

INSPECTION REPORT

KINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mill Street, Kington

LEA area: Herefordshire

Unique reference number: 116701

Headteacher: Mrs Anne Phillips

Reporting inspector: Mr Peter Sandall
25771

Dates of inspection: 23rd - 26th September 2002

Inspection number: 247668

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior and infant with nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Mill Street Kington Herefordshire
Postcode:	HR5 3AL
Telephone number:	01544 230363
Fax number:	01544 230521
E-mail address	admin@kington-primary.hereford.sch.uk
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Dean Benbow
Date of previous inspection:	1 st October 2001

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25771	Mr P Sandall	Registered inspector	History Physical education	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning How well the school is led and managed
1329	Mr K Oliver	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils The school's partnership with parents and carers
7593	Mr J Collier	Team inspector	English Music Special educational needs	
3751	Mrs T Cotton	Team inspector	The work of the special education centre	
19897	Mr A Evans	Team inspector	Science Geography Equal opportunities	The curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils
12172	Mrs W Knight	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology	
27369	Mrs C Powell	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage curriculum Art Religious education	

The inspection contractor was:

Schools Inspection Unit
School of Education
The University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Kington Primary School is of similar size to most primary schools, with 120 boys and 118 girls, and also 22 who attend the nursery part-time. Most pupils come from Kington itself, although some live in surrounding villages, with 19 currently travelling on a school bus. Almost all pupils come from white UK heritage backgrounds, and all speak English as their first language. Forty-six pupils have special educational needs, which is broadly average, as is the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs. Entitlement to free school meals is below average, although greater than current published statistics suggest. When children start in the nursery they have generally been below the level expected for their age, although the current pupils in the nursery have average attainment. There has been a considerable turnover in teaching staff since the last full inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides an appropriate and improving education for its pupils. There is a very positive ethos and a caring environment, which leads to good personal development. Staff know their pupils well and work hard in their interests. Standards by the age of eleven are below average in some subjects including English, although pupils show good attainment in science and more able pupils do well. Progress is satisfactory overall, but is not consistent. Pupils make good progress in the infants, and sound progress in the juniors: the quality of their learning in lessons is improving, especially in English and mathematics. This is due to the standard of teaching, which is very good in the nursery, and good in both infants and juniors, but is unsatisfactory overall in reception. The headteacher provides very good leadership and management, and is well supported by staff and governors. The amount of money spent on each pupil is close to the average for schools of this type and the school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher sets a very clear educational direction and her excellent leadership skills enthuse and motivate everyone in the school.
- Governors are well informed and play an active role in moving the school forward.
- Teaching is good overall and helps pupils to make steady progress in their learning.
- More able pupils achieve well by the age of eleven, especially in science.
- There is very good provision for personal development, both in school and through outside activities.
- The school has very good links with the local community and other schools, including both the high school and the Beacon partnership of schools.

What could be improved

- The quality of education overall in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception classes).
- Standards in English, especially in reading and writing.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT).

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 found to have serious weaknesses in 1996, and has remained in this position through three subsequent inspections. The school has made satisfactory improvement since its last full inspection in June 2000. The additional inspection in October 2001 remained concerned about three key issues: assessment procedures, the rate of progress in lessons and the quality of teaching, although it was felt that reasonable progress had been made overall. Assessment procedures are now better. Progress remains good in the infant and nursery classes, and is improving in the juniors, due mainly to the significant improvement in the quality of teaching in the school as a whole. It is, however, poor in the reception class, which is a worse picture than that found previously.

Due to this overall improvement, and also because the school is now in a strong position to build on its achievements, it is the judgement of the inspection team that the school no longer has serious weaknesses.

STANDARDS

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	D	D	D
Mathematics	C	D	C	C
Science	C	D	A	A

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Similar schools are those where between 8% and 20% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals.

Standards in school have fluctuated considerably over the last five years. As a result, while the school's standards have improved slightly over time, they have not kept pace with improvements nationally. In the 2001 national tests in Year 6, standards were below the national average in English, average in mathematics and well above average in science. In Year 2, test results last year were below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, and also when compared with similar schools. However this represents an improvement in all these areas over the last three years. Few pupils in Year 2 achieve the higher level 3 in tests, but the picture for higher level 5s is more encouraging in Year 6, particularly in science. Standards by the end of the reception year are well below what might be expected in reading, writing and mathematics. Children reach expected levels in communication, creative development, personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development.

Current standards of work in Year 2 are below average in English and mathematics, well below in ICT and design technology (DT) but above in physical education: they are average in all other subjects. In Year 6 standards are above average in science, below in English and geography, well below in ICT and DT, and otherwise average. Despite this, pupils in the infants are generally making good progress as they have a lot of catching up to do. Junior pupils are making satisfactory progress overall. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress; where they receive focused support, whether from teachers, teaching assistants or, for older pupils, in the special education centre, their progress is good.

The school sets appropriately challenging targets for pupils in both Year 2 and Year 6. In 2002 these were achieved in English, but not in mathematics. The school has analysed the results closely so that pupils' performance in future may be improved.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and show real enthusiasm for all aspects of their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The great majority of pupils behave consistently well in lessons and on the playground. The challenging behaviour of a small minority is well managed. The one recent exclusion was fully justified.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships are very positive in all areas of school life, and this ethos makes a strong contribution to the quality of learning.
Attendance	Below average, although the school is working hard to improve the position.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Unsatisfactory	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 overall. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has fallen compared to the last inspection. Both the nursery and the infants have a high percentage of very good teaching, and there is a lot of good teaching in the juniors. Nearly all the unsatisfactory teaching is in the reception class, and is related to low expectations of what children can achieve, particularly in the areas of language and mathematics. The school's monitoring systems have not been quick enough to identify and remedy this lack of progress in children's learning. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are not taught satisfactorily here, whereas in the rest of the school mathematics and English are well taught. The quality of learning is good in both infants and juniors, as pupils develop their skills and knowledge.

The high quality of most teaching seen during this inspection indicates that pupils' learning should continue to improve as they become familiar with teachers' expectations. Teachers manage pupils well and this, linked to the good relationships between teachers and pupils, is a significant strength of teaching. Higher attaining pupils are generally suitably stretched by the tasks they are given, and less able pupils are appropriately supported in class: those who attend the special education centre are well provided for. Levels of homework are broadly satisfactory. The quality of marking varies too much and is rarely successful in helping pupils to improve their work; not enough reference is made to how well pupils achieve against the targets they are set.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The range of learning opportunities in the Foundation Stage lacks breadth and balance. Insufficient time is given in the whole school to promoting writing skills through different subjects. There is a very good range of activities outside lessons, and there are very good links with the community, the high school and the Beacon schools group.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Individual education plans are well written and regularly reviewed. The special education centre provides junior pupils with good support.
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Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Spiritual development is satisfactory, but would benefit from planned opportunities to raise pupils' awareness. Moral and cultural development are good; there are clear expectations of how and why to behave, and the school works hard to broaden pupils' understanding of other cultures and beliefs. Social development is very good: the quality of relationships in the school underpins all the school's efforts in this area.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Pupils' welfare and health are taken seriously. Everyone in the school gives personal support freely. There are effective procedures to promote good behaviour. Assessment of pupils' progress is satisfactory, but the use made of assessment to plan suitable work for different pupils requires a sharper focus.
The partnership with parents and carers	Good. Parents are welcome in school, and the quality of information they receive is good. Further efforts are needed to ensure that all parents feel involved.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher gives excellent leadership and is well supported by her staff, who have clear roles. There is a strong ethos of care and support for all members of the school community.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors really understand the school and what it is trying to do. They ask key questions and have a strong influence on the actions taken to move the school forward.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school's development plan is an effective working document to which all contribute. The priorities for improvement are generally appropriate but not all important issues are covered. The school is very good at training new staff, and has a very good capacity to succeed.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes good use of resources, both human and physical. Financial decisions are linked to educational priorities. Beacon partnership provides many useful initiatives. Accommodation is being improved and there are sufficient staff and learning resources. Staff and governors always try to obtain value for money when purchasing resources or services, but are not as practised at evaluating the consequences of the choices they make.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school• Behaviour in the school is good• Teaching is good• The school is well led and managed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The use and amount of homework• The information they receive about their child's progress• The way the school works with parents• The programme of activities outside lessons

The inspection team agrees with all the positive views expressed by parents. Homework provision is broadly satisfactory; it is never likely to satisfy everyone. Links with parents are generally good, and the school is working to improve them; parents receive good information about their children's progress. There are many activities and opportunities for pupils outside lessons, and this provision is judged to be very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- Children achieve well in the nursery, but not in the reception class.
- The school's performance in national tests is getting better, but has not kept pace with improvements nationally.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are improving, particularly in the juniors.
- Infant pupils make good progress in English and mathematics but have much ground to make up.
- Science standards in the juniors are above national averages and pupils make good progress.
- Higher attainers achieve well in the juniors.
- There are weaknesses in ICT, DT and geography.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall, especially the juniors in the Special Education Centre.

1 Standards in English, mathematics and science in both the infants and juniors have improved since the school's last full inspection in June 2000. This is confirmed by the results of the 2001 tests in Year 2 and Year 6, the most recent for which national comparisons are available. Standards in reading stayed the same in Year 2, remaining below the national average. Writing was better, moving from well below to below, and mathematics improved significantly: while still below standards nationally, results over the previous three years put the school in the bottom five per cent in the country. In Year 6, standards in English were unchanged, remaining below average, but mathematics improved from below average to be in line with other schools. There was a remarkable jump in science, where standards moved from below the national average to well above it.

2 The results of the tests in 2002 suggest that in Year 2, standards in reading have not improved, and although the number of pupils achieving the higher level 3 has increased, it is still likely to be well below the proportion nationally. Mathematics results look similar to last year. By the age of eleven, results in English, mathematics and science are likely to be similar to those in 2001. Within this, the number of pupils attaining the higher level 5 continues to match the proportion nationally, and in science to exceed it for the second year running, indicating that the school is doing well by its more able pupils.

3 Standards have fluctuated considerably over the last five years. Results by the age of eleven were relatively good in 1997 and 1998, fell in 1999 and 2000, improved in 2001 but fell again slightly in 2002. Over this time the school has experienced considerable changes, both in leadership and teaching staff, as well as the normal differences in the relatively small groups of pupils to whom these results refer. While the standards have improved over time, they have not kept pace with gains nationally. The improvements noted in this inspection, particularly in relation to leadership and the quality of teaching, are likely to have a positive effect on pupils' progress in future, and therefore lead to better standards overall.

4 Children in the Foundation Stage generally start in nursery with below average knowledge, understanding and skills, although this picture has improved recently, and the attainment of the children currently in the nursery is in line with expectations for the age-group. Prior to admission, children and their parents have the opportunity to benefit from the local 'Sure-Start' programme, which helps children to begin school with fewer anxieties. Although children only attend the nursery on a part-time basis, very good teaching means that they make good progress in all areas. Through the wide range of experiences they receive in the reception class children continue to make satisfactory progress in the areas of creative development, personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development, and they start the infants with standards which are generally as expected. The picture in reading, writing and mathematical development is much less positive. The lack of structure and planning, together with unsatisfactory use of time and assessment, means that children are not taught the basic skills that help them to make progress in these key areas. As a result by the end of the Foundation Stage overall standards are well below what is expected of children of this age.

5 Inspection evidence shows that by the end of the infants pupils have improved, even though they are still below average in reading, writing and mathematics, indicating that they make good progress in these important subjects as a result of good teaching. Speaking and listening skills are better, and reach expected levels. Standards are average in science, religious education, history, geography, art and music. In physical education (PE), where pupils are very well taught, they are above expectations. There is a strong focus on control and quality of movement, and pupils are encouraged to watch and learn from each other. Standards have deteriorated in both ICT and DT, where they are judged to be well below what is expected. In DT there is insufficient focus on developing pupils' skills and evaluating what they have done. The new computer suite is giving pupils more opportunities to make progress in ICT, but for many pupils skills are still at a relatively low level.

6 By the age of eleven standards remain below average in reading and writing, although pupils make good progress in the junior classes. A more consistent approach to the teaching of reading, together with more planned opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in other subjects, would improve standards further. Speaking and listening remain satisfactory, mainly because teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to practise these skills during lessons in many subjects, not just English. Good mathematics teaching lifts pupils' attainment close to national levels, with good use being made of strategies for teaching numeracy skills. Science standards continue to be above the national standard. The focus on teaching the skills of scientific enquiry, apparent throughout the school, are clearly bearing fruit. Standards in religious education, history, art, music and PE are average. They are below in geography, due to weaknesses in both skills and knowledge. In ICT and DT standards are well below what is expected, the lack of progress being for similar reasons to those in the infants. For ICT and geography this is similar to the findings of the inspection in 2000, but DT appears to have fallen back further.

7 Pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress overall, particularly when help is well targeted. This occurs in the Special Education Centre and in class lessons where work is specifically planned to meet pupils' needs taking account of the targets on their individual education plans. Since these focus on literacy and numeracy, it is in these lessons that the better progress is usually achieved. Teaching assistants also provide invaluable support in these lessons to promote good learning. In other lessons, where less attention is given to providing tasks that match the needs of individual pupils or where extra support is not available, progress is less pronounced.

8 The school sets realistic targets for pupils' performance in English and mathematics in the national tests at the age of eleven, which it is required to do, and also in science. In 2002 these were reached in English, but not in mathematics. The school tracks the progress of Year 6 pupils, comparing their individual results with those in the national tests as seven year olds, as well as their performance in similar tests at Year 5. This shows that most pupils make good progress in the juniors, with many exceeding expectations. Target setting in English and mathematics for individual pupils is also beginning to support pupils' learning, although the practice needs refining to be of maximum benefit.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school.
- They show a capacity for hard work and concentration.
- The overall standard of behaviour is good.
- There is an improvement in pupils' self-esteem and attitude to responsibility.
- There are still some problems with the behaviour of some older boys, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Relationships are very good.

9 The majority of Kington Primary's pupils like coming to school every day. They are happy as they work and play with their friends, teachers and all the other adults who look after them. More than 90 per cent of the parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire and attended the meeting agree with this judgement. Pupils' attitudes to school, good at the time of the previous inspection, are now even better.

10 Pupils get on well with their teachers. They are polite and friendly to visitors, for example happily holding doors open and offering to show the way around the school. The majority of pupils enjoy their lessons, where they are capable of hard work and concentration over long periods of time. In a Year 1 numeracy session on 'units' and 'tens', for example, there was a real sense of fun with numbers as pupils made very good progress. When they had completed the tasks that their teacher had set, they conscientiously found other relevant work using number squares and the classroom's computers. A Year 6 art lesson was a model of collaborative work as pupils worked together on designs to decorate 'Greek vases' which they had made in an earlier lesson.

11 Pupils have responded very well to increasing expectations over the last couple of years. They willingly help their teachers to keep their classrooms tidy and prepare for the next lesson. Each class has developed its own set of rules. Older pupils help to look after younger ones in the playground. Pupils of all ages are eagerly awaiting the introduction of the school council and in circle time, before elections take place in a few weeks time, they are sharing ideas about what makes a good representative.

12 The overall standard of behaviour in and around the school is good. Pupils support the rewards and sanctions system. In class they know what is expected of them and they and their teachers are able to get on with the day-to-day business of learning and teaching. The previous report referred to the disruptive effect on lessons of some badly behaved older boys. There is still a small number of such pupils, some of whom have specific behavioural problems, but their behaviour has minimal effect on other pupils who simply get on with the task of learning, maturely leaving their teachers and helpers to sort out problems. Pupils enjoy their own and their friends'

successes. Achievement assemblies are occasions when everyone celebrates individual progress in learning, behaviour and contributions to school life. Merit badges are proudly worn.

13 Playtimes are a happy mixture of running, ball games and hectic activity on the brand new climbing frame. Whilst some enjoy being active, others are content to stand around and chat with each other and their supervisors. Younger pupils have fun with hoops, stilts and ball games and relish their allotted time in the sandpit. Behaviour is good with little rough play and no bullying going on. Pupils are kind to each other. A Year 5 pupil, for example, who was being comforted by a supervisor after she had fallen over, was quickly surrounded by a group of friends who gently made sure that all was well.

14 Attendance over the last year has been below the national average for schools of this type and to this extent is unsatisfactory. However this was principally due to a unique and unavoidable set of circumstances over which the school had no control. Punctuality is good. There has been one permanent exclusion in the last school year, following considerable efforts by the school to solve the problem.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- The overall quality of teaching has improved significantly.
- Teaching in the nursery is very good, but unsatisfactory overall in reception.
- In both infants and juniors teaching is good overall.
- Basic skills have not always been well taught in the past, and there are gaps in pupils' knowledge in some subjects.
- There are very good relationships between teachers and pupils.
- Teachers make good use of questions to extend learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well taught.
- Expectations of pupils' work are not consistent and marking is not always helpful.

15 The quality of teaching is good overall. This a clear improvement from the full inspection in June 2000, when both teaching and learning were found to be unsatisfactory overall, and also from the additional inspection in October 2001, when 16 per cent of teaching was judged unsatisfactory, compared to 6 per cent in the current inspection. Seventeen per cent of teaching was very good, including one lesson that was excellent, and 61 per cent good or better. The highest quality of teaching is in the nursery, with good teaching overall in both the infants and the juniors.

16 The quality of teaching, and therefore the quality of pupils' learning, varies considerably in the Foundation Stage. In both the nursery and reception class the planning of activities and the assessment of children's progress are not sufficiently linked to the guidance for the Foundation Stage curriculum. However in the nursery the clear structure to lessons, the focus on basic skills, the 'seizing of the moment' and above all the highly skilled, intuitive teaching of both the teacher and the nursery nurse mean that despite these weaknesses the children make good progress in their learning.

17 In the reception class the teaching overall is unsatisfactory. There is a commendable emphasis on giving the children a wide range of experiences, but these lack structure and purpose. There are too few interventions by adults, either to move learning forward or check

children's understanding, which are missed opportunities. Time is not always used constructively, and there is not enough emphasis on consolidating children's learning. Despite this, the children's progress in most areas is generally satisfactory, although they do not maintain the momentum begun in the nursery. More concerning is the lack of teaching of basic skills in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics. As a result children make poor progress in these crucial aspects of learning, and enter Year 1 with standards that are well below those expected.

18 Teaching in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is good throughout the school. In English and mathematics in the infants it is particularly commendable, given the low level from which pupils start. The National Literacy Strategy is used soundly to teach basic skills of grammar and spelling. Pupils have a positive attitude towards reading, but do not always read books that are suitably challenging, which limits their learning, as does the understanding of vocabulary for some. Teachers currently plan too few opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in different subjects. The National Numeracy Strategy is well used, encouraging pupils to hone their mental skills and develop their own ways of working out problems. Teachers use a good range of methods and offer pupils stimulating challenges, although tasks are not always well matched to pupils' abilities. In science pupils are motivated by teachers' enthusiasm. There is a good balance between imparting knowledge and encouraging pupils to discover for themselves. Here, too, the basic skills of observation and predicting are well taught.

19 This quality of teaching does not extend consistently across all subjects. While the majority of lessons taught were good or better, analysing work from the previous year shows some gaps in pupils' learning. The teaching of skills has been less effective in subjects such as ICT, DT and geography in the past, and this has left pupils with a considerable amount of catching up to do. There are examples of ICT being used in subjects such as science and history, but this is not always well planned for. Teachers are sometimes too ready to accept work that is limited in quantity, unfinished or poorly presented. While all work is marked, there are few comments that challenge or help pupils to move forward in their learning, and few references to how well pupils are attaining against the targets they are set each term in English and mathematics. Homework is used satisfactorily, both to consolidate understanding and extend pupils through suitable challenges.

20 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, and they make good progress in their learning. Their individual education plans have suitable targets and pupils' progress towards these is effectively monitored. The quality of teaching in the Special Education Centre is consistently good, and the junior pupils who have access to this facility make good progress. The special educational needs co-ordinator is experienced and competent, and learning support assistants work well with teachers.

21 Teachers have equal expectations of the performance of boys and girls, for example directing questions equally to both. The school identifies the most able pupils in Year 5 in a range of subjects (which means they are not always the same ones). These pupils spend time at the high school with similar pupils from other feeder primary schools. This extends their learning, and they bring back the work they have done to discuss with the rest of the class, benefiting everyone. The school deliberately chooses pupils in Year 5 so there is the opportunity for them to use and share their new skills in Year 6.

22 Relationships between teachers and pupils are generally very good, and a strength of the school. In most lessons this means that teachers can concentrate on teaching, to the benefit of the pupils. Where there is some challenging behaviour, mostly by a minority of boys in the juniors, teachers deal with it well, but inevitably it has some effect on the progress of all the pupils in the lesson. Another strength of teaching, seen in many different subjects, is the use of

questions, not only to check knowledge and understanding but also to extend pupils' thinking skills and encourage independence in learning. The school's teaching and learning policy, as well as involvement in various teaching initiatives through the Beacon partnership, are instrumental in raising teachers' awareness. The school needs to consider how good teaching practice can best influence all teaching, in order to develop consistency and raise standards further still.

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

- Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good.
- There is very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education.
- The community contributes very well to pupils' learning.
- There are very good relationships with partner institutions.
- Provision for art, music, DT and ICT is not fully effective.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- There is sound use of the National Literacy Strategy, and the National Numeracy Strategy is well used.

23 The school provides a broad and reasonably balanced curriculum for pupils in the infants and juniors, offering them a satisfactory range of learning opportunities and a sound preparation for high school. This reflects the findings of the school's 2001 inspection report, which found that good progress had been made in addressing the many criticisms of the curriculum made in the 2000 inspection. The school now meets statutory requirements for all subjects of the National Curriculum. Apart from the reception class, there is an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of English and mathematics. The school is implementing the National Literacy Strategy satisfactorily. Implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is proving effective in raising standards in mathematics. The school now aims to raise the profile of music, art and DT, which have had a less prominent place in the curriculum. Total weekly teaching time meets national recommendations for primary school pupils. Religious education complies with the locally agreed syllabus.

24 Curricular planning is sound. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are well established. Planning in other subjects is based on national guidelines, which have been adapted to meet the needs of the school. Subjects other than English and mathematics are planned on a clear two-year cycle. The teachers plan carefully for the work that the pupils will do each term and each week, taking account of the wide range of pupils' needs. The school is participating in some new curricular initiatives, such as thinking skills in science, which are helping to develop the pupils' key skills across the curriculum.

25 The school has clear policies and guidelines for ensuring that all the pupils, regardless of academic ability or gender, have equal access to the full curriculum. The teachers ensure that the pupils develop respect for racial and cultural diversity in Britain and the world through fund raising for the Third World, visitors to the school and the celebration of multi-faith festivals. Assemblies explore issues such as bullying and disabilities. The school carefully monitors the achievement of different groups of pupils, such as boys and girls, pupils with special educational needs and higher attainers. There is a recognition, for example, that more infant pupils need to attain the higher level 3 in national tests in the core subjects. Careful planning indicates that Year 2 pupils in two different classes should cover the same work, although recorded work in some subjects such as history suggests there are some discrepancies.

26 Provision for special educational needs is good. The policy meets the requirements of the new Code of Practice and each pupil has an individual education plan that sets specific targets for improvement, usually in the areas of literacy, numeracy and sometimes behaviour. Class teachers write these in consultation with the special educational needs co-ordinator and they are regularly reviewed by these teachers to track pupils' progress. Some write notes on the plans so that, when it is time to review them, they have good evidence of the rate of progress. All teachers plan specific work for the pupils, particularly in English and mathematics lessons, though not always in other subjects, and this enables pupils to make the same progress as others in the class.

27 A number of parents feel that there are insufficient activities provided for the pupils outside lessons. This provision is, in fact, very good. There is a school choir, involving over 50 pupils. During the inspection, 20 pupils were observed enjoying a netball club and 19 pupils taking part in country dancing. There are also clubs for recorders, hand bells, drama, computers, gardening, chess and football. Most of these clubs provide for junior pupils, though younger pupils participate in recorders and country dancing. Matches are played against local schools and teams enter 'Kwik Cricket', football and netball tournaments. For the past two years, the school has been a finalist in the county's 'quick cricket' tournament. The teachers enhance learning through worthwhile visits to places such as London, Cardiff, Ludlow, Bristol and Borth. Whenever possible, they make effective use of the knowledge and expertise of visitors, such as clergy, police, the school nurse, music and theatre groups.

28 The teachers make very good use of the community to enrich the pupils' learning. There are strong links with St Mary's Church, where harvest festival was recently celebrated. During the inspection, the vicar led collective worship in school and another clergyman took an after-school recorder club. The nurse was also in school and she took some sessions of personal, social and health education (PSHE). The community is involved in school development through sponsorship of environmental projects and curriculum initiatives. The school earns some money from a local recycling scheme. A local potter has worked with the nursery children. School matches are played at Kington Football Club's ground. The teachers make good use of the locality to enrich learning in religious education and geography. Some pupils have danced in community events and, in return, the school is being helped by the community to buy a maypole.

29 There is a clear policy for PSHE and citizenship and provision is very good. Community links, such as local visits and visitors, participation in extra-curricular activities and assembly issues all contribute very well to the pupils' PSHE. There are opportunities for the pupils to discuss relevant issues in circle time. In one such session, Year 1 pupils shared their feelings about things that frighten them. In another, Year 3 pupils discussed cooperation on the playground. Older pupils, mindful of the need to select representatives for the proposed school council, discuss what characteristics are needed for this role. Throughout the school, the teachers make the pupils aware of the dangers of drugs misuse. There is additional drugs awareness training for pupils in Year 6, facilitated by the school nurse and a Crucial Crew visit. The school participates in the National Healthy Schools Standard and the National Fruit Scheme for infant pupils. Junior pupils are encouraged to bring fruit daily. There is a clear sex and relationship education policy and aspects of human growth and bodily changes are taught in both key stages through science and PSHE. There is formal sex education for pupils in Years 5 and 6, facilitated by the school nurse, who also holds a worthwhile weekly 'drop in' session, when any pupil can approach her with concerns. In this way pupils know the nurse well and, as she holds a similar position in the high school, it helps them when they reach Year 7.

30 There are other very good links with the local high school. Junior pupils have planned use of the high school's sports hall for indoor physical education. Gifted and talented pupils in Year 5 benefit from links with the high school in subjects such as mathematics, science and DT. The high school ensemble has enabled the pupils to appreciate what is on offer in music from Year 7 onwards. Year 6 pupils have two full induction days at the high school, in order to help their transfer at eleven. High school teachers have worked with their primary colleagues sampling pupils' work in English and mathematics and deciding what National curriculum levels of attainment they represent. Participation in the Beacon school initiative is having an excellent effect on inter-school links.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

- The school is a very caring community.
- Spiritual development is sound but needs to be planned into the curriculum.
- Moral and cultural development are good.
- Provision for social development is very good.

31 Overall, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. The good standard of provision for moral and cultural development has been maintained, and the provision for social development is now very good, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. The provision for pupils' spiritual development has remained the same and is satisfactory. Although the caring ethos of the school permeates all activities and helps to promote very good relationships, attitudes and personal development, there are no planned opportunities for spirituality written into teachers' planning, and curriculum policies do not identify opportunities to enhance this.

32 The school is a very caring community where pupils learn to respect each other's views and beliefs. For example, in a Year 3 geography lesson, a teacher used the local area newspaper as a resource to promote a discussion concerning a farm fire, asking 'How would you have felt if it had been your farm'? This was an excellent opportunity for pupils to show a sense of concern, compassion and empathy with others. 'Circle time' is used consistently throughout the school to promote and discuss a wide range of issues. The school provides pupils with moments for reflection in assemblies and frequently there is a focus for collective worship, such as a candle with music being used for entry and exit from the assembly in order to create a feeling of spirituality. However opportunities are missed for experiences to be planned into lessons to develop the spiritual aspect more fully.

33 Provision for pupils' moral development is good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Social development, which is very good, shows a significant improvement from being satisfactory previously. Values are successfully promoted through various areas of the curriculum, such as science and religious education. There is a consistent whole-school approach to managing pupils' behaviour, and pupils are quite clear about their class rules and the sanctions applied when these rules are broken. From a very early age, pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong, and they benefit from the very good role models offered by adults in school. Lessons provide very good opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively, sharing expertise and helping each other to achieve. Pupils make a positive contribution to the running of the school by volunteering to act as monitors in classrooms and around the school, or serving on the school council. The older pupils act as playground 'buddies' or the 'friendship squad' and support the younger pupils. Further opportunities to develop the social skills of the oldest pupils are offered through attendance on a residential visit. From the way that pupils relate

to each other and to adults and take part in the many social events, it is clear that pupils are developing a very good set of values that influence their perspective on life.

34 Provision for pupils' cultural development, including multi-cultural education, has remained consistently good since the previous inspection. Pupils learn about their own culture in subjects such as history, art and design, dance, music and English. In religious education lessons, pupils learn about some world faiths and in geography they learn about their own country and other parts of the world. The school has a good range of multi-cultural dolls in the Foundation Stage and the infants that help to promote pupils' cultural understanding. The school is very aware of the need to prepare pupils for life in multi-cultural Britain and is taking positive steps to develop in the pupils a real tolerance and understanding of others. Good attention is paid to ensuring that all pupils are included in the life of the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- Health and safety issues are taken seriously.
- There are good procedures to both monitor and promote attendance.
- Teachers know their pupils well.
- The system of rewards and sanctions is consistent and effective.
- The school works hard to raise pupils' self-esteem and sense of responsibility.
- Assessment procedures have improved, although they need further refinement.

35 The governors and staff of Kington Primary look after their pupils. Arrangements for child protection, which were missing at the time of the previous inspection, are now satisfactory. New, comprehensive policies and procedures, which include all the appropriate local agencies and authorities, are in place. All staff are aware of the new arrangements.

36 The governors and staff are committed to ensuring Kington Primary School is a healthy and safe place for their pupils. Present arrangements are satisfactory but the governors are, nevertheless, pursuing ways and means of improving both safety and security. All policies are up to date and safety matters are dealt with through a good system of procedures and regular inspections, which follow the local authority's guidelines. There are four fully trained first aiders on site throughout the school day. All school trips are properly planned and subject to risk assessment procedures.

37 The school's procedures for recording, monitoring and improving attendance are straightforward and good. They are made very clear to every parent and are published in the School Information Booklet. Unexplained absences and poor punctuality are quickly followed up. On the rare occasions when serious problems do arise, the school brings in the local education welfare officer.

38 The headteacher and staff know all their pupils very well. The 'general progress' sections of pupils' annual reports show that they have good knowledge and understanding of their pupils' personalities and personal needs. Everyone, including non-teaching staff such as the school administrator and the lunchtime supervisors, works hard to ensure that these personal needs, as well as learning needs, are attended to properly.

39 In classes teachers encourage their pupils to work hard. Achievements are recognised through merit points and the headteacher's award schemes. The school's procedures for

promoting good behaviour are based on a highly successful rewards and sanctions system, which deals consistently with any problems which do occur. They also deal very effectively with the needs of pupils who have behavioural problems. Even though there has been an improvement in behaviour since the time of the previous inspection, the headteacher and staff believe that the overall standard of behaviour is not yet good enough. Therefore ways and means of further improving this area are included in this year's school improvement plan. The school does not tolerate either bullying or racism and takes appropriate action where necessary.

40 Over the last couple of years the headteacher and staff have worked hard through circle time and initiatives such as the 'quiet bench' and 'bench buddy' schemes to raise pupils' self-esteem and encourage them to take more responsibility for themselves and others. Year 6 pupils have responded very positively to the opportunity of becoming monitors. Last year's innovative 'compost scheme' was very successful. It gave a group of less keen Year 6 pupils a real opportunity to mature through organising and running a project which benefited the school.

41 There are sound procedures in both the infants and juniors for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This represents a significant improvement from the previous inspection. The co-ordinator has developed a clear policy document. Each term, during an 'assessment week', pupils have tasks in the core subjects, and sometimes in ICT. This work, in individual 'blue books', is assessed and given a National Curriculum level of attainment. This helps the teachers to set individual targets in English and mathematics, in order to help the pupils improve further. Parents are encouraged to help in progress towards these targets by support at home. The pupils are made aware of these targets, which are pasted on to the front cover of their numeracy and literacy books. The co-ordinator recognizes that there is room for further refinement and more consistency in the process. For example, it is not always clear how the pupils are progressing in mathematics if number is assessed in the autumn and shape and space in the spring term. There are good procedures for assessing the progress of pupils with special educational needs. There is also a clear policy to ensure pupils' safety when using the Internet.

42 For the most part teachers make sound use of the information gained from assessment and from a careful analysis of the pupils' attainment in national tests to plan the next steps in learning. For example, teachers in the infants found that there was a need for more focus on the spelling of plural words and words beginning with consonant clusters. Staff training in agreeing the standard of pupils' writing, which is a weakness across the school, is planned in the near future. There are whole school collections of samples of pupils' work in the core subjects at agreed levels of attainment. This is useful to the teachers in ensuring the consistency and accuracy of their assessments. Teacher assessments of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils' attainment at the end of the last academic year were accurate. Nevertheless, these new assessment procedures have not yet had time to influence standards in English sufficiently, nor enabled more infant pupils to attain the higher level 3 in national tests.

43 The school successfully identifies pupils who have special educational needs early on in their school life and a watching brief is maintained before anyone is put on to the register. Thereafter, they are regularly assessed using the school systems that are in place for all pupils. In order to provide particular support for pupils with special educational needs, the school maintains good links with outside agencies, such as the speech therapist and the Learning Support Service provided by the local authority.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- The majority of parents are confident that Kington Primary is doing its best for their children.
- Communication has greatly improved over the last couple of years.
- Information for parents, including annual reports, is good.
- Many parents are involved in the school as employees, helpers and through the parent teacher association.
- A minority of parents still feel that the school does not keep them well enough informed' both about what is going on and their children's progress.

44 Parents are happy to send their children to Kington Primary. They are confident that the school takes good care of their children. They feel that the headteacher and the rest of the staff are approachable and dedicated to helping their children learn and mature.

45 The last couple of years have seen major improvements in the level and quality of communication between parents and governors, the headteacher and staff. Some parents, however, still feel that they are not kept well enough informed of their children's progress and what is going on in the school. The headteacher is well aware of this and is working hard to improve things further. Parents are always welcome in the school and they feel that teachers are accessible. Teachers mix with parents at the beginning and end of the school day and find time for informal chats as and when the need arises.

46 Both the governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus are good. The latter contains a wealth of information about all aspects of school life. The school also regularly sends out newsletters about what is going on and there is a steady stream of letters about one-off activities such as trips and social events.

47 The previous inspection team found that the formal annual reports about pupils' progress were unsatisfactory. This no longer the case and reports are now good. Unusually, they are sent out in the middle of the school year, so that parents and teachers still have over a term to address problems within the same class. Both parents and the school find this system effective. Reports provide parents with information about their children's progress across the curriculum, helpful and insightful comments about personal progress and, where appropriate, results of the school's and national tests. They also give basic information about what needs to be done next. Detailed targets are shared with parents at the beginning of every term. There are also two consultation meetings, one in the middle of the autumn term and the other in the spring term. At the end of the summer term there is an open evening when parents can see what goes on in other classes.

48 Parents of pupils with special educational needs are properly informed of any initial concerns that the school has and thereafter, regular contact is maintained so that parents can play their part in supporting at home what the teachers are doing in school. Parents are invited to meetings when a review of the individual education plan is imminent and most accept the invitation to attend.

49 An innovative 'curriculum year book' keeps parents in touch with what their children are doing at school. Sent out at the end of the summer term, it tells parents what their children will be learning in the coming year. Detailed pamphlets about the curriculum are also sent home and at least one classroom has posters on the windows, which tell parents what their children will be doing.

50 There is a home-school agreement, which the majority of parents support. Many parents regularly help their children to learn by listening to them reading. Reading and homework diaries keep parents aware of what their children are learning but there are some inconsistencies in the way that the diaries are used. The parents of Year 6 pupils see homework as a good way of preparing their children for life in secondary school. Kington Primary's governors, headteacher and staff see parents as partners in the education of their pupils. They therefore value their ideas and opinions and seek them out, for example through a recent questionnaire on the possible introduction of hot lunches.

51 Parents make a good contribution to the life and work of the school. Several of them are employees and a dedicated band of at least eight regularly comes into school to give voluntary help in classrooms. Many more parents willingly assist with one-off events. Twelve of them, for example, helped out during a recent walk along the local riverbank. There is a very active and successful parent teacher association. It organises social events throughout the school year and raises thousands of pounds for projects such as the new climbing frame in the playground.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- The headteacher provides outstanding personal leadership and is the catalyst in creating a positive ethos.
- The staff team is committed to improving the school.
- Management is generally successful but has nevertheless failed to identify one key issue.
- The governing body is very effective and fully involved in taking the school forward.
- The co-ordinator for special educational needs monitors the provision well.
- Co-ordinators now need to be more involved in the evaluation of standards, teaching and learning.
- Financial planning is clearly linked to educational objectives.
- The accommodation is compromised by lack of space, both inside and out.

52 The excellent leadership qualities of the headteacher have been instrumental in moving the school forward from a lengthy period during which it was considered to have serious weaknesses. Her positive attitude and emphasis on teamwork has successfully created a group of staff and governors who are fully committed to consolidating the progress made and who strive for continuous improvement. She has a clear vision of what the school needs to do to move forward and puts a strong emphasis on developing pupils as independent learners. The improved quality of teaching and learning in the school has been significantly influenced by her actions. The membership of an influential Beacon group of schools is paying considerable dividends for the school as a whole and for managers in particular.

53 The headteacher works hard and successfully to ensure that the school's day-to-day management is smooth and efficient, a good example being her preparation for the inspection itself. Senior managers are hardworking and enthusiastic and feel fully involved. Generally the issues highlighted in the school's improvement planning are the most urgent, although the appropriate focus on raising standards, particularly in English, has to some extent masked other areas of concern. In particular, the low standards in reading, writing and mathematics of pupils entering the infants have not been picked up, although there is evidence that this situation has existed for over a year. The commendable work carried out by the deputy headteacher in analysing the progress of individual pupils in the juniors in English and mathematics, and the use of this information to improve future provision, needs extending further, so that the school has an informed understanding of how well all pupils are doing.

54 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed and monitored by the co-ordinator. She has enabled all teachers to be confident in writing individual education plans for the pupils in their classes and is always willing to give advice to her colleagues. She meets regularly with the teaching assistants who give invaluable help in the classroom, particularly to help pupils with special educational needs.

55 There is considerable monitoring of teaching, mainly by the headteacher. This is effective in raising the overall quality, with useful appraisals of lessons observed and development points being discussed. It does not have the focus on content and skills, and the progress being made over time, which might result from subject co-ordinators having a similar opportunity. Most subject co-ordinators look at planning, but a regular review of the work produced by pupils would lead to greater consistency from one class to another and would help to pick up where key skills are insufficiently emphasised.

56 The governing body meet statutory requirements. Many members are relatively newly appointed but this lack of experience is more than made up for by their enthusiasm and commitment, and they are in fact well informed and effective, with a 'hands-on' approach. They are very well involved in development planning and have a very clear view of the school's strengths and the areas where improvement is needed. There are good links between individual governors and different subjects and classes in the school, and governors are made to feel welcome and appreciated. They understand their role and believe they have a valuable contribution to make: an indication of this is that elections are needed when there is a vacancy for a parent governor.

57 There are very effective procedures for inducting new staff into the school. Newly qualified teachers and staff appointed from other schools are introduced to school procedures, and have immediate access to a designated member of staff who offers support or advice. Plans are well developed to offer initial teacher training commencing in the New Year. Training and other professional development, tailored to individual needs, is provided. Similar supportive systems are in place to ensure the professional development of staff who have been in the school for a longer time. Performance management is used effectively to identify training needs and suitable courses are provided, through local education authority arrangements or the Beacon school partnership. Both school and individual needs are rightly considered. Performance management is also giving teachers appropriate targets to ensure standards continue to rise and there is a shared commitment to work towards improving provision.

58 The school budget is rightly matched to the priorities in the school improvement plan, and specific grants are well used to gain the best from available funding. The school is quick to take opportunities for maximising its funds, such as organising training through the Beacon school partnership, which also enables bids for matched funding from external sources. Unsuccessful applications for grants for building alterations to the small office and the entrance hall have resulted in an underspend over the last couple of years, but the money is earmarked for this specific, important purpose. Prudent financial planning takes account of best value in terms of cost effectiveness. Lowest tenders are not always taken if local contractors are known to provide quality work. The headteacher and governing body carefully consider the likely outcomes of decisions, such as expenditure on teaching assistants, and make informed choices based on what they know from previous experience. There are no formal systems for comparing the school's effectiveness with similar ones, but the Beacon school group provides an informal forum where discussion gives a clear indication of how well it is doing. Formal consultation is seldom used. ICT is used appropriately to support the budgeting process and in day-to-day administration as well as in analysis of assessment data. Financial administration is efficient, and

provides regular updates for governors and senior staff to check progress of the expenditure. Most of the recommendations in the latest audit report have already been acted upon. Co-ordinators are not involved in decisions about the amounts allocated to their areas of responsibility, but do have a role in selecting and purchasing resources.

59 The teachers are suitably qualified, and classroom staff well experienced and appropriately trained to ensure pupils are taught and supported. The teachers and teaching assistants work well together. Although adequate, the accommodation has the same shortcomings as at the time of the last inspection. The hall is small, adversely affecting the physical education curriculum, and outdoor areas are mainly tarmac. The computer suite is a thoroughfare between most infant classes and the junior blocks. Outdoor play areas for Foundation Stage are barely adequate. Some classrooms are cramped. However, the whole environment is stimulating and well maintained. Resources are satisfactory except in art, where they are poor and do not support the curriculum sufficiently to allow variety and creativity in planned activities: this indicates a deterioration since the last inspection. Resources for DT and ICT however have improved, as have library stocks. The library is adequate, but because it is also the ICT suite, is seldom used for independent work or supporting reading.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60 In order to maintain and improve on the school's recent progress, the governors, headteacher and managers in the school should:

1. Improve provision for children in the Foundation Stage by:

- ensuring that greater attention is given to the published national guidance for children in the Foundation Stage;
- nursery and reception staff planning together to improve the continuity of children's experiences;
- establishing suitable assessment procedures for children and using these to ensure that they support planning both in the short term and over time, so that tasks are purposeful and closely matched to children's needs;
- improving the quality of teaching for children in the reception class, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, by paying more attention to developing basic skills and raising expectations of the standards children can achieve.

(Paragraphs 4, 16, 17, 23, 53, 69, 71 - 76, 79, 80, 82 - 85)

2. Improve standards in English, particularly in reading and writing, by:

- providing a clearer structure to develop pupils' skills in reading, with a closer link between the books read in school and at home;
- ensuring that pupils are given frequent, planned opportunities to write freely in response to a variety of demands;
- raising teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation of their work;
- using marking to let pupils know their progress towards the targets they are set and what they need to do to improve.

(Paragraphs 1-3, 6, 8, 18, 42, 55, 59, 65, 66, 94, 96-100, 102,162)

3. Raise standards in ICT by:

- reviewing available time to make maximum use of computers;
- planning regular practice in all lessons across the curriculum.

(Paragraphs 5, 6, 19, 55, 88, 139-144, 149, 162)

61 In addition the following minor issues should be considered for inclusion in the governors' post-inspection action plan:

- raise standards in DT throughout the school;
- raise standards in geography for older pupils.

(Paragraphs 5, 6, 19, 23, 122-127, 129, 130, 131)

THE SPECIAL EDUCATION CENTRE

- The centre offers good provision and pupils make good progress.
- Pupils are set clear targets for their learning.
- Teachers have the expertise to meet the pupils' diverse needs.
- Work could be more challenging for pupils capable of working at a faster rate.
- Provision for pupils when they return to mainstream classes needs evaluating.

62 The special education centre (SEC) is accommodated within the school and provides specific support for pupils from junior classes only. At present 13 pupils, four with statements for their special educational needs and nine pupils identified on the school's action plus stage, receive extra help with their learning. Provision in the centre is part-time during morning sessions and focuses on work linked to literacy and numeracy. The centre is staffed by a part-time teacher and a learning support assistant (LSA).

63 Provision in the centre is good. This is because teachers, including the special needs co-ordinator (SENCO), have the knowledge and expertise to respond to the diverse needs of the pupils. With guidance from the SENCO, teachers set clear learning targets for pupils in their individual plans (IEPs) and refer to them successfully when planning work in lessons in literacy and numeracy. Effective assessment procedures track pupils' progress and point the way forward for learning. Evidence of pupils' achievement and progress is shared in displays and annotated in portfolios of work. Pupils are proud of their success and motivated to do their best. This is evident during a plenary session in literacy, when a pupil suggests, "I've concentrated really well today and got on a lot better with my work".

64 Pupils make good progress in the centre. Evidence from pupils' past work indicates that their present rate of progress matches previous rates and that their behaviour and self-help skills are improving. The very small minority of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are managed well and they make good progress towards personal targets. The teacher is positive in her encouragement and praise and so pupils respond confidently and behave well in lessons.

65 In literacy and numeracy lessons, work is well matched to the needs of less able and average learners in group work, and so they make good progress with their learning. Pupils working at a faster rate, however, are not always challenged enough. For instance, the tasks set in worksheets relating to understanding time in numeracy and identifying missing words in literacy are too easy, and completed quickly by a group of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. Skills of handwriting and spelling are improving, but need to be taught in a more consistent, structured way if pupils are to master control and recall. More capable pupils attempt to spell words such as 'silly' and 'round' independently, whilst pupils working at a slower rate identify the initial sounds of words such as 'red' and 'blue'. The teacher's good modelling technique with writing helps all groups to structure their ideas and thoughts in simple sentences. By the end of one lesson good progress is evident when an older writer produces the sentence 'Granny sped round and round the garden on her motor-bike' independently.

66 Teaching in the centre is good. All teaching staff, including the SENCO, contribute to planning and set suitable learning challenges. Lessons are well managed and teachers use a range of teaching strategies, including support for sensory and emotional difficulties. Questioning skills are effective and teachers are mindful of helping slower and less confident communicators. Pupils and parents share the targets set in IEPs, which are regularly reviewed and have clear

criteria for success. In literacy and numeracy lessons, the level of class work is pitched appropriately. There is a suitable choice of books for class lessons and practical exploration is used well in numeracy. However, teachers are not monitoring the range and level of books pupils choose to read by themselves and have identified the need to structure reading resources and monitor reading activities more closely.

67 Since September 2002, due to funding changes, provision in the centre has been reduced from full-time to part-time. The pupils return to work in mainstream classes for afternoon sessions. While pupils no longer miss out on lessons in non-core subjects due to being withdrawn to the centre for extra lessons (an issue identified in the previous inspection), it raises the question of appropriate provision for pupils during the afternoon. This aspect needs further evaluation.

68 The SENCO and teachers working in the centre work successfully as a team and manage provision well. Funding is spent appropriately and resources are adequate. Staff organisation and expertise ensures that pupils' diverse needs are being met. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

70

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

40

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	14	28	23	4	0	0
Percentage	1	16	44	33	6	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	11	238
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	26

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	42

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.1

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.6
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	16	14	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	13	12
	Girls	13	14	13
	Total	27	27	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (88)	90 (69)	83 (72)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	14
	Girls	12	11	14
	Total	25	24	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (75)	80 (75)	93 (75)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	19	18	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	16	18
	Girls	15	13	15
	Total	31	29	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (70)	78 (64)	89 (86)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	17	18
	Girls	15	13	15
	Total	32	30	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (61)	81 (73)	89 (75)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	216
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.5
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	156

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	16
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11

Financial information

Financial year	2001
	£
Total income	552,533
Total expenditure	537,357
Expenditure per pupil	1,991
Balance brought forward from previous year	25,055
Balance carried forward to next year	40,231

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7
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	238
Number of questionnaires returned	67

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	34	7	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	45	42	9	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	54	7	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	42	26	3	4
The teaching is good.	51	36	3	0	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	40	22	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	31	12	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	39	6	1	4
The school works closely with parents.	33	37	25	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	46	40	4	1	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	36	12	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	31	16	15	13

NB Totals may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding to the nearest whole number

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

- Progress in the nursery is good and pupils reach expected standards.
- Nursery staff make a high quality team.
- Standards are well below expectation in reading, writing and mathematical skills by the end of the reception year and progress is poor.
- Insufficient emphasis is placed on the teaching of basic skills for reception children.
- The Foundation Stage staff do not plan together.
- Assessment does not reflect the many stages of learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum and is not used effectively to help children make progress.

69 Since the previous inspection in June 2000 there has been a change in the education provided for nursery and reception children nationally. The Foundation Stage curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes replaces the previous curriculum for the 'early years'. The previous inspection mainly focused on the nursery together with a small number of reception children who were less than five years old. The findings of this inspection are significantly lower than that of the previous inspection. While children then were judged to be making very good progress, inspectors judge progress in the reception class to be insufficient now. Children with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers.

70 The environment for children in the Foundation Stage is attractive and welcoming. Children are happy to come to school and leave their parents knowing they are secure and well cared for. The 'Sure Start' programme for parents and children prior to joining the nursery helps to reduce anxiety. At the time of the inspection there were 22 part time children in the nursery and 24 children in the reception class, some of whom attend part time for the first half term. Most children benefit from pre-school education with almost all children transferring to the reception class from the nursery. A gradual introduction to the nursery through home visits, meetings and visits to school, together with helpful information given to parents, ensures children make a good start.

71 Children have entered the nursery with below average levels of attainment over time, although this year's intake are of average attainment and are likely to make better progress. Children make good progress through the first year of the Foundation Stage in all areas of learning and by the end of their first year attainment is at a level expected for children of this age. By the end of the reception year, however, children's attainment has declined significantly in reading, writing and mathematics. As children enter Year 1, achievement is well below average in the areas of communication, language and literacy overall, and mathematical development, and children make poor progress by the end of the reception year in these two areas. In the areas of personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development, standards are in line with the levels expected for children of this age and progress is satisfactory. Children are identified as having special educational needs throughout the two years and these children receive appropriate support and make the same progress as their peers

72 The Foundation Stage curriculum is unsatisfactory in that the existing planning, although covering all the areas of learning, does not provide for both year groups in a continuous way, nor does it give enough attention to all the stages of learning known as the 'stepping stones'.

Because work is not planned in a continuous way, children do not make sufficient progress in their learning, as the work is either too easy or too hard for them. In the reception class some concepts are too complex and taught at an inappropriate level. Insufficient attention is being paid to the developmental stages of learning, particularly in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Within the environment provided there is insufficient structure to ensure that all areas of learning receive the necessary attention to promote children's learning in the reception class. The Foundation Stage curriculum, together with the 'stepping stones', is insufficiently understood by staff. The curriculum is not sufficiently balanced in the reception class and provides too few opportunities for children to learn and practise writing, reading and mathematical skills. However, there are satisfactory opportunities for children to express themselves creatively, for example in daily painting activities, and to gain a range of knowledge of the world around them. The informal style of the curriculum promotes these areas of learning, but insufficient emphasis is placed on developing the 'basic skills' on which to base children's subsequent learning. This means that by Year 1 pupils are working at a level expected at the beginning of the reception class, taking into consideration the level of attainment on entry to school and the good progress made in the nursery.

73 The Foundation Stage does not have a cohesive team, which makes leadership problematic and hence unsatisfactory. All staff do not plan together on a regular basis, although long term planning does cover a two year period. In spite of monitoring having taken place, these weaknesses have not been identified.

74 Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory, both in the long term and in day-to-day recording. An early assessment is made of children as they enter the nursery' and again as they enter and leave the reception class. However, insufficient use is made of these results in the reception class to ensure that children are taught at the right level. Teachers know their children well, but there is some lack of insight when considering this important stage of children's education. The profiles of children's work do not match the needs of the Foundation Stage curriculum and many assessments in the reception class are inaccurate due to the mis-match of expectations, skills and knowledge. The school has identified the need to develop curriculum and assessment procedures in order to ensure the necessary systematic delivery of the whole curriculum for children of this age.

75 The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall and inconsistent between classes in the Foundation Stage. Within this picture there are extreme variations. Teaching in the nursery is always very good and on one occasion excellent, but the teaching in the reception class fluctuates between satisfactory and unsatisfactory. The teaching in the nursery consists of a shared team approach of high quality. Time is used well, with every moment grasped as an opportunity for learning. Teaching is sensitive with high expectations of children's achievements. Good structure to the sessions promotes secure and well-focused learning with good attention being paid to the teaching of the basic skills. However the rate at which the children learn over time, although good, does not match the very good intuitive teaching. This is mainly due to the existing curriculum and assessment procedures, part-time attendance and the previous regime of children entering the nursery twice a year.

76 The quality of teaching for the reception children is unsatisfactory. There are missed opportunities to extend children's learning in reading, writing and mathematical development. Within the range of experiences provided, insufficient emphasis is placed on communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and the teaching of basic skills and phonological awareness. Opportunities for exploratory and investigative experiences are extensive, but unstructured. The activities lack clear purpose and do not focus sufficiently on the teaching of basic skills. Time is not used thoughtfully to enable children to learn all that they can.

The long 'free activity' session of forty minutes at the beginning of the day leaves thirty-five minutes for focused learning to take place before playtime. At the end of a lesson little time is spent sharing information and consolidating children's learning. Where teaching is satisfactory staff ask relevant questions and promote children's speaking and listening skills by joining in with play activities such as on the 'sailing boat'. Day-to-day planning is not linked closely enough to the 'stepping stones' to ensure that lessons and activities are pitched at the right level, and expectations of children's achievements are too low. Meaningful and relevant assessments are not sufficiently based on day-to-day assessments, to ensure that each child makes progress, building effectively on previous learning. Early levels of attainment are not used to ensure that the curriculum provides appropriately for the needs of each child.

Personal, social and emotional development

77 Most children enter the nursery class with skills that are below average in personal, social and emotional development. By the end of the nursery year children make good progress with attainment reaching an expected level. Reception children make satisfactory progress so that by the end of the reception year they achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although for children in the nursery teaching is good.

78 Children make a good start in the nursery and begin to plan and organise their work independently. Younger children sit together at the beginning of the day, and teachers skilfully encourage and discuss the activities available enabling children to make choices in their selection and use of activities. Although children are new to the nursery they behave very well and are sufficiently confident to seek other children to share their activities, for example in role play or in the construction area.

79 This independence deteriorates in the reception class where children do not benefit from the same structured approach. There are fewer opportunities for children to plan and take responsibility for their learning. Teacher led activities involve children but when these draw to a close or activities are self-chosen, children are unaware of the purpose, and when asked 'What will you do next?' the child responds, 'I don't know'. Most reception children behave well but do not respond readily when the class teacher asks them to stop their activities and listen. When activities have little focus children lose concentration and behaviour deteriorates. Snack time is a good feature in both the nursery and the reception class and children benefit from the social occasion. In groups, reception children mostly concentrate for short periods of time but become distracted or restless when the teaching becomes more complex.

Communication, language and literacy

80 By the end of the reception year standards overall are well below the expected levels in reading and writing and children make poor progress in relation to the sound standards achieved by the end of the nursery year. Oral communication is at the expected level for children of this age by the end of reception and children make satisfactory progress. Teaching overall is unsatisfactory, but teaching in the nursery is very good. There are good opportunities for children to develop their speaking and listening skills throughout the Foundation Stage, but there are insufficient planned opportunities to develop children's reading and writing skills satisfactorily in the reception class.

Speaking and listening

81 In the nursery the new intake of children play in the role-play 'home corner' using a good range of familiar words to act out their experiences. They join in with rhymes and repeated

phrases and respond well to simple instructions, benefiting from the expertise of the nursery staff. In the reception class children have many opportunities to talk in the course of a session. Support staff play an important part in encouraging language development. Where there is staff involvement in role-play, as when aboard the 'sailing boat', children, including those with special educational needs, extend their vocabulary through listening to others.

Reading

82 Children in the nursery listen and join in with stories and poems both in small groups and alone with an adult. They are interested in pictures and print both in books and around the nursery. Children enjoy looking at photographs of themselves taken the previous week. They know the title of a favourite book and share books in the comfortable library area. Reception children identify their names each morning and borrow library books on a regular basis. Children have a book trolley but there is no specific area where they can share and enjoy books. The story of 'Fidgety Fish' forms a link with a bubble investigation but there are many missed opportunities, either through lack of planning or a failure to 'seize the moment' to develop or consolidate previous learning. There is no regular daily reading, for instance concerning the 'days of the week' or 'months of the year', or other stimulus to encourage the development of reading on a regular and consistent basis. Children observed in a lesson at the beginning of Year 1 did not know the days of the week in sequence or the months of the year, nor did they know which month Christmas was in. There is insufficient emphasis placed upon knowing the names and initial sounds of letters and this is included as a target on the cover of most children's English books at the beginning of Year 1.

Writing

83 In the nursery there are planned opportunities to practise the basic skills of writing such as patterns, tracing and drawing. Children practise their writing independently using a range of materials provided. This is enhanced by the use of individual 'message boxes' through which children are encouraged to communicate. Children make good progress because teaching is well structured. However, in the reception class opportunities to learn the basic skills of writing and practise these are insufficient. Some resources for writing independently are available together with the 'message boxes' used in the nursery class but these are infrequently visited. Children record their 'investigation' on prepared sheets but as only one group complete the bubble activity each day, children practise writing once each week. Paint is available on a daily basis, but children were not observed using these resources. Letter shapes are not practised frequently enough for children to become confident writers. This is evident in the low standards of writing seen in Year 1 and the targets seen in their literacy books.

Mathematical development

84 By the time they reach Year 1 children have regressed considerably and standards are well below average. This represents poor progress in relation to the average standards children achieve at the end of the nursery year. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall with the better teaching seen in the nursery.

85 In the nursery children count and sort fish by their pattern and colour, matching shapes and making sets of fish. Assessments by the end of their first year show that high attaining children are confident in their understanding of numbers to 10 and the average and lower attaining children are confident to 5. By the end of reception most children are unable to 'count on' beyond 10 and are unable to write numbers accurately. The higher attaining child can complete addition 'sums' to 10 with the less able child recording five dots on the ladybird. There

is little evidence in books of the other aspects of mathematical development such as shape, space and measure and capacity. In one lesson, four reception children make 'bubbles' using play dough balls from a given number but when this is achieved the group, being unsupported, gradually disperse with no interaction and hence little learning taking place. Children at the beginning of Year 1 do not know 'length' in mathematical terms or understand the terms 'measuring', 'estimate', 'longer than' and 'shorter than'. One higher attaining child knows that objects must start from the same point in order to compare the length of two objects and demonstrates this to her peers. When using a large dice in a circle game Year 1 children are unable to recognise numbers more than 10, for example 55 was suggested for 15 and 12 and 22 for 21. Children recognise 'more and less than 5' using a number line.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

86 Children reach standards that are in line with those expected for their age by the end of reception in this area of learning. Children make good progress overall. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good, with the better teaching seen in the nursery. This area of learning is used as the main focus of the Foundation Stage curriculum and as such children receive a wide range of experiences.

87 On entry to the nursery children need encouragement to explore and investigate. This soon develops as a result of very good teaching from the nursery team. Children develop their curiosity and interest in the world around them, for example when examining a fish (from the fishmongers!) as part of the nursery weekly topic. Reception children focus upon exploring bubbles as their week's theme. Children make bubbles using a variety of implements and talk about the air inside the bubble. One child pumped air into a beach ball and used the word 'inflate' to describe what she had done. Evidence from photographs and previous planning represents a wide range of experiences in this aspect. For example in the nursery a mini beast hunt was undertaken, different materials felt and experiments with musical instruments involved listening to their sounds. Reception children have experience of planting in the garden, observing snowflakes and footprints involving melting ice and collecting shiny objects, finding out about reflections. Within these topics children are encouraged to look at patterns and change within their world.

88 All children use construction apparatus to build and photographs show nursery children designing and making a miniature garden with good results, as well as reception children handling tools as they design and make objects using wood. Children use the computer in their work but some reception children have little understanding of what is required in order to complete the programme.

89 A sense of time and place is developed through a good range of visits and visitors to school, including the local library and fire station. Cultures and beliefs of others are well developed through visitors to school together with the 'persona dolls' representing a range of cultures. The christening of 'Faith' gave the children a wide range of experiences and photographs show a good level of involvement, both from the school and local clergy.

Physical development

90 Children's progress is satisfactory in their physical development. By the end of the reception year, standards are in line with those expected for children of their age. Teaching is sound overall.

91 Nursery children practise their climbing and balancing skills both indoors and outdoors and have planned opportunities to use small apparatus, bikes and wheeled toys on the school play area. The nursery and reception play areas are small, and although the school has done its best there is little opportunity to develop an outdoor curriculum or encourage safe, adventurous play to its fullest extent. In the hall reception children move 'like crabs' in various ways, although many children find this activity difficult. They move around the hall confidently, selecting their chosen space and moving in response to the teacher's instructions. The hall session is relatively new to the children and time needs to be spent developing confidence and consolidating previous learning, using assessments made in the nursery. Children use tools such as scissors with care and developing control.

Creative development

92 Children achieve standards that are in line with the expected levels by the end of the reception year and make satisfactory progress. Teaching ranges from very good to excellent in the nursery and is satisfactory in the reception class.

93 In the nursery children produce handprints as they experience the texture of paint, describing it as cold and slippery as they differentiate between the different colours offered. They use the stimulus of music to paint both on a large and small scale and join in with their favourite songs. For example, children listening to a short piece of music move their hands like fish while listening. This lasts for a very short time but has a strong creative impact. In role-play they use their imagination and 'pretend', acting out real life events in the home. In the reception class painting easels are available throughout the day, although children were not seen using them during the inspection. As part of an investigation children experience bubble patterns, observing the effect of different colours as they blend. There is more emphasis on exploration in art than on teaching early techniques. The Foundation Stage curriculum promotes the blend of both skills and creativity. Children learn new songs to accompany a literacy session and photographs show the performance of a 'worm dance' while on a visit to a park, as well as natural sculptures in the style of Andy Goldsworthy. Musical instruments are not readily available to use independently despite 'sounds of the sea' being identified as the focus for music during the week.

ENGLISH

- Standards of speaking and listening are average, and progress is good, particularly in Years 1 and 2.
- Standards of reading and writing are below average, although pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2.
- There are too few planned opportunities for pupils to write in different subjects.
- Teaching in the lessons seen was good but expectations for neat handwriting and presentation are too low.
- Good assessment procedures are starting to have an effect on pupil progress.
- Marking has weaknesses.
- Leadership of the subject is good.

94 Pupils in Years 2 and 6 are currently achieving standards in speaking and listening that are average. Standards in reading and writing are below average. These standards reflect those

of the most recent tests (in 2001) for which national comparisons are available. This picture is broadly similar to that painted in the inspection report of 2000.

95 Standards of speaking and listening are average in Years 2 and 6. Opportunities to practise skills are systematically planned in lessons and this is proving effective in raising standards. In Year 1, for example, one girl taking the role of the elephant and answering questions consolidates the understanding of the story of 'Elmer'. Her classmates form their questions carefully and she answers appropriately, with the teacher prompting her to speak more loudly when the audience cannot hear her. Year 2 pupils have regular turns at telling their news and they are keen and confident to do so. They usually speak clearly and, when occasionally they make grammatical mistakes, teachers or other pupils correct them, as when a boy says, 'We buyed'. Skills continue to be steadily practised in the juniors, through role-play (in Year 3, pairs of pupils model a conversation displaying good intonation when asking questions and appropriate expression when answering) and through other activities, such as 'circle times'¹ These promote the development of skills so that, by the age of 11, pupils carefully express their ideas and reasons for their opinions. This is particularly noticeable in one-to-one and group situations where pupils are more confident than in whole class settings, where they are sometimes reluctant to contribute. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, a girl declined the offer to read out her work that described a character from the story of 'Perseus' and the teacher had to do it for her.

96 Standards of reading are below average in Years 2 and 6. Progress in the infants is good because pupils enter Year 1 with well below average skills. They know very few words by sight, have poor knowledge of letter-sounds and rely on the pictures to tell the story. By Year 2, there is noticeable improvement. Most pupils have acquired some strategies for reading unknown words and have reasonable understanding of letter names and sounds. A higher attaining girl works out *examined* by breaking it into parts, applying her knowledge of the letter sounds and building the word again. A lower attaining girl knows the first sound of *cross* and, with help, she builds this too. However, not all pupils have suitable books and, though most read accurately and fluently, not many read expressively because books are sometimes too difficult. The school uses a colour coding system to classify its books but several of these younger pupils cannot say which colour they are on (one boy has several books in his reading bag with various coloured stickers) and cannot explain what happens when they are ready to progress to the next colour. Teachers and other adults endeavour to hear pupils read these home books regularly but their main assessments are carried out in group reading activities. If these reading books were colour-coded, teachers could check that the books going home match the level of reading competence in the classroom. When pupils move on to the next colour in their group reading activities, they would then know that their home reading choice should change.

97 Pupils in the juniors make steady progress. A justifiable decision has been made to take guided reading out of the literacy hour and timetable a slot each day for this activity. However, the problem of monitoring the pupils' choices of reading material is still evident. A lower attaining pupil in Year 5, for example, was reading a book that was too difficult for him and this is not an isolated example. Most pupils have a positive attitude to reading and diaries are well maintained throughout the school. Comments by parents, teachers and sometimes the pupils themselves indicate the books read, the level of enjoyment and competence and occasionally suggestions of what needs to be done to improve further. The Year 2 teacher, for example, lists some words that need to be practised and learned by sight. The main problem faced by Year 6 pupils is in understanding vocabulary. Most read accurately and have strategies for tackling unknown words

¹ Discussions that take place in a circle with each pupil contributing, often employed to promote personal and social education.

but a higher attaining pupil does not understand *reverie*, *inquisitive* and *gibbered* even though she can read them. The higher order reading skills of inference and of explaining the author's intentions with reference to the text are not well developed and the school has identified this after analysing the 2002 national test results. Pupils who no longer need to choose colour-coded books say that they have a good choice of reading material and name favourite authors and/or books readily, though Year 5 pupils are more forthcoming than those in Year 6. Most pupils explain clearly the system in the library for finding reference books and nearly all know the purpose of an index. The school library has improved since the last inspection. Books, though limited in quantity, are catalogued and they are neatly arranged.

98 Standards of writing are below average in Years 2 and 6 but infant pupils make good progress because many enter Year 1 with well below average skills. Some are still making marks on the page rather than properly forming letters and one or two are not confident in knowing that writing goes from left to right. By the end of Year 2 however, even the lower attaining pupils last year were writing independently, albeit in short pieces of work. Nevertheless, the structure of a story was understood with 'once upon a time' being used at the beginning. Most pupils understand how to demarcate sentences but many use *and*, *then* and *but* continuously to extend sentences rather than using a full stop. Standards are depressed because of difficulties with spelling, punctuation and handwriting. The higher attaining pupils know how to spell many of the high frequency words correctly but others struggle with words such as 'went' (*whent* or *wet*), 'said' (*sade*) and 'by' (*biy*). However, because they have reasonable phonic knowledge, many words are readable because they are phonetically correct such as *pleas* and *musicul*. Punctuation other than full stops is not evident in much of the work. A higher attaining pupil, for example, attempts speech marks but misses out question marks and commas. Handwriting is unsatisfactory throughout the school. Inspectors in October 2001 noted the difficulty that some infant pupils had in maintaining good pencil control, the lack of development in cursive script, as well as the lack of a clear school policy for the use of pencil or ink and for neat presentation. These remain as areas for development. The school acknowledges this and steps are in hand to improve the situation.

99 The school has convincing data to show that most Year 6 pupils who took the national tests in 2002 made good progress when comparing their tests results at seven with those achieved at eleven. However, the sample of work suggests that progress overall in the juniors is steady, partly because of the lack of regular opportunities to write freely and creatively. Pupils complete plenty of exercises to understand better the rules of punctuation and grammar, amongst other things, but do not have enough opportunities to put them into practice in extended writing activities. A conscious decision has now been taken to allow more time for pupils to write extensively and regularly and the proposal is outlined in the school improvement plan. The work of Year 6 pupils last year showed that stories were sometimes planned and re-drafted and that, occasionally, work was presented using a word-processor. Computers are not widely used, however, to support work in English, nor is there an awareness that literacy skills can be developed in other subjects of the curriculum and that opportunities to do so can be planned, especially in subjects such as history and religious education. The higher attaining Year 6 pupils last year often wrote extensive stories that were arranged in paragraphs and contained correctly punctuated speeches. However, while there was some use of adverbs, exciting adjectives were rare and complex sentences² were the exception. Average pupils wrote sensibly but again vocabulary was appropriate rather than adventurous and some words were surprisingly misspelt, such as *replied* and *sore* (saw). The lower attaining pupils did not write lengthy stories but they managed to convey their meaning and showed awareness of story structure with conventional beginnings and endings ('One day' and 'He went back to sleep').

² A sentence containing a main clause and subordinate clause or clauses.

100 In the lessons seen, teaching was invariably good with two very good lessons but this judgement has to be tempered with evidence from the sample of work that showed low expectations for the quality of handwriting and presentation and wide variations in the quality of marking. Pupils have individual targets for improvement but references to these are rare in the teachers' written comments. Pupils do not therefore know whether they are making progress, nor do they know what they ought to do to improve further. The school has good assessment procedures. Each term a written piece of work is levelled and a target for improvement is shared with each pupil and with parents. Tests are beginning to be closely analysed so that weaknesses can be identified and plans modified to address them. For example, an analysis of the 2002 spelling test for seven-year-olds revealed that 59 per cent of the pupils could not spell 'once' and teachers have been reminded that it should be taught in Year 1 as an irregular word. This is good practice. All teachers plan work well to meet the needs of their pupils. Those with special educational needs are given specific work and those with greatest need in the juniors attend the Special Education Centre for their literacy lessons. They make good progress because of the work that is specifically planned for them and delivered through good teaching. In class, teaching assistants given good support in the activity sessions to those with less severe special educational needs, enabling them to make the same progress as their classmates. In Year 5, for example, the assistant reinforces pupils' understanding of 'The Hodgeheg' through an extra focus on reading and discussion.

101 Most lessons move at a brisk pace and contain a good variety of activities to hold pupils' interest. Most pupils have positive attitudes to English but there is some disaffection amongst the older boys. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, the teacher had to exert firm control over a small number of boys in order that the rest did not suffer. She did this successfully. The very good lessons occur because of a teacher's infectious enthusiasm and natural warmth that draws everyone into the session so that they all feel valued, together with an ability to frame questions that encourage pupils to think ("Give me an example of a verb," says the teacher in Year 4). In Year 2, the game that concludes the lesson is greatly enjoyed but reinforces the learning of vocabulary from the story around which the lesson has been planned. A pupil has a word stuck on his/her back and others have to give clues so that it can be guessed, for example, "It rhymes with hard," enabling the answer to be offered, "Is it card?" Basic skills are well taught, particularly in the infants and this promotes good progress there. Resources are used well. In Year 1, for example, each pupil has a whiteboard on which to write 'He can sit.' The teacher then employs a puppet to look at each pupil's work giving her the opportunity to assess the individual successes and difficulties. Homework is appropriately used to reinforce work in school as when Year 6 pupils are asked to write a nonsense poem.

102 The co-ordinator leads the subject well. The improvement in teaching since the inspection in 2000 is due, in part, to her observations of lessons and the pertinent development points that have been agreed with each teacher. The school is fortunate too in having a Lead Literacy Teacher who demonstrates good practice in delivering the literacy hour. The National Literacy Strategy is effectively aiding teachers to deliver their lessons but the school has not finally decided on the adaptations that will enable more time to be devoted to extended writing. There are sufficient resources to deliver the curriculum and the visit of a theatre group and visits out, for example to the Globe Theatre, enrich the pupils' experiences and contribute successfully to their social and cultural development.

MATHEMATICS

- Good progress is made from Year 1 to Year 6.
- Standards at 11 are average and improving.
- Effective use is made of the National Numeracy Strategy.
- Refinements are needed in the pace of mental work and the use of the plenary session.
- Assessment is not yet ensuring best progress for all pupils.

103 Inspectors agree with the 2001 national test results that standards are below average at the end of the infants but broadly average by the age of 11. As the pupils in Year 1 start with very limited mathematical knowledge, this constitutes good progress throughout the school and standards are improving year on year by the end of the juniors.

104 Year 1 pupils are currently (very close to the beginning of the school year) learning to count on and back using numbers less than 10 and recognising 'more than' and 'less than'. Few recognise numbers larger than 20. They are not confident about ordering days of the week, and not all can name months of the year. Only higher attainers make very simple comparisons of lengths, stating which are longer than a given object and which shorter. By Year 2 all but the lowest attaining pupils are confident about numbers to 100 and can count in tens as well as ones; some higher attainers count in fives. The majority of pupils can identify missing numbers in a simple counting sequence. Most pupils can give change from 10p and record the associated calculation, although the majority rely on using their fingers to do so and so are not confident with larger amounts. Higher attainers are beginning to use larger numbers with the aid of number lines and squares.

105 By Year 3 pupils know numbers which add up to 20, although recall is not always rapid. Pupils use knowledge of counting on and back to calculate difference, although few are secure about using steps of 10 in doing so. Pupils apply this knowledge to working with length and most use a tape measure accurately to gather data. Some lower attainers are not able to measure confidently with a ruler, though. Year 4 pupils count in fours confidently and add numbers in the hundreds, while by Year 5 the majority of pupils count in eights and double or halve amounts to £100, sometimes solving problems presented in words. Higher attaining pupils apply strategies such as partitioning³ and rounding to enable them to calculate more readily. The oldest pupils multiply quickly by 10 and 100 and average and higher attainers can extend this to multiplying by 20, some using doubling methods. Most pupils confidently multiply three digits by one digit (lower attainers using a method whereby answers are entered into a grid to ensure place value is used correctly), and higher attainers are able to do long multiplication.

106 Mathematics is well taught in both the infants and the juniors. The National Numeracy Strategy is being used well to develop mental skills, teach a variety of strategies and involve pupils in explaining their working. Errors are regularly used to help pupils to understand better. A variety of interesting methods, including games, puzzles and practical work, are used to interest pupils, and are changed at regular intervals to help them to sustain concentration and think flexibly. In Year 5, for instance, pupils worked with a partner on mental questions, completed an open-ended problem in search of a pattern and some pupils used cards to generate calculations in the group task. At the beginning of nearly all lessons the objective is shared with pupils so they know what they are learning, and in many lessons this is then reviewed towards the end so that pupils know how well they have achieved it. In the best lessons there is also attention given to

³ Process whereby the numbers are broken down into hundreds, tens and units for ease of calculation

whether answers are reasonable and teachers check that recording of work is mathematically accurate so pupils understand the need to check on what they put. There is still room to improve the pace of mental sessions to develop more rapid recall.

107 As a result of monitoring, the school has rightly identified the need to refine plenary sessions and to use more ICT. The best plenary sessions lead on to the next work to be covered, or assess pupils' understanding of the work done, but too many just repeat what has been done in the lesson. In Year 3, a plenary effectively draws pupils' attention to the way curved lines can be measured and provides useful practice at estimating some lengths of curved lines ready for the following day. In Year 2 a deliberate error displayed for discussion identifies that pupils have still not understood the need to record larger numbers first when subtracting. In the lessons where progress is less rapid, teachers have failed to ensure that all group tasks are at the right level for different pupils. In Year 5, for instance, higher attainers practise doubling and halving when they are already secure with the process and in Year 3 lower attainers fail to take accurate measurements with a ruler. Although apparatus is sometimes available for pupils it is not always regularly provided for pupils to use if they choose, so lower attainers in Year 2 did not each have plastic coins to help them work out change. Good practice is evident, but teachers have different strengths and as a result inconsistencies occur in the approach in individual classes. Best practice has yet to be shared.

108 Pupils with special educational needs who are withdrawn to the Special Education Centre make good progress because the work is well matched to their needs and they are well supported. Those who remain in class usually make good progress too, especially where work is directly related to their individual education plan targets, but misunderstandings are not always picked up sufficiently quickly when work is too challenging for them and this does sometimes lead to loss of confidence.

109 The co-ordinator has been effective in gathering and analysing much test data on pupils to enable the school to check on pupil progress. Assessment practice is also beginning to be used to set suitable targets for individual pupils, but the usefulness of some of them is doubtful, and others are not truly mathematical but relate to general learning habits. Similarly, termly assessments provide some information in skills acquired but because a context is not always provided, they are not consistently linked to National Curriculum levels and inclusion of work is not organised systematically, these assessments do not give a picture of overall progress. Further improvement in provision will result from refinement of these procedures and the follow up of identified weaknesses.

SCIENCE

- Attainment by the end of the juniors is above average.
- Teaching is consistently good, with a strong emphasis on scientific enquiry.
- There are strong links with mathematics in particular.
- Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning although a minority are less motivated.
- The co-ordinator has made a sound start to management.
- Good assessment procedures are being used soundly to help future planning.

110 By the end of the infants, standards are average. This judgement is a significant improvement on the findings of the previous inspection report, when standards were well below average. It reflects teacher assessment of pupils' attainment in 2001. By the end of the juniors, standards are above average, reflecting the findings of the previous inspection. In the 2001 national tests, attainment was well above the national average and also well above average compared with similar schools.

111 Standards are rising as a result of good teaching, with a clear focus on developing the pupils' skills of scientific enquiry. Teachers ensure that all pupils are fully involved in learning. Those with special educational needs are making sound progress. Gifted and talented pupils in Key Stage 2 achieve well. Girls performed less well than boys in the most recent national tests for eleven year olds, but there is currently no significant difference in attainment by gender. The pupils have positive attitudes to science lessons, though a minority in the juniors show some disaffection.

112 By the end of the infants, the pupils understand that sounds become fainter the further one is away from the source of the sound. They do not fully understand how results can be shown by means of a block graph, but they are keen to try out their own ideas. Weak literacy skills mean that many of the pupils find it difficult to record their findings accurately. The pupils can name the major parts of the human body and they are aware of the changes that occur as people grow older. They have a sound understanding of the need for a balanced diet as part of a healthy lifestyle. The pupils are able to investigate what materials various classroom objects are made from and whether or not they are magnetic. They know that objects move when a force, such as a pull or a push, is applied to them and they are able to measure the distances travelled by toy cars moving down a ramp.

113 By the end of the juniors, the pupils have a good understanding of how to conduct practical investigations into topics such as the effect of exercise on pulse rates, evaporation, the changing states of materials and the effect of friction on movement across different surfaces. They can make sensible predictions as to outcomes and they have a good understanding of the need to make a scientific test fair. They can represent their findings well through writing, tables, bar graphs and line graphs. In this way, the pupils are developing their literacy and numeracy skills well. They are able to evaluate their investigations and record how they might improve their methods next time. The pupils know how plants disperse their seeds in different ways. They investigate the habitats of woodlice in the school grounds and they are able to use branching keys effectively, in order to classify animals and plants. They know that micro-organisms can be both harmful and helpful. They have a good understanding of the difference between series and parallel electrical circuits.

114 The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good throughout the school. The teachers are enthusiastic about science and this motivates the pupils, many of whom say science is one of their favourite subjects. There is a good balance between direct teaching and allowing the pupils to develop their skills through practical investigations. The teachers prepare resources well for lessons. Sound use is made of ICT to enhance learning. There is good teaching of basic scientific skills, such as careful observation, prediction and fair testing. Teachers make useful links with literacy, by encouraging the pupils to talk together about ideas. In a Year 6 lesson, this helped the pupils in their understanding of how heating and cooling materials can cause reversible or irreversible changes. The teachers ensure that the pupils see the relevance of science to everyday life. This was apparent in a Year 2 lesson, where the teacher made effective use of a video, which helped the pupils see the varied uses of electricity in the home.

115 The teachers use questioning well, in order to make the pupils think carefully. In a year 4 lesson, the teacher asked 'If the holes are too big, what is going to happen?' This helped the pupils understand how sieving can be an effective method of separating mixtures, such as soil. The teachers encourage the pupils to use correct scientific terms. In a Year 5 lesson, focusing on terms such as *mixture* and *solution* helped the pupils in understanding that filtering can separate solids that do not dissolve in a liquid. Work is well matched to pupils' differing needs and the teachers ensure that there is usually a challenging task for higher attainers to move on to. They make frequent links with mathematics, as the pupils represent data graphically. In a Year 1/2 lesson, for example, the pupils learnt how to represent the distance at which pupils could still hear a clock by means of a block graph. The quality of marking of pupils' work is variable. There is often insufficient guidance for pupils to know how they might improve.

116 The co-ordinator has made a sound start in managing the subject. She has audited resources for teaching and learning. These are now adequate, although storage is a problem. The coordinator has not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching, with a view to sharing good practice. A clear policy meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and planning is soundly based on national guidelines, adapted to the needs of the school. There are satisfactory procedures for assessing attainment. Information from this assessment and from a careful analysis of national test results is used to plan the next steps in learning. There is a collection of samples of pupils' work at agreed levels of attainment, which is useful in helping teachers in the accuracy and consistency of their assessments. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' personal development. They learn to work collaboratively when necessary and to think about issues concerning the environment. There is a small environmental garden area and a pond, which have the potential to enrich learning.

ART AND DESIGN

- Standards are average in both infants and juniors.
- Resources are poor both in quality and quantity.
- Less emphasis is placed on the use of imagination and creativity.
- Art is a focus area within the school improvement plan.

117 As with the previous inspection there were limited opportunities to observe art lessons during the inspection, but lessons seen, portfolios of pupils' work, sketch books, discussions with pupils at the end of each key stage and with staff, indicate that standards are average. There are few examples in the form of displays in some classrooms due to the time of the inspection, but the assessment tasks in pupils' portfolios of work give an indication of

satisfactory progress in both infants and juniors for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Art is a subject for specific attention in the school improvement plan and it is intended to establish a scheme of work and assessment procedures which will give a clear indication of pupils' progress through the school in all aspects of art. It is clear from talking to pupils that they have a good knowledge of many techniques in art, mainly in the juniors, but there are fewer opportunities to practise these both within other subjects and creatively.

118 Art and design and DT are taught in half termly 'blocks' of time. However this appears to be a 'moveable feast' and timetables are not consistent with the planned overview of art in the school, although the time allocation has been increased since the previous inspection. There is no whole school approach to the use of art in other subjects, such as observational drawings in science, and sketchbooks are not used consistently in order to try and test techniques or collate ideas over time.

119 Three lessons were seen during the inspection, two in the infants and one in Year 6. In Year 1 pupils learn to mix secondary colours from primary colours in a series of lessons concerning the knowledge and understanding of colour. Because the teaching points are clear and the objectives of the lesson are revisited frequently most pupils understand that secondary colours such as purple can be achieved using the primary colours of red and blue, for example. However, a class with both Year 1 and 2 pupils show less confidence in their skills when painting and using crayons. Many pupils know the primary colours but they experiment with wax crayons and oil pastels at a level lower than would be expected of pupils of this age. Basic skills and techniques are not taught in a planned way in the reception class, resulting in time being needed to establish these skills in Year 1; this then affects the standards in Year 2, leaving less time to practise these techniques creatively in art work.

120 In the one Year 6 lesson seen and in discussion with these pupils it is clear that they make sound progress in terms of skills and knowledge in art. Pupils benefit from a variety of stimuli such as Year 5's art session held at the high school, tie and dye fabrics to represent 'Joseph's coat', pencil action drawings completed at the time of the Olympics and a school visit to a beach to look at natural forms. In the Year 6 lesson, pupils practise and change their ideas to produce a Greek motif to decorate a 'Greek vase'. They are encouraged to use books to research aspects of art from Ancient Greece, working collaboratively in groups, sharing ideas and valuing each other's opinions. There are good expectations of behaviour and achievement, resulting in all pupils making good contributions to the lesson in terms of sketches of buildings and people.

121 Samples of patterns and pictures, some involving the use of ICT to support art, are found in the Year 6 portfolios. However many of these samples are not dated, which makes judging progress difficult. Resources for the subject are poor and do not encourage creativity either in the range or quality of media available. An intention to improve resources is included in the development plan, together with planning and a focus on creativity in art. Pupils benefit from a range of experiences but the development of skills and knowledge led by an agreed scheme of work would enhance standards in art and help to push boundaries and stimulate pupils' creative ideas. This has been identified by the school and is part of the school improvement plan.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- Standards are well below average and progress is limited in both infants and juniors.
- Skills are not developed systematically.
- Teachers are not all secure in teaching the whole design and technology process.
- The co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to raise standards.

122 Attainment in DT remains well below average, as at the time of the last inspection. Provision has improved in that there is now a scheme of work and regular lessons are taught for each project, but these are not introducing pupils to the essential skills and systematically developing them. They do not learn to apply their knowledge of previous projects to improve their designing of another product, nor record their intentions in more structured ways as they mature. They do not decide precisely what needs improving in finished artefacts so that they can use their ideas more usefully on subsequent work. Progress is, therefore, limited, and at the end of the infants and the juniors skills are underdeveloped. There is no specific evidence on the progress of pupils with special educational needs although they are usually appropriately supported in lessons.

123 In Year 2 pupils have sketched what they hope to produce and know that stitching and staples can be used to join material and they have sewn or stapled the pieces of their 'Joseph's coat' together. Much attention has been given to making the coats attractive with sequins, appliqué and paint, but only a few coats are neatened, usually with pinking shears, to improve the finish. Comments on the finished products are usually about the appearance rather than the function of the product.

124 Year 6 pupils discuss the priorities to consider in designing a Greek pot. They are all aware that an unstable jug is not useful for its purpose but many fail to realise the importance of lifting and manoeuvring it in order to pour successfully without wasting any of the contents. Their papier maché jugs have not helped them to understand how to fulfil the priorities in practice. Previous work on structures shows poor skills in cutting dowelling and cardboard corners accurately to create a stable base for a model shelter. Like younger peers, designing consists of drawings of general ideas, neither annotated nor detailed to show precise intentions and the order of work. In evaluating the kebabs cooked, pupils only used ticks and crosses to agree or disagree with statements provided; they do not make any independent appraisals of the outcomes. Early plans and simple pattern pieces for the soles of slippers are not all of appropriate size and shape for the wearer, and most time has been spent on drawing the decoration even though the basic design might prove impractical. Year 3 pupils are considering the theory of creating stable bases for their picture frames, experimenting with hinges and props to enable them to stand up and working out ways to make paper stronger so that it will create a firm frame. Activities are not connected, though, so the stable base created by using construction kits is likely to be problematic when a design has to be produced using the paper and card available. Some joining methods for the props will be more difficult with a picture inside the frame.

125 Only two lessons, both in the juniors, were observed during the inspection. Both were well taught. There were clear objectives for each lesson, which were understood by pupils and worked on consistently throughout the lesson. Introductions were pertinent, and useful demonstrations given when needed so pupils knew what to do and how to go about it. Teachers actively encouraged pupils to think for themselves, resulting in some original and ingenious ideas. Over the longer term, though, teachers have accepted poor work and failed to ensure

skills are acquired. The amount of work completed has often been limited, and pupils have not been helped to improve by instructive comment and follow up tasks. Many teachers lack confidence in tackling an entire DT project and in assessing what pupils need to learn next, but have not had the benefit of training. At worst resources are wasted, such as good quality felt being used to experiment with ways of joining fabric.

126 The co-ordinator has not received relevant training and has not had the opportunity to observe lessons, so is not in a position to influence provision. There is still some lack of clarity in the planning of projects which are truly functional DT ones rather than decorative artistic ones, especially where they link to other National Curriculum subjects. DT has a low profile in activities and displays in the school even though many pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and enjoy practical tasks. Links with literacy, numeracy and ICT are limited.

GEOGRAPHY

- Attainment is average in the infants, which is an improvement.
- Attainment is below average in the juniors.
- Teaching and learning over time in the juniors is unsatisfactory.
- There are no whole school assessment procedures.
- There is no monitoring of teaching by the co-ordinator.

127 By the end of the infants, standards are average, which is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. This is the result of improved teaching, which is focusing on developing the pupils' early mapping skills. By the end of the juniors, however, standards are still below average. Throughout the school, most pupils have positive attitudes towards learning, although presentation of work is often untidy. A minority of pupils are less well motivated to learn. All pupils are fully included in learning. Those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in the infants, but unsatisfactory progress in the juniors. There is no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls.

128 By the end of the infants, the pupils are able to observe buildings and other features in the locality. They extend their personal development by talking about safety issues, such as the need for double yellow lines and a zebra crossing by the school. With adult help, the pupils can locate some principal buildings on a large-scale plan of Kington. The pupils talk about what they like and dislike about living in Kington. They name some features that they would like to see in the town, such as a cinema, a swimming pool and a railway station! Before visiting the local garage and filling station, the pupils use their literacy skills satisfactorily to write simple questions that they might ask the mechanic. They are able to draw basic plans of their route to school. They make careful observations of some features around the school, such as the bell and the shelter, and they are able to write simple descriptions of these. However, progress is limited as a result of the pupils' weak writing skills. With adult help, the pupils use the Internet satisfactorily to locate their homes on a local map. They use their numeracy skills to construct accurate tally charts of their parents' occupations.

129 By the end of the juniors, the pupils have made unsatisfactory progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of places and in reading maps. They are unsure how to use coordinates accurately in locating map features and, while they know that a map needs a key, they are unfamiliar with many symbols used on conventional maps. The pupils' atlas skills are under-developed; they are unsure of the wide range of different kinds of maps. Their basic

knowledge of geography is weak. For example, they confuse continents with countries and, while they are aware of environmental pollution and the need for recycling, they do not really understand why the world's tropical rain forests are disappearing and why this is of concern to us all. Weak literacy skills mean that many pupils find it difficult to write at length. The pupils know some basic facts about the human and physical geography of St Lucia and about life in a rural village in India. They make sound use of their mathematics skills, for example by representing occupations in St Lucia and Kington by means of accurate bar graphs.

130 The quality of teaching and learning in the infants is satisfactory. Over time, teaching in the juniors has been unsatisfactory. Teaching of key geographical skills, such as map reading, has been weak. Nevertheless, teaching in lessons observed during the inspection was satisfactory. The teachers try to make the pupils see the relevance of geography. For example, pupils in Year 3 took advantage of this summer's football World Cup to learn about the geography of Japan. The teachers make good use of local fieldwork, such as studies of the town, the local quarry and the River Arrow. These first hand experiences make learning more relevant. The teachers make sound use of the library loans service, which enables the pupils to develop their research skills. Effective links are made with other subjects where appropriate: for example, in a Year 4 lesson, the teacher made strong links with science as he taught the pupils about nature's water cycle. This helped the pupils in their understanding of how rivers are formed. At times, the pace of lessons drops, usually as a result of interruptions from less motivated pupils or from pupils who are too eager to wait for their turn. Pupils sometimes waste time waiting for attention, as they are unsure what to do next.

131 The co-ordinator recognises that standards are not high enough by the time the pupils leave the school and she has put strategies in place to address this. A clear policy meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Planning is soundly based on national guidelines, adapted to the needs of the school, but there are currently no formal, whole school procedures for assessing attainment and progress. The coordinator monitors planning, but has not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching, with a view to ensuring that practice follows planning. There are adequate resources to support teaching and learning. The subject makes a positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In a Year 1/2 lesson, for example, the teacher encourages the pupils to think of a special place in Kington to which they would take Bertie Bear. Year 3 pupils learn about Japanese culture through exchanging letters with the Japanese friend of their teacher. In a Year 3 lesson, where the pupils were locating a recent news event on an Ordnance Survey map, the teacher asks "How would you feel if you were the owner of the farm?" This makes the pupils think carefully about the impact of a fire at a local farm. Junior pupils learn about aspects of life in India, the Caribbean and China.

HISTORY

- Standards are at expected levels.
- Pupils are confident and interested in history, and show a good general grasp.
- Written work is uneven, and some tasks lack clarity and purpose.
- A useful portfolio of pupils' work is helpful to teachers.
- There is no systematic assessment of pupils' progress.

132 Due to the way the subject is organised, it was only possible to see one history lesson during the inspection, in Year 5. Judgements are made from talking to teachers and pupils and looking at teachers' planning and pupils' work.

133 By the ages of seven and eleven pupils reach the expected levels in history. These findings are similar to those reported in the inspection of June 2002. This judgement is clearly supported by talking to pupils in both Year 3 and Year 6, who develop sound knowledge and understanding of the subject at levels appropriate to their age. The quality of the written work produced is less convincing, however, and shows considerable variation at times between different classes.

134 Pupils who have just entered Year 3 are confident and articulate about the history topics they cover in the infants. They have studied famous people from the past, quoting Henry the Eighth, Florence Nightingale and Beatrix Potter. Pupils know what they were famous for, for example linking Florence Nightingale to the Crimean War and 'the lady with the lamp'. They talk confidently about changes, identifying areas such as clothing, toys, electricity, transport and schools. They look forward to their history lessons, and enjoy finding out about the past.

135 Year 6 pupils can talk about the Romans, Vikings and Saxons, Tudors and Ancient Greeks, remembering all the topics they have studied in the juniors. They show a good sense of chronology, not only putting these periods in historical order but dating them accurately too. They are familiar with historical vocabulary, readily explaining terms such as 'AD', 'monarch', 'court', 'invasion' and 'settlement'. They talk about different sources of historical evidence, such as books, the Internet, museums, archaeology and talking to older people about recent history. They are less secure when asked about primary and secondary sources, although they know that some evidence may be false. When researching information they know that they need to make notes of what matters to them, rather than copying chunks of information. They are interested and enthusiastic and clearly enjoy the subject.

136 The quality of pupils' written work, while good in places, does not always match their verbal understanding. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are compromised by their limited writing skills, and there is also a considerable discrepancy between the amount produced by the Year 2 pupils in different classes. There is good writing in the juniors, with examples of letters, interviews and play scripts, some of which extend to performance in assemblies. However there are also worksheets and word searches that add little if anything to historical understanding, as well as some time-filling colouring of pictures. There is effective research, but also quantities of printed sheets from the Internet pasted into books, which are well beyond the understanding of the pupils concerned. Work is marked, but comments rarely serve to move pupils' understanding forward.

137 It is not possible to comment on the quality of teaching overall. In the one lesson seen Year 5 pupils compared Athens and Sparta. The teacher has good subject knowledge but the main activity, filling in missing words on a prepared sheet, limited pupils. The extension activity, which only a few quicker pupils reached, was much more interesting, as they were asked to say which city-state they would have preferred to live in, and why. The discussion on this at the end of the lesson engaged the pupils' interest, but there was no time for them to justify their views.

138 The subject co-ordinator is interested and enthusiastic. She has organised the history resources effectively to support teaching and learning. There is a useful school portfolio, which contains annotated and levelled pieces of pupils' work, giving teachers clear guidance on standards, but there is no regular system for assessing pupils' work. As yet she does not have a clear picture of the quality of teaching and learning through the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- Provision has improved, but too recently to have ensured pupils have experienced the full National Curriculum for ICT.
- Attainment is well below average throughout the school.
- Assessment data is not being used to plan work to accelerate progress.
- ICT is not used enough to support learning or provide regular practice.

139 Provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection and pupils are now receiving regular lessons in a computer suite, which are planned to cover the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. The necessary software has only recently been acquired, though, so no pupils have as yet experienced control technology. Because facilities are relatively recently set up standards are still well below average, but pupils are making regular progress in lessons. Nevertheless, this progress is not enabling them to catch up with the skills they need to accelerate achievement because many pupils have significant gaps in basic knowledge that prevents them from doing so. One pupil in Year 4, for instance, was not au fait with the scroll bar and could not locate her work, while one of her peers had to ask which was the delete key and another did not understand the need to use the return key. Many pupils even in Years 5 and 6 still need help with logging on and accessing programs, which seriously reduces the time for new work. The school has begun to establish a system for assessing pupils' ICT skills, but it is not identifying these weaknesses and is not, therefore, useful for helping pupils to progress at the present time.

140 Pupils in Year 1 and 2 use the paint program to create free designs. They use tools from the tool bar to draw a line, fill spaces and create a spray effect. They can change the colour using the tone palette and delete unwanted work. Higher attainers can use additional tools such as closed shape icons and different line thickness, while lower attaining peers often only use a single colour throughout. Infant pupils have also learnt to word process single sentences and captions, changing font and inserting a graphic. There is currently little difference in the attainment of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils in word processing or graphics work.

141 Year 4 pupils are still not all confident about logging in and out and saving their work. They have some greater skills in changing colour, font, size and style of text to suit the purposes of the newsletter they are working on, but some have little idea how to create the effect they want by justifying the text, checking spelling and changing the view on the screen. Errors in using the computer result in loss of work and shutting down the computer for no reason. By Year 6 more pupils know the procedures for accessing the computer and saving work done, but some lower attainers still need support. Higher attainers access the Internet independently and explore the British Museum web site with interest to support work on the Ancient Greeks. Their ideas on what makes a successful web page are clear, but applying this knowledge to creating their own on the computer, including what ICT makes quicker and easier, is not secure. Pupils throughout the school have had opportunities to find and download information from the internet to support work in science, geography and history but it is frequently inappropriate data because it is too difficult for the pupil to read or understand.

142 Overall the teaching of ICT is satisfactory, and during the inspection good and very good lessons were observed. However, while some teachers allow pupils to experiment freely, others have very limited and tightly focused objectives to ensure all pupils develop the same skills. Teachers' subject knowledge is not always secure enough to deal with pupils discovering and

working on different skills, although the valuable assistance of the teaching assistant does support the approach in some lessons. Most teachers make it clear to pupils what they are to learn, demonstrate the required procedures so that pupils can do them independently and question effectively so that pupils understand why they are using certain procedures. At best, teachers provide prompt cards or sheets to remind pupils of a particular procedure so they can be truly independent of adults. In Year 2, for instance, this enabled more pupils to save their own work. The use of time is problematic in many classes. Ten computers in the suite mean sharing lesson time resulting in too little chance to complete tasks for older pupils: for instance, lower attaining Year 6 pupils only had time to log on and create a single text box. On the other hand, Year 1 pupils lose concentration because the lesson is too long for the activity they are doing. Different work is often set for pupils based on their literacy skills, which works satisfactorily at present, but once ICT skills are more secure is unlikely to be so useful. Comments on books are not helpful to pupils in knowing how to improve, and too much work in exercise books is poorly presented. In some year groups little work is recorded.

143 Pupils rarely have the opportunity to use and practise computer skills in other lessons, particularly literacy and numeracy, even where ICT would support the learning. In Year 3, for instance, pupils gather arm measurements for a database but record them in writing rather than entering them straight on to the computer, which would have also sorted them and saved time during the plenary session. When computers are used it is often for practice at word or number skills and is not necessarily at a level that challenges pupils, although very high attainers in Year 6 are using it to good effect in mathematics. Although pupils with special educational needs are appropriately supported when working on the computer in lessons, the potential for improving their progress in literacy and numeracy and encouraging independence is underdeveloped.

144 The co-ordinator has rightly identified the need to accelerate skill acquisition and provide more regular practice in literacy and numeracy lessons. He has also been proactive in acquiring more resources, establishing links with business and interesting pupils in ICT through a lunchtime club run by a teaching assistant.

MUSIC

- The need for improved provision is identified in the school improvement plan.
- Opportunities to participate in musical activities outside school are good.
- The standard of singing of the oldest pupils, particularly the boys, is unsatisfactory.
- There is a lack of instruments from other cultures.

145 The last full inspection report in 2000 painted a generally positive picture of music. It is not possible to be as positive this time because of the difficulty in acquiring evidence. First, the co-ordinator is absent this term and the quality of her leadership and vision cannot be judged. Secondly, no lessons in Years 3 to 6 could be seen because they occur on alternate weeks and did not coincide with the week of the inspection. Thirdly, the hand-bell club that was praised last time is not currently meeting and fourthly, not all pupils in the juniors now learn the recorder. An impressive number of pupils in Years 2 to 6 still learn the instrument but this takes place in after-school clubs run by a volunteer.

146 The school is aware that the provision for music needs a fresh impetus and, in its improvement plan for this year, has correctly identified what needs to be done. The nationally recommended scheme of work has been adopted and its delivery is suitably plotted on a long-

term plan covering two years that will ensure that work is not repeated and that all elements of music are taught. Work is to be supported by commercial material that is to be introduced in 2003 and teachers are to receive training so that their knowledge and confidence will be enhanced with the idea that many will then take their own class music. At present, the fortnightly lessons for all pupils are taken by the former co-ordinator who comes on a part-time basis. He also leads lunchtime sessions for up to 60 pupils who belong to the choir. Their involvement in the community continues to be good, putting on a summer concert, joining in an annual fund-raising event in the town and providing music for the carol service at Christmas. Pupils have the opportunity to learn a range of instruments, from guitar and violin to the trumpet, at the after-school music centre at the local High School. All this contributes well to pupils' social and cultural development.

147 The lessons seen in Years 1 and 2 were soundly taught and greatly enjoyed by the pupils because they were taken at a good pace. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, took a full part and made similar progress. The lessons indicated that the satisfactory standards reported two years ago have been maintained. Pupils sang enthusiastically and, for the most part, in tune. Diction was good and rhythms were correctly observed. Progress in the lessons was satisfactory. For example, pupils in Year 2 who at first struggled to distinguish between high and low sounds, were much more competent at the end. This was due to the variety of activities that enabled them to develop their skills, in particular a marching session where they walked on tip-toe when they heard high sounds and crouched down when low sounds were played on the piano. It was not possible to evaluate the quality of work in the junior classes because no lessons were seen. However, singing in their assembly was disappointing. This contrasts with the favourable comments in the last report. There was little enthusiasm and the older boys were particularly disenchanted. Few of them joined in with the songs. Singing overall lacks confidence, is not particularly tuneful and is below the standard seen in the majority of schools.

148 In discussion with pupils in Year 6, it is clear that all elements of music are covered. They talk about composing activities that they have experienced and explain how they drew graphic scores to record their work. They also recall how they drew pictures to illustrate what they 'saw in their mind' as they listened to the works of famous composers, in particular Holst's *Planets Suite*. These examples of work were not available for scrutiny and their quality could not therefore be judged. However, the pupils name a good number of percussion instruments, talk about the pentatonic scale and explain the meaning of *pitch*, *rhythm*, *tempo* and *dynamics*. This indicates that standards are likely to be similar to those at the last inspection when they were judged to be average.

149 Resources are adequate with a suitable range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. There are almost no instruments from other cultures. Computer programs are not used to promote musical knowledge or skills and there is no system for assessing the standards and progress that individual pupils achieve.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

- Standards have been maintained in the juniors and are improving in the infants.
- Good opportunities for swimming.
- The site and buildings make it harder to address all aspects of PE successfully.
- Good teaching and learning in the infants.
- Skills development in the lower juniors lacks clarity.
- No formal system for assessing pupils' progress as yet.

150 Standards in PE, which had improved at the last full inspection in June 2000, have been maintained in the juniors, where they remain satisfactory in games. In the infants standards have improved in both gymnastics and dance, and are now above the expected level. No other aspects of the physical education programme were seen, but all are planned for. Swimming is taught from Year 1 to Year 6, with about 75 per cent of pupils achieving the target of swimming 25 metres by the time they leave school. The site, with its lack of a grassed area and small hall, limits what the school can provide, but junior pupils use the high school facilities in summer and there are plans for one of the residential visits to include outdoor and adventurous activities.

151 Six lessons were seen during the inspection, four in the infants and two in the lower juniors. All pupils are encouraged to take part in lessons, to the extent that the school will try to provide suitable kit for those who forget it. Support is sometimes available for pupils with special educational needs, who are fully included, and all make similar progress in relation to their ability.

152 In dance, pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 show good listening skills as they follow a taped music lesson. Teachers use this resource creatively, stopping the tape at intervals to reinforce ideas and encourage the pupils to reflect and improve on their own performance. Pupils work independently and imaginatively, showing a good level of control and linking their movements effectively to the music. The quality of teaching and high expectations leads to pupils making good progress.

153 Gymnastic lessons in the infants are also well planned and proceed at a good pace, with plenty of activity and lots of appropriate praise and encouragement. Frequent assessment is a feature of teaching in all the infant classes, with teachers quick to use other pupils as exemplars of good practice. New skills are well taught and those already learned reinforced, although sometimes opportunities are missed to link actions into a sequence, such as moving from one balance to another.

154 In the lower juniors the teaching in games lessons is more variable, and as a result pupils' progress is less assured. There is a suitable focus on skills in the planning, but activities are not always well chosen to support these: sometimes the tasks are too complex and demanding, at other times not challenging enough. Pupils are not given the chance to measure their own rate of improvement by being set meaningful and measurable targets in the short term. Lessons provide plenty of activity and give pupils the opportunity to practise their skills in a game.

155 All teachers include a 'warm-up' and 'cool-down' as part of the lesson, although the quality varies significantly. Relationships with pupils are generally good, and expectations made clear: as a result pupils' response is always sound, and frequently very good in the infants. The quality of teaching is good overall, ranging from very good in the infants to one unsatisfactory

lesson in the juniors, where the pupils make little progress in developing their skills. There is a good focus on aspects of health and safety, and pupils' independence through encouraging responsibility for organising equipment and setting out apparatus. This, and the way in which pupils are given opportunities to work together co-operatively, make a good contribution to social development.

156 The co-ordinator is recently appointed and brings both enthusiasm and good personal practice with her. She works hard to improve staff confidence and expertise and is providing some helpful in-service training. Planning is monitored but there has been no opportunity so far to look at teaching in lessons. There is no formal assessment system, although one is being developed to trial in the infants. There is a good range of opportunities outside school, which are well supported by both teachers and pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- Standards are as expected.
- Pupils are well informed by the end of both infants and juniors.
- Better teaching is seen in the infants.
- The progress made by more able pupils has improved.
- A portfolio of work has not yet been compiled.

157 Throughout the school pupils achieve standards that are broadly in line with the locally agreed syllabus. This was the same at the time of the previous inspection and pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in both infants and juniors. There has been an improvement in the scheme of work that supports the planning and implementation of the locally agreed syllabus, which systematically helps the teachers develop pupils' knowledge and understanding from year to year. The major world faiths are studied, with Christianity receiving good attention. Teaching is sound overall with a very good lesson seen in Year 1. There are very few displays in classrooms to provide an indication of work covered, due to the timing of the inspection, but in books from last year, Year 6 reflect the importance of Christianity together with a 'brainstorm' session concerning, 'What Christmas means to me'.

158 Since the previous inspection more attention has been given to higher achieving pupils and they now make the progress they should. Evidence from last year's books shows extended work for the more able pupils when considering 'beliefs' centred on an Easter play. Various elements of literacy are employed such as a written text and notes for a play that considers a number of issues, but content and presentation vary considerably. The sharing of views, 'brainstorm' and 'hot seat' sessions all contribute to the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. The subject also contributes to pupils' understanding of our multicultural society, for example in the support given to an African charity and Food Aid. However, in discussion with some pupils at the beginning of Year 6, only Hinduism was referred to in terms of knowledge of other world religions, and some Year 6 pupils think that the only Hindus in this country are tourists.

159 Pupils make satisfactory progress through the school in acquiring knowledge and in realising the part that religion plays in shaping people's lives. In Year 1 pupils are told about 'special places' and share ideas of their own places that are special to them. Year 2 pupils learn about special celebrations and aspects of Judaism. They can explain a range of artefacts including the Torah, skullcap and the components of a Jewish meal. They have visited St. Mary's

church and explain in detail the role of the Vicar. They know the reason why we say prayers, sing hymns and are able to explain what God wants us to do and what is important to Him.

160 In Year 3 pupils struggle with the moral of the parable, the 'Wise and Foolish Man' but find similarities with their own experience. Year 4 pupils begin a series of lessons about the Bible, focusing upon prayer, making good links with prayers that they intend to write for inclusion in a future school assembly. In Year 5 pupils consider rules in our society and in Year 6 they discuss the difference between prayer and meditation with a very mature attitude.

161 The quality of teaching is generally satisfactory overall. A very good lesson was seen in Year 1 where the very good relationships with pupils encourage them to share enthusiastic responses sensibly. In Year 2, similarly, there is a warm rapport and learning is made fun. Very good resources in terms of the teacher's 'special things' enhance both lessons, maintaining pupils' interest and concentration. Where lessons are weaker in the juniors, opportunities are missed, for example to 'set the scene' in a reverential sense or use methods that enthuse or motivate pupils in their understanding. In a minority of lessons pupils behave in a way that disturbs others.

162 Written accounts in lessons vary in quality, quantity and presentation and computers are not used widely to support work. Pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate help from effective support staff in the juniors, enabling them to make satisfactory progress. Resources have improved through money raised and loans of artefacts are available when specific resources are required. The post holder supports her colleagues but the part-time nature of her post makes some elements of the monitoring difficult. There is a formal end of year assessment of standards of individual pupils in the reports to parents. A portfolio of work is still to be developed, as was the position at the time of the previous inspection. This would make appropriate standards clear, support each year group and provide ideas for activities in lessons.