquire new vocabulary, although many still have poorly formed speech and an immature use of language. They listen for reasonable amounts of time but they do not know how to take turns in speaking and often call out when others are speaking. However, they usually respond appropriately to the insistence by staff that children listen to the teacher when it is her turn to speak and they try to remember to put up their hands before speaking. Children are provided with daily sessions when they share texts. During literacy sessions, the support staff and the teachers sit with the children and this enables them to hear what the children are saying when attempting the refrains and to support those who need help. The beginnings of literacy are taught carefully to introduce the children to a suitable selection of literature. For example, the children enjoy looking at big books such as *'Peace at Last'*, *'Three Little Pigs'* and *'Goldilocks'*. Most children handle books reasonably carefully, attempting to hold them the correct way up and turn pages. They try to follow when stories are read to them and help to change books to take home and share with parents. However, many children have very weak early-reading skills. A few boys are disrespectful of books, sometimes throwing them around and kicking them, although staff are vigilant and insist on children tidying them up. The introduction of the *'Jolly Phonics'* programme has had a good effect on children's learning. Teachers encourage children to look carefully at words and to identify initial letter sounds. For example, specific focus on letters such as 'b' and 'd' in the word 'bed' helps children to learn the shape of individual letters and to identify them in texts. Those with special educational needs are supported well through good questioning and know that books are read from front to back. Whilst writing consists mainly of pencil marks on the paper, they are sometimes interspersed with letters but only a few more capable children form letters correctly and are beginning to copy simple sentences. A few can read their marks aloud confidently to an adult.
52. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. All adults have good relationships with the children and manage them well. As a result, the children try hard to succeed and want to please their teachers. They are interested, concentrate for short periods, behave appropriately and have positive attitudes to school. Due to the adults' good use of praise and good modelling of speech and behaviour, the children soon discover how to improve. However, the curriculum is not wholly appropriate for communication, language and literacy or extended sufficiently to enable children to achieve all of the Stepping Stones before embarking on their studies of the National Curriculum in Year 1. This is because they are not ready to attempt advanced work as they have not yet reached all of the Early Learning Goals. Not enough is done to encourage children to take part in speaking activities and so increase their vocabulary through imaginative play. For example, they often sit for too long, passively listening to their teachers and only occasionally making brief contributions. The lack of interaction between children is further restricted by over structured literacy hour-type sessions. Although teachers demonstrate the correct language suitably, children lack confidence and skills in communicating with others, and assessment information is not used effectively to modify long-term planning accordingly because the newly introduced procedures have not yet had time to take full effect. Nevertheless, each child has a language book and a writing book, with folders for assessment, and adults use the good resources well and intervene appropriately to help children. The procedures for tracking progress are used effectively to identify targets for children with special educational needs.

### **Mathematical development**

53. The children's mathematical skills are well below the expectations when they first enter the school and they are unlikely to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. Some count to 10 and a few more capable children can count up to 20, adding one more each time. However, many only count up to five confidently and those with special educational needs struggle with counting beyond three, needing considerable support. For example, in a fishing game the teacher helped the children to choose objects with a small number of spots and the success they achieved boosted their self-esteem. Most children do not know the names of common shapes when they begin, although by the time they leave the reception classes, they begin to identify and name squares, triangles and circles, and a few more capable children are able to recognise rectangles. Children learn about time by sequencing and ordering pictures on the theme of 'Day and Night'. They make teddy bear shapes in sand and dough, cut out and colour tall and short teddies and complete worksheets. However, they struggle with the idea of 'shortest' because they do not fully understand the concepts of 'big' and 'small'. The staff provide children with a wide range of counting and number experiences, enabling them to gain in knowledge. Mathematical activities are integrated well into each week's planning and teachers make sure that they are linked well with other areas of the curriculum. For example, in one lesson, the children were involved in a variety of number and shape games and used a computer program that supported their knowledge and understanding of the world, as well as their language development.
54. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. It is occasionally very good when work is matched well to children's capabilities. The adults use appropriate mathematical vocabulary and everyday experiences to reinforce mathematical thinking. For example, children are organised according to ability in red, yellow, green and blue groups and the teachers ask them to identify the shapes, such as squares and circles. Good praise celebrates successes well and staff work hard to extend children's learning. They are all involved well in planning the activities for the week. These plans show clearly how the teachers and learning support workers are to be deployed and upon which groups of children they will be concentrating, based upon assessments of their progress. However, the planning does not link closely enough to assessment information to ensure that the individual needs of the children are catered for appropriately and too much focus is placed on the National Numeracy Strategy which is not suitable for the many children who struggle with basic skills. Most need far more hands-on play experiences to consolidate their knowledge and develop an understanding of mathematical language. Nevertheless, all adults use questioning effectively to support children's learning and the good range of colourful resources is used well.

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

55. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world are similar to those expected for their age and they are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. Although children enter the school with limited knowledge of the world around them, they are presented with a wide range of experiences to help them learn, including the use of computers. The school uses the immediate area well to teach the children a variety of skills and digital photographs are used effectively by staff to help the children understand their surroundings. As a result, they discover that owls sleep during the day and fly out at night and follow stories that are used to teach the children geographical, historical and scientific skills. They make sun and moon pictures to complement their scientific studies of light and dark and construct models of owls and mobiles using glue, sticky tape, card and split pins to fix wings. However, some children lack the basic skills of cutting and sticking and those with special educational needs struggle when using scissors and need much help. The good opportunities for children to learn the days of the week, seasons of the year and the weather are sometimes managed by learning support workers during registration periods and children complete pictures in their zigzag books of people getting ready for bed. They are beginning to use computers independently and display reasonable control of the mouse. With adult guidance, they learn to click on the corresponding coloured shapes to choose pictures of animals and use animated numbers and taped programmes to increase their knowledge.
56. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff plan activities well that focus clearly on the Stepping Stones contained in the Early Learning Goals. The planned activities complement other

areas of learning, such as language and mathematical and social skills. The interesting range of activities encourages the children to explore and all adults in the classroom are prepared well and understand their roles in each lesson. Staff extend the highest attaining children well and give extra support to children with particular learning needs throughout lessons in their use of skilful questioning and by providing additional support and challenge. They make useful assessments of individual children's achievements during lessons and the information is used to plan activities for all levels of ability. The quality and quantity of resources to support this area of learning are good. They are stored well and easily accessible to children. The good numbers of computers in each classroom are used well.

### **Physical development**

57. The children achieve well and are on course to meet the standards expected at the end of the reception year. They have regular access to outdoor activities and this enables them to gain experience of moving around a large space. They ride tricycles, pedal and scoot, push wheelbarrows and prams with increasing control, turning left and right accurately, and bounce and balance on space hoppers. All children enjoy using the outdoor area and are developing their skills when balancing on the walkway, climbing up and down steps and jumping across the landings. They move around balancing on one foot, changing direction and speed with some skill. Most children use space well during dance activities and are aware of themselves and others when moving in time to music to represent the movement of owls in flight. They learn to imitate the flapping wings of a bird in motion and to swoop, stretching out their arms to imitate gliding. They curl their bodies when pretending to land and wait quietly for the adults to touch the little 'sleeping owls' to indicate the end of lesson, before lining up sensibly. The sessions provide the children with good experiences that can be built upon when they move into Year 1 and start the National Curriculum. However, although most children are developing their manipulative skills appropriately, many do not handle pencils, crayons, dice and scissors well and they need much help to take off and put on their clothes for lessons. They are provided with many opportunities to cut and stick, paint, explore sand and water and handle 'small world' objects, such as model cars, dolls and puppets but many often play silently and do not interact with others because they have limited communication skills.
58. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and occasionally excellent. The adults have good relationships with the children and manage them well. Good planning takes account of the good resources available for the children and there is plenty of space for them to move around safely when playing with the climbing frame, tricycles, play house and prams. The excellent management and strong use of praise in dance sessions and activities in the adventure playground lead to the children deriving great enjoyment from their physical activities; they try hard to succeed and want to please the adults. The teacher's very good choice of music like Beethoven's '*Moonlight Sonata*' helps children to respond to quiet, flowing refrains to create mood and rhythmic responses. In the best lessons, excellent use is made of the teacher's normal and whispered voice, with good demonstrations of actions to encourage great enjoyment and very good attitudes amongst children. Good links are forged with other areas of the curriculum; for example, teachers use numbers well to reinforce counting when organising children into groups of five. Good questioning techniques lead to conversations between adults and children that help to reinforce language skills. For example, when asked by learning support workers '*What's making the leaves fly away?*' the children eventually worked out that it was the wind and they followed this up by fetching the wheelbarrow to take them to the bin. Children with special educational needs learn well due to the good support from all staff. They concentrate for short periods and often work independently. Adults intervene at appropriate times to teach skills and reinforce them for those children who need it. They provide a good range of activities, both indoors and outside, using small and large equipment and the adventure playground. All adults work enthusiastically with the children, checking on their progress and challenging them to improve their skills, ensuring their safety by seeing that they use the equipment sensibly.

### **Creative development**

59. The children make good progress and are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception class. They are provided with frequent opportunities to use paint in different ways and to cut and stick materials for collage pictures and models. Children enjoy colouring in pictures of owls and teddy bears and they are encouraged to hold pencils correctly, applying colour within the outlines. They paint pictures of creatures such as tawny owls well by copying photographs and looking carefully at live creatures, using appropriate colours for feathers and beaks. The good balance of direct teaching and independent work extends children's opportunities to learn new skills and be creative. Adults support and intervene when necessary to extend the children's learning. For example, they help them to dress up in play clothes in 'Percy's Corner' and sometimes play alongside the children to help extend imaginative play. In musical activities, the children enjoy singing and performing, using accompanying actions to songs such as *'Five Little Owls Went Flying One Day'* and this helps them to improve their knowledge of rhymes, as well as counting skills. They join in willingly during assemblies and sometimes recall the lyrics well.
60. The teaching and learning are good. The wide range of creative activities is planned and organised well to make good use of the accommodation. Teachers and learning support workers liaise closely to support the children and help those with special educational needs to relate to others during play activities. As a result of this good interaction, the children form groups in the home corner areas and, although they usually work independently, they are beginning to co-operate with each other. Resources are good and the very good displays include highly colourful fabric drapes and objects for the children to touch, as well as children's finished work. For example, an exciting display of Indian artefacts for the celebration of Diwali is easily accessible and used to increase children's multi-cultural awareness and good pictures based on the theme of 'Day and Night' adorn the walls of the classrooms.

## ENGLISH

61. Pupils enter Year 1 with skills that are well below average in reading and writing and they have poor communication skills. The inspection findings indicate that, although pupils of all abilities make good progress, attainment is below the national expectations by Year 2, and there is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. A range of successful initiatives has been introduced since the last inspection, which is having a positive effect on teaching and learning. For example, the school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy appropriately in all classes and the information gathered from the good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are used well when planning the next stage of learning. As a result, standards are slowly but surely starting to rise. Most pupils achieve well in relation to their very low attainment on entry to school.
62. Throughout the school, pupils listen appropriately to their teachers and their classmates and enjoy participating in class discussions. However, many pupils have only a limited vocabulary and overall speaking skills are below national expectations by Year 2. Most teachers give pupils regular opportunities to participate in class discussions. These discussions are particularly successful when all the pupils, even the more reluctant speakers, are encouraged to participate and when the pupils' interest is captivated. This was illustrated in very good literacy lesson observed in Year 2 where pupils were discussing the story *'Can't You Sleep, Little Bear?'* At the end of the session, because of the sensitive encouragement of their teacher, pupils of all abilities were becoming confident in putting forward their ideas about the story. In other subjects teachers stress the importance of using the appropriate language and, as a result, pupils become familiar with new words and use a widening range of vocabulary. This helps them to express their ideas and has a positive effect on their learning in these subjects.
63. In reading, pupils make good progress, although overall attainment is below average by Year 2. However, the whole-class shared reading of 'Big Books' and focused guided reading sessions with small groups of pupils are helping to develop pupils' confidence in reading. Pupils become familiar with the conventions of reading and use strategies such as picture, phonic and contextual clues to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words. They start to put expression in their reading following



the good examples set by their teachers. Pupils enjoy these sessions and respond well to the teachers' questions about the content and meaning of the text. Higher attaining pupils employ the reading strategies they have learned to help them understand a variety of books, both fiction and non-fiction, and read in line with national expectations for their age. A few more capable pupils read well. However, the less capable pupils are working at a low level and do not use their knowledge of letter sounds sufficiently to work out the words of which they are not sure. Learning support workers provide good support for these pupils and this is helping to ensure an overall improvement in reading standards. Pupils receive the practice and encouragement they need and most are now beginning to develop a real interest and enthusiasm for literacy.

64. In Year 2, pupils' attainment in writing is below national expectations. Most pupils are working below the expected level, although the most capable are working in line with national expectations. Pupils make satisfactory attempts at writing in a story format, which has a clear beginning, middle and end, and are able to spell commonly occurring words. They make plausible attempts at spelling more difficult words, such as 'brilliant', and have good levels of confidence when attempting new words because of the encouragement of their teachers. By Year 2, many pupils have a knowledge and awareness of the use of capital letters and full stops but only a minority apply this knowledge consistently in their own writing. A significant number of pupils require a high level of support with their writing. Handwriting is mainly formed satisfactorily, although it is often not consistent in size. Presentation of work is satisfactory overall. Teachers work hard at motivating pupils and giving them the confidence they need to succeed and there is evidence that standards are improving. For example, some pupils in Year 2 were using a variety of interesting words to describe the setting of a story, such as 'scary', 'spooky' and 'frightening'.
65. Teaching and learning are good overall. Basic skills are taught well and teachers encourage pupils to listen carefully and speak clearly. However, sometimes insufficient emphasis is placed on pupils' need to develop better communication skills and extend their vocabulary. In the best lessons, teachers make good use of open-ended questions, targeted effectively at the differing ability levels of the pupils. They have high expectations of the pupils and the lessons are well paced. Pupils respond well to this and are highly motivated in their learning and keen to give of their best. Generally, teachers use the end of the session appropriately to assess and evaluate the learning that has taken place, and this practice helps to give pupils a clear idea of the progress they have made. They are given suitable opportunities to write in a variety of styles, such as poems, instructions, descriptions and stories, which contributes well to their learning. Other subject areas are used effectively as a means of developing work in literacy. In religious education, pupils retell stories from the Old Testament, such as 'Noah's Ark' and 'David and Goliath'. In history, pupils use information books appropriately to research information on the Victorians. Most teachers know and manage their classes well, which helps pupils to behave well and enjoy learning. However, sometimes pupils spend too long sitting, listening and not being actively involved and then they lose concentration and become fidgety. Learning support workers are effectively deployed to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs and less able pupils and this enables them to make progress in line with that of their classmates. Teachers plan lessons well and use homework appropriately to support and extend the pupils' learning. The quality of marking is satisfactory overall. The best marking relates specifically to the pupils' progress towards their targets for learning and gives them a clear understanding of what they need to do next. However, this is not always the case and the quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to support pupils' learning. Visitors to school and visits out of school help to boost pupils' interest, such as visiting theatre groups and an annual visit to the pantomime.
66. The subject is led and managed well. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has identified clearly what needs to be done in order to raise standards by effectively monitoring the teaching and learning. She has taken the lead in implementing appropriate action plans and a number of good initiatives to help to raise standards. There are focused long- and medium-term plans for the subject, in line with the aims and objectives of the National Curriculum and the National Literacy Strategy and these are related appropriately to short-term planning. Assessment of pupils' progress is undertaken regularly and used effectively to support their learning. Appropriate targets are set which enable pupils to know what they need to do next and

they show great satisfaction and pride when they achieve them. The school has become involved in a reading programme with a local school and set up a 'Breakfast Bookworm' club in order to encourage pupils to read more. It has correctly identified the need to place an even greater emphasis on developing pupils' language skills and is planning to address it. Overall, the school has shown good improvement in the subject since the last inspection, although this has yet to be fully reflected in the tests at the end of Year 2. The school has a good range of resources that are used well to enhance teaching and learning and classroom displays support pupils' learning. For example, the displays of story beginnings such as, '*Once upon a time*' and '*One sunny day*' help pupils to get started when writing stories.

## **MATHEMATICS**

67. Standards in mathematics have improved since the last inspection. Most pupils in Year 2 reach the nationally expected standard for their age. The school has successfully used assessments to plan realistic targets for achievement. Pupils work in ability groups during numeracy lessons so that they are challenged at the right level. Extra support staff work effectively alongside teachers to help pupils make good progress. Achievement in mathematics is now in line with that of similar schools and girls and boys perform equally well.
68. By the end of Year 2 most pupils have a sound understanding of number. They count and order numbers to 100 and do mental calculations to solve problems with numbers to 20. Pupils understand sequences such as five and ten times table and can double and half numbers. They use their knowledge of addition and subtraction, for example, to work out how much they spend, or what change they would get from 50 pence. Most know the names of regular shapes and can describe features such as the number of corners and edges. They begin to use centimetres to measure and compare the length of objects. More capable pupils develop an understanding of multiplication and equal division and solve problems using coins to the value of 20 pence. Pupils in Year 1 understand mathematical language such as 'more than', 'less than' and 'difference' and investigate mathematical ideas such as symmetry or 'odd' and 'even' number patterns. Pupils are industrious and manage a good amount of work. Exercise books are generally neat and tidy.
69. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The unsatisfactory teaching seen during the last inspection has been eliminated and the overall standard has improved. A particular strength is the improved planning for numeracy lessons, which sets clear learning targets for oral and mental work and the main lesson activity. As a result, teaching is brisk and focused well on what pupils will know by the end of the lesson. Teachers evaluate their work daily to assess progress and plan for the next stages of pupils' learning. Lessons are made more interesting because the teachers use learning resources well to help pupils understand new ideas. For example, a teacher demonstrated subtraction to Year 1 pupils by transferring cubes from one jar to another. This was a simple yet effective way of teaching that all pupils could see and understand. By the end of that lesson, most pupils were solving problems independently, some by accurate mental calculations. Teaching and learning were 'brought to life' in the lessons where interactive computer whiteboards were used well. The speed and clarity of the demonstrations using 'touch-screen' technology ensured that pupils were actively engaged in learning leading to a better understanding of number and problem solving. Teachers establish good relationships in their classrooms. They are sensitive to pupils' individual needs and value the contributions they make. This helps pupils to feel confident and secure, promoting a good climate for learning. Teachers and learning support workers liaise closely to ensure that help is given where it is most needed. Pupils who have special educational needs are supported well and teachers make sure that suitable work is planned to match the different levels of ability in the classes so that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable. However, in a few lessons teachers are not clear enough about what they expect of pupils in their independent work. As a result, a few pupils lose concentration when they are not adequately supervised and disrupt others. Occasionally, teachers' expectations are too low for the more capable pupils. For example, sometimes too much time is spent consolidating pupils' skills, which are already secure, rather than moving them on to a higher level. Although marking is generally sound, the quality is variable and does not always show pupils how they might improve. This is an area for further improvement.
70. Good leadership and management of the subject have led to the improved standards. The headteacher has monitored teaching carefully and so improved its quality throughout the school. A new subject leader has been trained over the past year and there is a good capacity to sustain the improving trend.

## **SCIENCE**

71. Standards are in line with national expectations by Year 2, which is an improvement since the previous inspection, when they were below average. Pupils particularly enjoy scientific

investigations, applying their knowledge appropriately. For example, as a direct consequence of the good teaching, many girls and boys make good progress in their learning and the most capable attain well. The teachers' good focus on the development of the pupils' scientific enquiry skills has helped them to increase their understanding. They produce a wide variety of neatly written work and attractive illustrations and have completed good observations of themselves in which they describe physical features, such as height. Pupils' factual knowledge and understanding of life processes are increasing well. They know that animals and humans produce young that grow and mature at different rates and describe observable features of animals, knowing that husky dogs, foxes and rabbits have fur. Pupils with special educational needs work hard because they are supported well and given specific targets for learning to help them and they know that some creatures like spiders and ants live in local habitats around the school. The most capable pupils know that human babies need food and warmth to sustain growth. Pupils use computers appropriately to help them label diagrams of the human body. They recall previous knowledge readily and are keen to share their recollections with others. For example, they understand the basic properties of materials such as paper, metal and plastic, and they know that substances such as eggs, chocolate and butter change when they are heated or cooled. They experiment successfully with batteries, bulbs and cables to make simple electrical circuits. A few more capable pupils are developing a secure understanding of how to construct a fair test. Pupils in Year 1 understand the push and pull forces involved in toys and are able to suggest ways in which results can be presented, recording their observations in simple tabular form. They particularly enjoy finding out about light sources and reflective materials, experimenting with torches and shiny fabrics in a dark cupboard. However, many pupils have only a limited understanding of scientific vocabulary because their speaking and literacy skills are weak.

72. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Classes are managed well by adults who are calm and kindly and have a good sense of humour that helps to make learning fun. The teaching of basic skills is secure and lesson planning is based on sound coverage of the curriculum. Lessons often begin with an effective recap of previous learning, moving with good pace and purpose. The sound, inclusive practice throughout the school leads to work being pitched appropriately to suit the needs of less capable pupils and those with special educational needs, whilst extension activities are often set for more capable pupils. Teaching is occasionally excellent. For example, when investigating the question 'Are all shiny things lights?' the teacher's skilful questioning and very good use of praise in Year 1 led to a significant increase in pupils' learning about light sources, based on the theme of 'Day and Night'. Questions, such as '*Is it the disco ball that's shining or is it the torch?*' made pupils think hard and come to the correct conclusion that a torch is a true light source. Praise like '*You're a science star!*' celebrated pupils' success well and they smiled with pride. Teachers are confident when teaching the subject and make good use of scientific terminology to encourage pupils to develop their understanding. These features have a positive effect on the standards attained because pupils are beginning to learn new vocabulary and extend their understanding. In most lessons, teachers have high expectations and maintain a good pace to extend pupils' understanding. Learning support workers co-operate well with teachers to provide suitable challenges for all groups of pupils. Teachers pay good attention to health and safety aspects in experiments by insisting that pupils handle equipment safely.
73. The management of the subject has improved well since the last inspection and is now good. The co-ordinator checks the curricular planning and teachers' marking regularly and an appropriate assessment framework is available that includes effective termly assessments and mid-term reviews of pupils' work. Good features include the careful use of good resources to support pupils' learning, such as posters and reference books, and the strong focus on using interactive computer whiteboards during lessons.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

74. Standards match the expected levels at the end of Year 2. This is a similar finding to that of the previous inspection, and the good improvements to curricular planning over the last four years have had a positive effect on pupils' learning. Pupils make sound progress and use a combination of art

and design techniques appropriately. Displays of their finished pieces show that a wide variety of materials are available and pupils achieve a consistently sound standard of work over an extended period. In Year 2, the observational drawings of natural objects, such as flowering plants and shells, are completed with an imaginative use of charcoal, pastels and paint to represent shapes. Collage work links well with mathematics and science, as well as literary texts. For example, clay tile designs are colourful, with good attention given to achieving an appropriate effect for patterns using triangular shapes, and the story of *'Elmer'* is illustrated well with good reference to the scientific push and pull forces associated with the work of Indian elephants. Pupils with special educational needs achieve sound standards when focusing on designing patterns for clay tiles. Studies of Indian artefacts and *'Mendhi'* hand painting, as well as the work of modern artists, such as Baxter's *'Adoration of the Magi'* based on the fifteenth-century masterpiece by Marcel Helman, link well to developing pupils' multi-cultural awareness. Pupils use computers well to help them complete colourful prints of local features, such as people travelling on buses, and images based on the work of Mondrian. In Year 1, pupils draw self-portraits well, linking their work to that of famous artists, such as Stanley Spencer. Completed clay figures of creatures, such as owls, are given suitable finishes for beaks, eyes and feet in appropriate colours. Sound standards of patterns and designs are evident in pupils' work and good classroom displays include careful pencil drawings of items observed on walks around the school, such as buildings, spiders and aeroplanes, with exciting digital photographs taken by adults.

75. Very few lessons were observed during the inspection due to time-tabling arrangements but an analysis of teachers' plans, discussions with them and a scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that the quality of teaching and learning is sound. Lessons are planned appropriately according to a two-year cycle of topics and the good resources are used extensively by all teachers to inspire and motivate pupils. Teachers have high expectations and the pupils respond well to the stimulus that they provide. For example, the effective use of Van Gogh's work on self-portraits encouraged pupils to think about the contours of their own faces. The subject is linked well to other areas of the curriculum and pupils use art skills confidently to illustrate their work in literacy. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have produced a well-designed collage picture in response to a story of the *'The Old Woman and the Pumpkin'*. The subject is managed appropriately and the suitable procedures for assessing pupils' skills are used to modify curricular planning but the co-ordinator does not have sufficient opportunities during the school day to monitor artwork in progress during lessons. Nevertheless, good displays of pupils' finished work and natural objects, such as pinecones and leaves, add a cheerful welcome to the classrooms and this helps to provide a stimulating environment for pupils, staff, visitors and parents.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

76. Standards match those expected by the end of Year 2 and pupils make satisfactory progress in the acquisition of design skills and making-up processes. Pupils in Year 2 are accustomed to working from designs that specify the tools and materials needed and they have sound knowledge of a variety of methods to fasten materials together, which include clips, glue and string. For example, completed models of robot animals make appropriate use of junk materials such as cardboard rolls, plastic containers and egg boxes. Pupils understand the properties of common materials so that, by Year 2, they make good choices when selecting shapes and textures independently for winding toys. The good range of curricular opportunities, including model making and textiles, makes a positive contribution to pupils' sound attitudes to their work and links well to mathematical and scientific investigations. For example, the good activities for designing model vehicles with fixed wheels or fixed axles led to the consideration of the best materials and components for model cars, resulting in pupils' good attention to detail. Their ability to join materials in a number of different ways is developing well. For example, the effective use of paper fasteners and sticky tape by pupils in Year 1 helped them to produce jointed figures and moving models of fireworks. Pupils with special educational needs achieve success when designing model houses, giving suitable attention to features like the number of doors and windows needed. Many pupils use construction kits to sound effect when making structures for small toys. They show initiative by devising ways of keeping roof tiles in place and allowing space for various rooms within a home.

77. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is sometimes very good, although it is unsatisfactory on occasions when teachers have insecure subject knowledge. All teachers are calm and kindly towards the pupils and most plan their lessons suitably to provide a broad range of experiences. In the best lessons, good demonstrations and questions inspire pupils and help them to understand the principles involved in movement, as well as create a good sense of fun. For example, because of the teacher's skilful use of questions like '*What would happen if we had a fixed wheel and a fixed axle?*' the pupils had to think carefully before realising that the model would not move! Members of staff make sure that the pupils learn within a safe context and insist on careful handling of the equipment available. As a result, pupils learn about design processes satisfactorily and they are asked to plan their work thoughtfully in terms of how the finished product will look and the materials and tools required in making it. However, the poor behaviour of a few pupils is not always checked well enough and this slows down the pace of learning. Many pupils have limited vocabulary and not enough opportunities are provided for them to develop their speaking skills through discussions about their work. The subject is managed appropriately and linked well with other areas, such as literacy, numeracy, art and science but there have been too few opportunities for staff to increase their knowledge through training and, as a result, teaching is occasionally unsatisfactory. The procedures for assessing pupils' work have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory. Computers and interactive whiteboards are used well to extend learning and the co-ordinator promotes consistently high standards of displays in classrooms and corridors. This means that pupils' work is mounted well, labelled clearly and colourful.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

78. The evidence of pupils' work indicates that standards are in line with expectations at the end of Year 2. This is similar to the findings of the previous report. The school has adapted national subject guidance thoughtfully to plan a sufficiently broad curriculum for the pupils, which supports their steady progress in acquiring geographical knowledge and skills. Pupils in Year 2 compare different localities. For example they learn about the geographical features of India and how lifestyles compare with their own. Pupils compare life on an island with that on the mainland, using the stories about Katie Morag and the 'Isle of Struay' to stimulate their research. In Year 1, pupils begin to observe their local environment and develop mapping skills by describing and recording their route to school. They discover what people who live locally can do in their leisure time by finding out about the different amenities available to them. Pupils learn about more distant places when they follow the exploits of 'Barnaby Bear' as he travels to different countries and experiences different climates and cultures. Pupils record their work satisfactorily in writing and diagrams using opportunities well to practise literacy skills. The use of computers to research and record work is limited, however, because of the lack of suitable software.
79. Although no lessons were seen during the inspection because the topic focus was on history, work in pupils' books and displays in the school indicate that the quality of learning and pupils' achievements are satisfactory.

## **HISTORY**

80. Standards in history meet the national expectation for pupils at the end of Year 2. Pupils develop satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the past and begin to understand how earlier times can be represented in different ways. In Year 2, pupils compare in more detail modern and Victorian dress. They learn about how past events such as the Fire of London were recorded by reading extracts from Samuel Pepys' diaries. Stories about Grace Darling and Florence Nightingale teach pupils how some things seen today stem from people's commitment to a particular cause in the past. Pupils in Year 1 walk around the locality to compare old and new houses to observe changes in style. They compare past and present lifestyles, such as how a typical bath time in Victorian times might differ from their own experiences.
81. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and occasionally good. In one lesson

the teacher allowed pupils to handle a good range of Victorian artefacts and talk about how they might have been used in a kitchen. The good use of resources kept pupils' interest alive and helped them to understand that changes occur over time as people make new discoveries. In another lesson the teacher used dressing up and role-play to stimulate pupils' interest in Victorian clothes and how they differ from those worn today. The co-ordinator has made good use of national subject guidance to provide a revised programme which supports planning and teaching well. The development plan for the subject highlights the need to extend historical enquiry skills, particularly for more able pupils. Although new artefacts are used effectively in lessons to promote learning, there is too little use made of computers to encourage research and recording skills. Nevertheless, in one lesson the teacher's use of the interactive whiteboard to display pictures of Victorian life brought an enthusiastic response from pupils.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

82. The school has improved its provision since the previous inspection and, although pupils continue to attain the expected standards at the age of seven, more is now expected of them. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress in their learning and apply new skills well. The school has invested in an appropriate range of hardware and software to which pupils have regular access, allowing them to develop skills in a sequenced manner. During their time in school, pupils have suitable opportunities to use a programmable robot, a digital camera, cassette players and laptop computers, as well as the classroom-based computers. Effective training for staff has improved the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. The recent introduction of interactive whiteboards has generated much interest and enthusiasm among pupils. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to practise new skills, which increases their motivation and confidence to try things out for themselves. This works best where the class teacher keeps a check on pupils' understanding and involvement.
83. Pupils in Year 2 are developing satisfactory keyboard skills and are confident in using a range of function keys and tools. They know how to save their work and to locate it again and they can edit mistakes in a text. They are able to gather data and present it as a pictogram. They have a satisfactory awareness of how computers can be used for other purposes and how they affect their lives. Pupils in Year 1 are developing good control of the computer mouse. They are able to negotiate their way around a word bank, positioning the cursor accurately and clicking on the right word.
84. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and sometimes good. Lessons are prepared well, with learning objectives explained carefully to pupils and new skills demonstrated in a clear and structured way. Teachers' confident use of the equipment enables them to move lessons along at a good pace and to involve a good number of pupils in answering questions, making suggestions and demonstrating operations. This has a positive effect on their learning because virtually all pupils show interest and enthusiasm for the subject and are keen to 'have a go'. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into lessons and learn at the same rate as their classmates. Sometimes, appropriate links are made with other subject areas. For example, teachers make good use of pictures completed by the artist Mondrian as a stimulus for pupils to learn how to draw straight lines, use the 'flood-and-fill' icon and save their work on the computer. Following a visit from an Indian artist, pupils used the computer to produce attractive Indian designs. This supported their cultural development.
85. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. She has evaluated the strengths and weaknesses in delivery of the subject and set up an appropriate action plan. She has provided good guidance and training for staff and they are now becoming much more confident in the subject and are more aware of how it can be used in other subjects. However, this still remains an area for further development.

## **MUSIC**

86. There was only a very limited opportunity to observe lessons during the time of the inspection. An

analysis of planning and discussions with pupils and the subject co-ordinator indicate that overall standards of attainment are in line with national expectations at the ends of Year 2. Standards are similar to those reported in the previous inspection. Overall, improvements since the last inspection have been satisfactory. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.

87. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy singing. In whole-school assemblies they sing tunelessly for their age and with good volume and follow the accompaniment well. The pupils know a good range of songs and recall the words of the songs rightly from memory. From an early age pupils are encouraged appropriately to listen attentively to recorded music but sometimes opportunities are missed to discuss the music or the composer in assemblies. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are beginning to develop a satisfactory understanding of some of the musical elements. In a very good lesson observed in Year 1, pupils were trying hard to play percussion instruments rhythmically. With practice and assistance from the teacher, virtually all the pupils made good progress. Pupils are provided with suitable opportunities to create their own music and they enjoy this. All pupils have satisfactory experiences of playing a range of percussion instruments, both tuned and untuned, and they are aware of the need to handle and play the instruments correctly in order to make a pleasing sound. As an after-school activity, pupils have the chance to learn to play the recorder, which appropriately supports their musical development.
88. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The pupils are managed well and relationships are good. Pupils respond well and their attitudes and behaviour in lessons are usually good. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge and sometimes encourage lively discussions; for example, in one lesson about which instruments would provide the most effective accompaniment to the carol *'Little Donkey'* the teacher's musical talent was used very well to help pupils learn. Generally, teachers ensure that pupils understand the importance of listening carefully in order to appreciate the sounds they hear and this helps them to perform in unison. Most join in enthusiastically during singing or when performing and they achieve satisfactory levels of attainment. Pupils are provided with suitable opportunities to perform music to a wider audience such as at Christmas and summer concerts and visiting musicians give pupils the opportunity to listen to live performances.
89. The subject co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and is a good example for other teachers. She has not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in order for her to have a clear understanding of what is happening in the school. The appropriate policy and commercial scheme of work give staff useful guidance. However, assessments undertaken do not provide sufficient information about pupils' progress to enable them to develop their musical skills and abilities to the greatest extent. Although there is a good range of musical instruments, the limited amount of computer software and a lack of resources to reflect non-European cultures have been identified as a weakness by the co-ordinator.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

90. It was not possible to observe all aspects of physical education during the inspection week. However, evidence from planning and discussions with the subject co-ordinator and pupils indicate that all aspects of the national guidance on physical education are being undertaken and that, overall, standards of attainment are in line with national expectations. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Standards and progress are similar to those identified in the last report. Issues raised have largely been addressed. By the end of the Year 2, pupils are beginning to understand how their bodies react to exercise and the importance of warming up and cooling down before and after exercise. They know that this helps to prevent injury. They also understand the importance of handling equipment safely and sensibly. Pupils develop satisfactory control and co-ordination in their movements and are able to discuss the differences between their performance and that of others and to think about ways in which it could be improved. There are some after-school activities such as country dancing and 'Streetwise' dancing which pupils enjoy and which contribute positively to the development of their social skills. However, there is a lack of games-based activities to help pupils develop a sense of fair play. The



school has already identified this as weakness and plans to address it.

91. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Lessons are usually well planned. Teachers ensure that an appropriate amount of time is allocated to warming-up and cooling-down activities and suitable attention is paid to safety in using equipment. Instructions are clear and pupils respond appropriately to these and mostly participate with enjoyment and enthusiasm. Teachers give positive encouragement to pupils and this improves their self-esteem and confidence. In a good lesson observed, the teacher provided opportunities for pupils to develop their skills through the demonstration of good techniques. By the end of the lesson, pupils of all abilities made good progress in being able to change stretched shapes into curled shapes in a variety of ways. Overall, pupils co-operate well together and are willing to help each other where necessary. There are some good links with other curriculum areas. Teachers in Year 2 are currently using music from the '*Carnival of Animals*' by Saint-Saëns as the stimulus for helping pupils to move in imaginative ways. Related to this, information and communication technology is being used in an innovative way by giving pupils the opportunity to study the movements of fish on a screen saver before the dance lessons.
92. Money raised by parents has been used effectively to develop an adventure playground, which provides pupils of all abilities with good opportunities to develop their physical skills in an informal way. The school is involved in the 'Top-Games' project. This has provided it with a good range of small games equipment for use during the lunch break and learning support workers are involved in teaching pupils playground games during playtimes. These worthwhile initiatives make a significant contribution to developing pupils' skills, as well as to their social development. The satisfactory subject policy and scheme of work takes account of the national guidance. However, assessments undertaken do not provide sufficient information about pupils' progress to enable them to develop their physical skills and abilities to their greatest extent.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

93. Standards are in line with expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of the year. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has worked hard to raise awareness of the importance of religious education in promoting pupils' spiritual development. Revised lesson planning includes time for reflection so that the pupils can think about what they learn from religions, as well as learning about other cultures. Throughout Years 1 and 2, pupils learn about aspects of Christianity and Judaism and how people's lives are sometimes guided by religious beliefs. They learn about important celebrations, such as 'Yom Kippur' and the 'Shabbat' meal, helping them to understand how religious beliefs draw people together. Pupils listen to stories from the Old Testament and about the miracles and teaching of Jesus and think about their meaning in terms of loyalty, honesty and commitment.
94. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers' subject knowledge is sound and lessons are planned and assessed thoughtfully to match the levels of pupils' understanding. In a lesson for pupils in Year 1, the teacher used good story-telling skills when relating the tale of 'David and Goliath'. The pupils listened intently and afterwards were able to describe in their own words what David might have felt when confronted. Pupils later discussed the qualities David may have had and the ones they admire in people they know and this helped them to develop their speaking skills. In a lesson for Year 2 pupils, the teacher promoted some good discussion among the pupils about what is important to them. Afterwards, pupils shared their ideas about writing prayers of thanks to remind them of the importance to Jewish families of sharing the 'Shabbat' meal. Teachers establish a calm atmosphere in lessons and encourage pupils to be mindful of others' views and opinions. This results in pupils' growing confidence and helps to raise their self-esteem.