

INSPECTION REPORT

HIGHOVER JUNIOR MIXED AND INFANT SCHOOL

Hitchin

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117115

Headteacher: Ms Jane Pantall

Reporting inspector: Colin Henderson
23742

Dates of inspection: 24 – 27 March 2003

Inspection number: 247722

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Cambridge Road Hitchin Herts
Postcode:	SG4 0JP
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Nigel Pollard
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23742	Colin Henderson	Registered inspector	Science Geography Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9744	Peter Brown	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
12764	Wendy Thomas	Team inspector	Art and design Music Foundation Stage Special educational needs	
20063	Gerard Slamon	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Educational inclusion	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
16773	Raminder Arora	Team inspector	English History Religious education English as an additional language	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Higover Junior Mixed and Infant School is an average-sized primary school, situated on the eastern outskirts of Hitchin. It currently has 260 pupils on roll (147 boys and 113 girls) and a further 26 attend part-time in the nursery. It is larger than it was at the last inspection. Most pupils come from the nearby housing estate, from a mixture of council, shared and private housing and from varying socio-economic backgrounds. Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and 27 per cent speak English as an additional language. This is above the national average, and 15 per cent are at the early stages of learning English. Forty-five pupils (18 per cent) are on the school's register of special educational needs, with a broad range of physical, autistic, sensory, specific and moderate learning needs. Six pupils have statements of special educational needs, and this is above average nationally. Six per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below the national average. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is below average, especially in language and social development. There has been a high turnover of staff in the last two years. The current headteacher was appointed in 2002.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Higover JMI is a good school that provides well for pupils' personal development. The excellent leadership of the new headteacher, supported by the influential deputy, a good staff team and an active and supportive governing body, is giving a clear direction to the work of the school. The headteacher has introduced new procedures, focused strongly on school improvement. These are raising standards of pupils' behaviour and beginning to improve attainment, particularly in mathematics. Pupils are friendly; most behave well and have good attitudes to work. Relationships are very good throughout the school. Teaching is good overall, although there are still some inconsistencies, particularly in the infants. Inspectors found standards to be average in English and science and above average in mathematics by the time pupils leave the school. The impact of some recent initiatives has yet to promote higher standards in some subjects. This is mainly due to inconsistencies in some teachers' subject knowledge and expectations. The school makes very good use of its financial resources and gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils attain above average standards in mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and provides the school with an excellent base from which to move forward. An influential deputy headteacher and an active governing body support her very well.
- Teaching is good overall. It is often very good in the juniors.
- The arrangements for supporting pupils' personal development are good. They promote very good relationships, positive attitudes and good standards of behaviour.
- The good curriculum is enhanced well by visits, visitors and a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
- Good care, support and guidance are provided for pupils, especially those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.

What could be improved

- Pupils' attainment in science by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology, religious education, history and music by the end of Year 6.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made sound progress overall since its last inspection in October 1997. It has made some progress on all the key issues. Progress has been rapid over the last 12 months. Planning and assessment procedures have improved significantly in literacy and numeracy, although they are not

developed enough in some other subjects. Resources for information and communication technology have been improved considerably, though this is quite recent. They are used well and are raising standards, although do not yet meet expected levels by the end of Year 6. Standards of attainment have improved in mathematics and design and technology. They are similar to those reported previously in most subjects, although lower in religious education, history and music. The current, incisive leadership, which emphasises a strong team approach, gives the school excellent capacity to succeed.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	C	C	E
mathematics	B	C	C	D
science	A	C	E	E

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

In 2002, pupils in Year 6 attained average standards in English and mathematics, but well below average standards in science. Overall, the school's results in English and mathematics have improved at the same rate as schools' results nationally. Inspectors found that current Year 6 pupils are achieving better. They attain standards that are above the national average in mathematics, which is higher than at the last inspection. Attainment in English and science remains average. The improved standards in mathematics are due to good teaching, particularly in the juniors, and the effective use of support strategies. Too few pupils attain above expected levels in science as teachers do not use assessment information consistently to challenge pupils to build on their prior learning. There was no significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls in lessons, although girls achieved better than boys in last year's national tests.

Children enter the nursery with standards that are below average, particularly in language and social aspects. They make at least sound and often good progress, promoted by good teaching. Most are likely to achieve the national targets by the end of the reception year, except in early speaking, reading and writing skills and in their general knowledge and understanding of the world. Inspection evidence confirms last year's national test results and shows that Year 2 pupils attain average standards in reading, writing and mathematics, and below average standards in science. This partly reflects the proportion of pupils with special educational needs. It is also due to inconsistencies in the expectations of some infant teachers, which are not always high enough. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology are improving rapidly, but remain below expected levels by the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards in design and technology are above expected levels in Year 6. They are below expectations in religious education, music and history. Standards in physical education and art and design meet expected levels. Pupils, including those from ethnic minorities, make at least sound progress overall in their learning. Standards are improving. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress, particularly those whose English language skills have benefited from good individual support.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
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Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes. They are often very good and linked to very good teaching. Pupils are keen to learn and to succeed.
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Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is usually good in lessons and around the school. Pupils are friendly, helpful and polite. They play and work together well.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils respond well to opportunities to take responsibility and show very good respect for each other.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory and in line with the national average. There is a prompt and orderly start to the school day.

Pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour are strengths of the school and support their learning. The very good relationships contribute to pupils' enjoyment of school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching is good, overall, though it is inconsistent. It is often very good, particularly in Years 4 and 6, and occasionally excellent, for example, in Year 1. It is a key factor in helping pupils to make good progress in their learning. Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is good. It helps children settle quickly and happily into school. A small amount of teaching, however, is unsatisfactory or very occasionally poor, especially in the infants. This is due to inconsistencies in some teachers' expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and some weaknesses in their subject knowledge. Teaching in English and mathematics is good, overall, and develops pupils' literacy and numeracy skills successfully, particularly in the juniors. Teachers require pupils to apply their numeracy skills well in other subjects, although they do not provide enough opportunities to extend pupils' literacy skills. Teaching is good for pupils with special educational needs. It is sound overall for pupils who speak English as an additional language. It is good when pupils benefit from specific support, although that is not consistent in all classes. Teaching for ethnic minority pupils is sound overall. It is good when support teachers work closely with class teachers to focus on pupils' different learning needs, for example, those of African Caribbean pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	All subjects are taught and often enriched by a good range of visits and visitors. A very good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum. Curriculum planning has improved, although pupils' skills and knowledge in some subjects, for example, science and history, do not always build consistently on prior learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are supported well by teaching and learning support staff. They make good progress towards their specific learning targets.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Sound overall. It is good for pupils in the initial stages of English language development. The limited number of specialist staff restricts the impact of support in full class activities.
Provision for pupils'	Good overall. Pupils develop a clear sense of right and wrong and

personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	understand their social responsibilities. The school provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to appreciate the values, beliefs and traditions of their own and other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The procedures for ensuring pupils' care and welfare are good. The school provides good educational and personal support and guidance for pupils and monitors their progress well.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school has good links with parents and keeps them informed well. Parents are encouraged to work with the school and support their children's learning.

The school's caring approach and good range of learning activities are important factors in encouraging pupils' positive approach. An active and supportive Highover School Association helps the school to improve resources and facilities for pupils' learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The new headteacher provides excellent leadership, supported by an influential deputy, to target school improvement. They have established a very good team approach. Literacy and numeracy co-ordinators provide very good subject leadership. The roles and contributions of other co-ordinators are less effective, but planned for further development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. An active, enthusiastic and supportive governing body works in an increasingly effective partnership with the school to focus on improvement. Governors meet their statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Senior management closely monitor teaching and its impact on learning, especially in literacy and numeracy. They know that there is more work to be done to ensure complete consistency. The headteacher uses assessment information very well to track pupils' performance and set targets for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes very good use of funds to target improvement. It makes very good use of the best value principles.

The school has a good number of teaching and support staff, who work closely together to ensure that all pupils are included fully in all activities. Accommodation is very good. Resources are satisfactory overall. They have improved recently, especially for information and communication technology.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and make good progress. • Teaching is good. • High expectations that pupils will learn. • The school is well led and managed. • Staff are approachable and respond to concerns well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information on the progress their child is making. • The school's partnership with parents • The consistent use of homework.

Inspectors confirm the parents' positive views. Inspectors found that teachers generally use homework satisfactorily, especially in the juniors. The quality of information is good, although some aspects of pupils' annual reports need further development. The school's partnership with parents is good overall, although some parents support their child's learning more fully than others.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the nursery with standards of attainment that are below those expected for their age, especially in aspects of language and social development. Teaching and support staff work well together to ensure that children in the nursery and reception classes settle quickly and happily into school life. A well-organised area, a good range of learning activities and good teaching enable children to make at least sound, and often good, progress in all the required areas of learning. Most achieve the nationally set Early Learning Goals¹, although language weaknesses limit their progress in communication, language and literacy, and knowledge and understanding of the world. Many are unlikely to achieve their goals in these areas by the time they enter Year 1.
2. Year 2 pupils attain standards in reading, writing and mathematics that meet the average for all schools nationally. Standards are below average for similar schools - those schools that have a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. Standards are lower than those reported previously. Inspection evidence mainly reflects the average results of the national tests for seven-year-olds over the last three years. Inspectors found that there is a larger than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 2. Some inconsistencies in teachers' expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, together with some resources that do not enable infant pupils to extend their literacy and numeracy skills, limit the number of pupils attaining above average standards. This reflects the 2002 national test results when the proportion of pupils attaining above the nationally expected Level 2 was just below average in reading and mathematics. Inspectors found that most pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in developing their basic literacy and numeracy skills. They enjoy reading and most use their developing knowledge of sounds successfully to read independently. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop their writing skills well. Most present their work neatly and make suitable attempts to spell accurately any unfamiliar words. They improve their handwriting effectively, although some have not developed a consistent and accurate style. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their speaking and listening skills, although the standards attained by the end of Year 2 are below those expected nationally. Too few use a good range of words and their answers to questions are often short and do not explain their ideas in enough detail. Year 2 pupils show a sound knowledge and understanding of number. They use it well to carry out addition and subtraction accurately. Good teaching in some classes enables pupils to apply and extend their skills, although this is not consistent in all classes and limits pupils' achievements in some lessons. Year 2 pupils attain standards in science that are below average, and they do not all achieve as well as they might. This reflects inconsistencies in teaching and inadequate use of assessment information to set work that challenges all pupils to extend their skills and knowledge.
3. By the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards that are above the national average in mathematics and in line with the national average in English and science. In mathematics, standards are in line with the average for similar schools and in English and science they are below the average for similar schools. Standards in mathematics are higher than those reported at the last inspection.

¹ Early learning goals are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer to achievements children make in the following six areas of learning: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

They are similar to those reported for English and science. The results of national tests for 11-year-olds over the last three years show that standards in mathematics have been just above the national average. They have been average in English and science. The overall trend in standards at the school has been in line with the national trend. In 2002, the school almost achieved its target when 76 per cent of pupils at the school attained the nationally expected Level 4 or above in English. Seventy-eight per cent of pupils attained the expected level or above in mathematics, which meant that the school did not achieve its very challenging target of 90 per cent. Inspection evidence suggests that, in 2003, the school is unlikely to achieve its challenging target for English, although it is likely to be close to its equally challenging target in mathematics. In the 2002 national tests, the proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 or better was above average in mathematics, below average in English and well below average in science. Inspection evidence indicates that the proportion of pupils currently in Year 6 who will achieve above nationally expected levels is above average in mathematics and broadly average in English. Good teaching, effective support strategies and a very strong focus given by the senior management team on improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are raising standards and enabling more pupils to achieve above expected levels. Too few pupils attain above average standards in science. Teachers do not use assessment information consistently enough to ensure that pupils' learning builds on prior knowledge. More able pupils are not always challenged to apply their knowledge and understanding and to achieve above expected levels; for example, pupils are not always expected to explain the results of their investigations. Science is a current focus for improvement and the school is aware of what it needs to do to improve standards. Recent results in national tests show that girls attain better than boys. The school is trying to improve the attitudes and performance of boys. Inspectors found that this is promoting improvement and there was no evidence of any significant difference in the performance of boys and girls during the inspection.

4. Most pupils make good progress overall in their learning of basic skills, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The school has established a good strategy for promoting pupils' numeracy skills and applying them in a good range of subjects. Its literacy strategy enables skills to be taught well in English lessons, although pupils are not expected to extend their literacy skills consistently in other subjects. The overall achievement of most pupils for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory and generally in line with other groups of pupils. The results of these pupils in the 2002 national tests show an improving trend, particularly at Year 6. This is partly due to a good range of teaching methods used by some class teachers that effectively support these pupils in coping with the language demands of the subject and providing opportunities for developing their language in context. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are initially at a disadvantage but once competent in English, they make good gains in line with their peers. In lessons, where class teachers plan and organise activities to match their needs, these pupils make good progress. Pupils from ethnic minorities make good progress overall. Their progress is often very good when support teachers work effectively with class teachers to focus closely on their learning needs. However, the amount of specific support teaching, for example, for African Caribbean pupils, is limited. These pupils do not always make as consistently good progress in lessons when the support is not available. The school is monitoring the standards attained by ethnic minorities and focusing increasingly effectively on targeting improvement.
5. Standards in information and communication technology are below nationally expected levels. Resources and teachers' subject knowledge have improved recently and, as a result, pupils are now making good progress. They have yet to attain expected levels in all the required aspects of the subject. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress in design and technology and achieve standards above those expected by the end of Year 6. They achieve expected standards by the end of Year 2. Pupils make sound progress overall in art and design and physical education and attain the expected standards. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress overall in religious education, music and history, where they attain below nationally expected levels. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make unsatisfactory progress in geography, although better provision enables pupils in Years 3 to 6 to develop their geographical skills soundly. The school's recent focus on raising standards in English and mathematics has limited developments in other subjects. Assessment procedures are not developed fully to ensure that teachers build pupils' knowledge and understanding on their prior learning, for example, in science and history. The topic-based curriculum has been revised recently, but some inconsistencies in teachers' subject knowledge

and expectations have hampered improvements in pupils' skills and knowledge in science, history, religious education and music.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. Most pupils of all ages have a positive attitude to learning in general and to school in particular. In class they are attentive, and participate enthusiastically in the wide range of learning opportunities. When requested to undertake tasks or answer questions, they respond quickly and positively. Pupils clearly enjoy school, are keen to benefit from it, and many attend the numerous extra-curricular activities.
7. Behaviour throughout the school is good overall. Most pupils are well mannered, co-operative and considerate. Their movement around the school is orderly and they cheerfully hold doors open, often with a smile and a greeting. Instances of vandalism are rare. Where the quality of teaching is of a very high standard, behaviour is very good. In a few lessons, when teachers do not manage pupils' behaviour well enough, there is some inappropriate behaviour that affects pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs usually behave well, although those with pastoral support plans find it difficult at times to do so. They relate very well to the learning support assistants, who give them good, specific help. They try hard to behave well and are friendly and co-operative. There has been one fixed term exclusion during the past year.
8. The relationship of pupils with each other and with adults is very good and a major strength of the school. Pupils forge strong social relationships with each other and usually resolve conflict amicably and with minimum fuss. As a result, pupils collaborate well, both in groups and in pairs. Likewise, relationships with adults are very good and are founded on trust and mutual respect. The combination of very good relationships and high standards of behaviour provides an ideal basis for both academic and personal development in the vast majority of lessons. No instances of oppressive behaviour - including sexism, racism or bullying - were observed, or reported during the inspection. Pupils were insistent that within school they felt safe, secure, and free from threats. Members of staff, including teaching assistants, emphasised the friendly non-oppressive atmosphere in the school.
9. Most pupils have a good understanding of the impact their actions have on others, and are anxious to prevent others from being hurt or upset. They enthusiastically applaud the achievements of others, as was evident at a reception class assembly. Respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others is very good and positively contributes to the very good relationships which characterise the school. Pupils are sensitive to the many cultures, religions, and beliefs which are represented in the school.
10. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to display initiative and accept responsibility. An active school council enables pupils of all ages to propose new ideas to improve the quality of school life and to exercise responsibility. Delegates are regularly elected in order to gain maximum pupil involvement. Year 6 pupils help younger pupils with dance and in the making of craft products. Year 5 and 6 pupils help with play activities in the infant playground, and pupils of all ages perform monitoring duties and initiate and run charitable fund-raising events.
11. Levels of attendance are satisfactory and are in line with national averages. The level of unauthorised absence is slightly below the national average. Punctuality of pupils is also satisfactory, and registrations are conducted promptly and efficiently.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. Teaching is good overall, though there are inconsistencies. It is often very good, especially in Years 4 and 6, and occasionally excellent; for example, in Year 1. It is not always effective in Year 2. The overall quality of teaching confirms the positive views of parents. There has been a high turnover of teachers since the last inspection, and this has had an impact on the standards

achieved in some subjects. However, the overall quality of teaching is similar to that reported at the last inspection. Teaching was good or better in nearly two out of every three lessons observed. There was a small amount of unsatisfactory or poor teaching, mainly resulting from weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge or class management. The good quality of teaching was largely reflected in the analysis of pupils' work where pupils responded positively to teachers' high expectations, particularly in Years 1, 4 and 6, and achieved well. The teaching of English and mathematics is good. It enables pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills effectively. Teachers encourage pupils to apply their numeracy skills successfully in other subjects, for example, science and information and communication technology. This extends the use of their number skills and knowledge and raises standards in mathematics. Some teachers do not give pupils the chance to extend their literacy skills as consistently in a good range of other subjects. This means that pupils are not always able to improve their skills and limits the effectiveness of the school's literacy strategy; for example, in writing.

13. Teachers have very good relationships with their classes. They work closely with good quality support staff and know and manage most pupils very well. This helps all pupils to be included fully in the learning activities and to focus attentively on achieving the lesson objective. For example, in a very good numeracy lesson in Year 6, the teacher and learning support assistant worked together very effectively to maintain very good control and to provide high quality support to individual pupils in extending their knowledge and use of decimal numbers. Teachers use good, interesting teaching methods to gain pupils' interest and attention. They encourage a positive, enthusiastic approach and pupils are keen to succeed. For example, in a good infants' science lesson, the teacher challenged pupils to use toy cars and different ramps to test how the friction of different surfaces affects the distance travelled. The pupils were very keen to try out their ideas and test if their guesses were correct. The teacher and her learning support assistants used follow-up prompts and questions, such as 'Why do you think that this car will?' and 'How will that bumpy surface affect the car?' to encourage pupils to extend their thinking. The teacher challenged the more-able pupils successfully by requiring them to write down 'why' they had guessed a particular ramp would allow the car to travel furthest, while other pupils used one word or ticked from a list.
14. Where teachers have good subject knowledge, they use it successfully to raise standards. For example, in a very good information and communication technology lesson for Years 5 and 6, the teacher and learning support assistant had good knowledge of a program on scales and plans. They encouraged all pupils to be quickly involved and used their good knowledge of the program to provide intervention of a high quality to challenge and extend pupils' skills and knowledge. The teacher maintained a brisk and purposeful pace to the lesson. Pupils knew what they were expected to achieve in the time and worked very hard to meet the lesson objective. Their enjoyment of the work led to high motivation and sustained interest and concentration. However, where teachers have weaknesses in their subject knowledge there is a lack of challenge and pupils do not achieve well in lessons. For example, in an unsatisfactory Years 5 and 6 music lesson, weak subject knowledge meant the teacher was unable to provide suitable support to those pupils who were unsure how to write down an instrumental accompaniment to a Victorian ballad. This led to some pupils becoming uninterested and not contributing to the group's efforts. Pupils did not make satisfactory progress in developing their musical skills and knowledge.
15. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils' work, attitudes and behaviour and pupils respond very well. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 4, the teacher had high expectations of all pupils in a very large class. Relationships and pupils' behaviour were very good. All pupils were keen to work hard and improve their number work. The teacher managed the class very successfully. She ensured that a very good pace was maintained and that pupils moved smoothly from one part of the lesson to the next. Pupils were fully aware that they were expected to work hard. The teacher and the support staff moved around the class very effectively to ensure that pupils received extra support if they needed it. This resulted in very good learning. Occasionally, inconsistencies in teachers' expectations result in pupils not sustaining their concentration and very limited progress being made in the lesson. For example, in a poor mathematics lesson for Year 2, the teacher did not make her expectations of pupils' behaviour clear. She did not use the strategies for behaviour management consistently to ensure that

pupils were focused enough on their work. The teacher used worksheets that did not require pupils to work carefully to apply their knowledge. This meant that very little learning took place.

16. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. It is good in both the nursery and reception classes. Teachers provide a good range of learning experiences for children to meet the early learning goals in all areas of learning. Teachers work well as a team with learning support assistants and the nursery nurse. Relationships are very good and adults are good role models for the children. This helps children to settle into school routines and they are happy and confident. Adults are very aware that children enter the school with below average attainment in speaking and listening. They take every opportunity to promote speaking and listening skills. For example, children are encouraged to use the role play area to act out stories together. Adults teach children to use the appropriate vocabulary for all of the activities. They use the outside area well to play games. These involve mathematical language, such as asking children to jump forwards or backwards onto different coloured circles painted on the playground. Good

teaching enables most children to achieve their goals in most areas of learning, although weaknesses in language limit children's achievement in communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world.

17. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. They are very well supported and staff make good provision for them in lessons. The learning support assistants make a very effective contribution to their learning, in lessons, in small groups and individually. Staff understand pupils' needs well and adapt work appropriately for them. The overall quality of teaching and support for pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory. Teachers assess pupils suitably for their English language needs, and the school allocates specialised support in blocks of time to each class or year group. Support during literacy sessions is allocated to some classes. While a few more able pupils pick up sufficient English to participate effectively, for many average and below average pupils, the current rate of progress is inconsistent. Class teachers support most pupils on different stages of English language development soundly within class activities. However, teachers are not sufficiently guided by current national guidance and some do not specifically plan with these pupils in mind. Some teachers are not fully aware of the full range of language needs of the identified pupils. The school does not have a good enough range of interesting and appropriate resources for young learners that teachers can use. However, they provide good general help and pupils' responses are suitably supported and extended. The time spent in classes by teachers for pupils with English as an additional language is often used to give more specific, good quality and well-planned support to targeted individuals. However, the teacher does not have specific plans for the targeted pupils. The quality of teaching as judged in lessons where more focused support was given was good.
18. The teaching of pupils from ethnic minorities is sound overall. It is good when teachers supported through the Ethnic Minorities Attainment Grant work closely with the class teachers. They form an effective partnership and plan together successfully to ensure that they match activities closely to the different learning needs. This was clearly evident in a very good science lesson in Year 4 when the African Caribbean support teacher prepared an investigation for her group of pupils that matched closely that organised for the rest of the class. This enabled these pupils to make very good progress in developing their scientific knowledge and understanding. However, this level of support is limited and class teachers do not always ensure that learning activities consistently match these pupils' needs in some other subjects, for example, religious education and history. Teachers of English as an additional language and those supported through the Ethnic Minorities Attainment Grant keep good records of pupils' progress. They communicate effectively with class teachers and use attainment information to track pupils' progress and set targets for improvement.
19. Teachers make good use of recently improved resources to improve pupils' skills in information and communication technology lessons, although they do not provide enough opportunities to apply these skills in other subjects. Teachers give homework regularly, particularly in Years 3 to 6. They use worksheets, especially in English and mathematics, to reinforce and extend previous

learning. Some teachers expect pupils to look for information, for example, in science, and some Year 6 pupils indicated that they enjoyed homework opportunities. The analysis of pupils' work confirmed the views of most parents that teachers use homework effectively to promote learning. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and some use constructive comments of good quality to show pupils how they can improve the standard of their work. Some teachers indicate how pupils progress towards their learning targets in literacy and numeracy, although this was not evident consistently in all classes. Teachers plan lessons in detail and indicate clear objectives to provide a good focus to learning. They use assessment notes in English and mathematics consistently to guide their planning for future lessons. They do not use assessment information consistently in some other subjects to ensure that they build pupils' knowledge and skills on prior learning; for example, science and history. Although teaching in lessons in these subjects was often good, this does not always help pupils to make good progress overall in their learning.

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

20. The broad curriculum meets statutory requirements for all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. All subjects have an appropriate allocation of time. The main weaknesses in provision are that there are not enough well planned opportunities for speaking and writing throughout the school day, and the topic approach does not ensure that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding build consistently from class to class, for example, in science, history and geography. The school has already identified, in its improvement plan, this weakness in the science curriculum and the need to extend assessment procedures. The school makes very good use of available resources from within and outside the school to enrich the curriculum. The programme of personal, social and health education provides effectively for pupils' development, and includes sex education and an awareness of the misuse of drugs. It also gives pupils a clear understanding of how to be good citizens. The involvement of the local health authority and the police in these programmes ensures that pupils are made aware of health and safety issues, and that they are given accurate facts as part of their preparation for adult life; for example, through the 'Crucial Crew' initiative. The school has appropriate plans in place to further strengthen this provision.
21. The school has forged constructive relationships with the local community and other educational institutions. The design and technology curriculum, for example, is enhanced through the school's involvement in the Setpoint scheme. Visiting coaches from the local rugby and lacrosse clubs, as well as visits to dance performances at the local college and secondary schools, enhance the physical education programme. Visits by poets, a local sculptor, African workshops, the local vicar, and students from local colleges and secondary schools are used well to enrich the curriculum with particular skills.
22. Curriculum planning is satisfactory and weaknesses noted in the last inspection have been successfully addressed. Policies and schemes of work in all subjects guide planning and provide continuity in the learning of pupils of different abilities. Staff make good use of national schemes of work to help them to plan the curriculum. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are now well established, and teachers make good use of them. Basic skills in numeracy are well taught and are well developed across a range of subjects. Although literacy skills are taught well in English lessons, they are not yet well enough developed in other subjects. Provision for information and communication technology has improved greatly because of the training teachers have received and because of the development of the mobile suite allowing pupils to learn and apply basic skills. Although these skills are used increasingly to support learning, for example, in mathematics, the school recognises the need to give pupils opportunities to apply these skills in a broader range of subjects. The programme for religious education is based appropriately on the locally agreed syllabus, although pupils do not always get enough opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding to expected levels.
23. The school offers its pupils a very good range of extra-curricular and other learning opportunities. Such activities as technology, French, art, football, netball, drama, music, information and communication technology and recorders enrich the curriculum and provide pupils with opportunities to develop their talents and interests. For example, the 'Players' Club' play regularly in assemblies. Pupils appreciate the efforts of teachers and other staff who give freely of their time at lunchtimes and after school. A very good range of visits to places of educational interest, residential trips for older pupils, sporting competitions and public performances further support the curriculum and pupils' personal development. A homework policy is in place, clearly setting out a programme to support the curriculum. Most parents report that they are happy with the amount and quality of homework set to support pupils' independent learning and to consolidate what they have been taught in lessons.
24. There is a strong commitment to educational inclusion. All pupils are afforded full and equal access to the curriculum. The school successfully meets the needs of pupils with special educational and physical needs by providing well trained support. Most teachers use this high

quality support well in ensuring that all pupils are fully included in lessons. The individual education plans and statements of special educational needs are carefully drawn up and accurately identify new targets for pupils' development. The school has recently set up a register of gifted and talented pupils and has plans to use links already established with secondary schools to provide for their specific needs. The school has introduced setting arrangements in English, mathematics and science in Years 5 and 6 to provide for the particular needs of pupils of different abilities. Good opportunities are provided for pupils with English as an additional language to participate in all curriculum activities. The planned activities, the quality of support and interventions by teachers ensure these pupils are included. However, the limited support available for many of them means that they are not always effectively prepared to extend their learning. Support teachers carefully analyse the language demands of the curriculum for targeted pupils, and some support is also given in other subjects, particularly in developing the new subject-related vocabulary.

25. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development and very good provision for moral and social development. In assemblies, pupils are given opportunities to reflect on their experiences. In their personal, social and health education lessons, pupils are encouraged to discuss issues of concern to them and of importance to the school community. Staff make good use of the very attractive school grounds to develop pupils' understanding of the wonders of the natural world.
26. The very good provision for pupils' moral and social development generally results in very good behaviour in lessons and around the school. Pupils know right from wrong. They show respect for, and take care of, their property and school resources. The school council gives pupils opportunities to discuss rights and responsibilities. The elected pupils take their roles very seriously and represent their classmates well. The school council played a major part in formulating the school's 'Golden Rules' and in choosing new playground equipment. School rules are displayed in classrooms and in communal areas of the school. Pupils know what is expected of them and work hard to earn rewards and 'Golden Time'. Teachers provide pupils with many opportunities to work together in pairs and small groups. Pupils work and play well together. Pupils are involved in raising money for a variety of charities. They are keen to be involved in clubs, team sports and in residential trips. These contribute well to their social development.
27. Provision for pupils' cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Art and design and literacy make a good contribution to pupils' cultural understanding. Pupils enjoy working with different authors, such as a Caribbean poet, and visiting artists. For example, Year 2 pupils worked with a sculptor to make a totem pole, which now stands outside the school. Opportunities to appreciate the multi-cultural nature of British society have been much improved since the last inspection, although religious education is not used consistently to promote pupils' knowledge of different faiths. Staff development next term is to focus on promoting African-Caribbean culture. The school regularly borrows artefacts from the local authority's Multi-ethnic and Cultural Centre to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

28. Procedures for ensuring the care and welfare of pupils and child protection are good. The school has organised staff training in child protection awareness, and in the relevant procedures to be followed should suspicions be aroused. A detailed policy document has been issued which provides information about the arrangements, and the respective responsibilities of the parties involved.
29. Health and safety procedures are good and comply fully with statutory requirements. All members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of their responsibilities and organisational arrangements, although some do not consistently apply them, for example, allowing pupils to participate in dance lessons in stockinged feet. Governors provide very effective co-ordination by conducting periodic health and safety audits and by regularly monitoring procedures and practices. A wide range of risk assessments has been carried out. They are of

- very high quality, particularly those associated with external visits. Arrangements for accident reporting and fire prevention and control are good. The level of health and safety awareness shown by teachers and classroom assistants is high; for example, teachers insist that hands are thoroughly washed prior to food being handled. The school provides a safe and healthy environment for adults and pupils alike.
30. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development are good. The very good relationships between pupils and staff provide a secure basis on which guidance can take place. Teachers and classroom assistants are sensitive to the academic and personal needs of pupils. They provide very good care for pupils with special educational needs, particularly for those pupils with statements. Learning support assistants regularly have training opportunities and have good understanding of the needs of pupils with whom they work. Individual education plans are well used and staff make good use of assessments to guide pupils' progress.
 31. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory. Unexplained absence is followed up and the school actively discourages parents from taking pupils out of school during term time for holidays. However, there is insufficient monitoring of attendance data and documentation. The procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour are good. The school has recently introduced some measures that are already making a significant difference. Celebration assemblies, 'Golden Time', and the use of achievement trees provide very strong inducements to good behaviour. These strategies are very effectively supported by a careful structure of sanctions involving yellow and red cards and appropriate withdrawal of privileges. These are used consistently by staff, including midday supervisory assistants.
 32. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very effective and make a significant contribution to the virtual absence of bullying and racial and sexual harassment. A clear statement of policy contains distinct guidelines as to how staff should prevent and respond to incidents of bullying and racial harassment. This policy is fully understood and implemented by both teaching and non-teaching staff. Pupils are aware of the appropriate action to be taken should they become a victim of oppressive behaviour.
 33. In the previous inspection report, the procedures to assess pupils' learning were a key area for improvement. The school has made good progress in developing and implementing whole-school assessment procedures. There are clear procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The school uses an increasing range of assessment information to track the progress made by pupils in English and mathematics. The results of various tests, including an assessment when children start school and pupils' attainment in national tests, are analysed carefully to measure the performance of different groups and individuals. Teachers identify what progress each pupil has made and use this information to set specific targets for future improvements. This system also identifies pupils to be targeted for extra help; for example, those with potential to achieve better levels of attainment. Whilst the school has a satisfactory range of assessment information available in English and mathematics, assessment in other subjects is not developed enough. The assessment information in English and mathematics is used consistently to inform both teachers' planning and pupils' progress. Teachers have a very clear and common understanding of pupils' achievements and are effectively guided in their curricular planning to match all levels of abilities in these subjects. This is not so, however, in science, where lack of adequate assessment leads to some pupils not achieving as well as they might.
 34. The complete revision of the school's assessment procedures and the increasingly effective use being made of assessment information have been notable features of recent improvement in the school. The assessment co-ordinator plans to build on the existing good practice and extend it to include assessment procedures in all other subjects.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

35. Parents believe this to be a good school. They consider it to be well managed, the teaching to be good, and the school to have high expectations of work and behaviour. Staff are considered to be

approachable, and the school is believed to offer a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The inspection evidence supports the vast majority of these opinions, though there are a few times when teachers' expectations are not high enough.

36. The school has forged good links with parents which are based on informal contact at the start and end of the school day. A particular feature of the school is the daily throng of parents found in the classroom first thing in the morning and at the end of the afternoon. Class teachers make themselves readily accessible to provide information and advice to parents should it be required. The school is increasingly effective in involving parents in their children's learning. A particular example is the successful Family Learning Initiative that has been established recently. This involves parents of children in the Foundation Stage coming into school to explore with teachers different learning opportunities which can be used at home. Parents of pupils with special educational needs attend reviews and are kept well informed of their children's progress. Some pupils have home-school contact books, which staff and parents use effectively to share information. Parents are given copies of their children's individual education plans and are kept well informed of their progress
37. The impact of parental involvement on the work of the school is good. Practical assistance is given in the classroom, particularly in the infants, and with school visits. Artefacts are frequently provided by parents, which make a positive contribution to the quality of learning. The Highover School Association is extremely active, raising considerable funds for the benefit of the school. Money raised is carefully targeted to maximise its impact. Recent priorities have been computers, an infant library and classroom furniture. The Association also provides a valuable social forum in which parents and teachers meet on an informal basis.
38. The quality of information provided to parents is good and regular parents' evenings are held. Very well attended curricular information meetings have been held for Foundation Stage parents and for literacy. Parents receive information about school activities in general, and their own children's involvement in particular, by attendance at the many open assemblies. Fortnightly newsletters provide relevant information about recent, current, and future activities. The prospectus is informative and attractively presented. The governors' annual report to parents provides a good summary of activities and achievements at the school, and includes all the other information it is expected to contain. Parents receive an annual written report, which summarises progress during the academic year. These are reader-friendly and provide detailed information, particularly about literacy and numeracy. However, some reports in science and other subjects are too generalised and not specifically related to individual pupils.
39. Most parents make a good contribution to their children's learning, both at school and at home. Assistance is given with reading, numeracy and various project activities often linked to retrieving information from books and the Internet. To assist parents, the school provides a wide range of explanatory booklets covering yearly targets, curricular plans and practical advice on how pupils' learning can be supported at home. Many of these booklets have been produced in several languages in order to ensure that all pupils are included. The school looks actively for other ways in which to gain the support of parents of pupils for whom English is an additional language. It arranges translators and translations when needed. The school-parent partnership is consolidated effectively through the use of home-school agreements which outline the respective responsibilities of both parties.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

40. The current leadership and the management of the school are very good overall. They have improved since the last inspection, particularly in the last 12 months. The new headteacher provides excellent leadership focused increasingly effectively on raising standards. Many parents expressed their appreciation of the improvements made in the leadership, some commenting that there had been 'a dramatic transformation' within the last 12 months. Since taking up her appointment in January 2002, she has established a very successful partnership with a supportive and influential deputy and an active and very effective governing body. They have built

successfully on the improvements made by the temporary acting headteacher, especially those relating to behaviour management. They have quickly established a very good knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher has encouraged a very good team approach. Staff and governors discussed and agreed the aims and values of the school. These are known and shared by everyone, have given a clear and good sense of purpose and direction to the school's work, and are reflected in all aspects of school life. Staff, at all levels, commented on the strong, positive direction for the school, which reflects an excellent capacity to succeed. This was confirmed last April when the school was successfully re-assessed for Investors in People status.

41. The senior management team gave a strong lead to establishing more effective behaviour management strategies. This has improved pupils' behaviour and given a more consistent and constructive approach to handling the small number of incidents of disruptive behaviour. They have resulted in good, positive attitudes to learning in most classes, which, promoted by good teaching, are enabling pupils to achieve well. They are aware of the need to continue supporting and improving the behaviour management skills of individual teachers. Subject management is very good in literacy and numeracy. The headteacher and her deputy gave high priority to these key subjects. The literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have given strong leads in promoting teaching and learning and targeting areas for improvement. The school has developed good procedures for monitoring and evaluating standards of teaching and learning, especially in literacy and numeracy. The senior management team has used these successfully to evaluate the impact of teaching, particularly of staff new to the school, on standards in English and mathematics. The procedures are less well developed in science and some other subjects and have yet to promote higher standards. The school's good improvement plan identifies clearly when these other subjects are to be given priority.
42. The senior management team has successfully extended the roles and contributions of subject co-ordinators. They have, with some help and support from the local education authority, enabled some subject co-ordinators, especially those for literacy and numeracy, to observe lessons and focus on pupils' learning. Subject co-ordinators monitor teaching plans. Some evaluate standards by looking at samples of pupils' work, although this has not always focused rigorously on improvement in some subjects, for example, history. Co-ordinators have benefited from support from senior staff and from subject consultants and have drawn up subject action plans to target improvement and inform the school improvement plan. Some subject co-ordinators evaluate the impact of action plans on standards of attainment, although this is not consistently done in each subject. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher have established more rigorous assessment procedures. They use the information well to track pupils' progress, especially in English and mathematics, and to inform pupil groups to target different support strategies. The assessment information is being used with increasing effectiveness by the headteacher to link to performance management and annual reviews. The headteacher uses this information to track pupils' progress and to set annual attainment targets for each class. The school is using assessment information to monitor and target the progress of pupils from ethnic minorities. These procedures are providing a clearer focus for teaching and learning, for example, in mathematics.
43. The governing body is very effective in working with the headteacher and her staff to shape the direction of the work of the school. It is very supportive and provides constructive and influential advice to the senior management team. Governors have a very good range of experience and expertise, which they use to promote school improvement. They plan strategically very well, ensuring that the school is prepared for financial and educational changes should the number of pupils go up or down. Governors work closely with staff; for example, they discuss and agree the priorities for the school improvement plan and link them closely to school funds. Through regular visits and feedback from the headteacher and subject co-ordinators, they have a good knowledge and understanding of how well the school is getting on with implementing its priorities, for example, in science. Governors fulfil their statutory duties efficiently and responsibly and are increasingly focused on school improvement.

44. The co-ordinator for special educational needs works very effectively. She is very well supported by the responsible governor. The co-ordinator is given one day each week to complete administrative duties and provide additional support for specific pupils. She gives very effective support to colleagues on writing individual education plans and regularly discusses pupils' needs with class teachers. She has very good links with other agencies that support children in the school, such as the speech and language service and the advisory teacher for autistic pupils. She liaises well with learning support staff who find her very approachable and greatly value her support. Governors are very supportive of the school's work with special educational needs pupils. They supplement the school's designated funding from the school's budget to ensure that pupils receive as much support as possible.
45. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language and those supported through the Ethnic Minorities Attainment Grant is managed soundly overall. Pupils make good progress where well-planned, targeted support is given. Pupils' language needs are identified effectively but not always tackled consistently and explicitly, largely owing to a lack of specialised support. This is currently very thinly spread across the school. Two part-time teachers and two bilingual assistants work in partnership effectively with the teachers in the classrooms. They support a large number of pupils - 15 per cent of the school's roll - on the early stages of English language acquisition. Pupils who have moved to higher stages of English language acquisition also require continuous support to achieve appropriate levels in all aspects of English. However, this is not always available, which affects pupils' progress in lessons and over their time in school.
46. The school has established very good procedures to ensure that finances are monitored closely and targeted efficiently on improvement priorities. This was confirmed by the school's very recent audit. Governors have very good financial knowledge and understanding and use them very effectively to apply the principles of best value and ensure cost-effectiveness. This was clearly illustrated in the recent purchase of the mobile suite of lap-top computers for information and communication technology. Governors used their experience and knowledge to carry out a needs analysis, identify possible suppliers and draw up an agreed contract. They checked on the cost-effectiveness of their spending decisions on the standards being attained, for example, through governors' visits, the headteacher's reports and feedback from subject co-ordinators. They plan carefully for the school's future development, for example, by considering financial options based on different class sizes. The school makes very good use of specific grants, such as the Standards Fund, and the headteacher evaluates their impact on standards of attainment. The governors and the headteacher benefit from the very efficient financial management of the school secretary, who provides detailed, up-to-date and comprehensive financial information. She makes a significant contribution to the smooth administration of the school.
47. The match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum is good and provides an effective blend of experience and qualifications. The clearly planned and effective implementation of staff training ensures that most gain appropriate expertise to fulfil their professional duties, although some teachers have weaknesses in their knowledge of some subjects, for example, physical education. The school makes very good use of its performance management strategy so that further professional development of staff contributes well to school improvement.
48. The quality of accommodation is very good. The school is large, well planned in layout, and attractively decorated. Teachers make good use of displays of pupils' work to provide attractive work areas. The school benefits significantly from the very large and adjacent playing fields, which are effectively utilised for both curriculum and non-curriculum activities.
49. The adequacy of learning resources is satisfactory. Resources for information and communication technology and literacy are good and are being used successfully to improve pupils' skills. Resources are satisfactory in other subjects, although some subjects, for example, religious education, do not enhance resources by using visits and visitors regularly to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Although sufficiently stocked with books, there is little evidence of the library being used effectively to develop reading skills. The resources for pupils with English as an additional language, such as story props and tapes in different languages, are insufficient. Although the school borrows resources regularly from the Multi-Ethnic and

Curriculum Service, the limited range of resources restricts the development of the English language skills, especially for those pupils who are beginning to improve their fluency and word use.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

50. To continue to raise standards, the headteacher, staff and governors should;
- (1) Improve standards in science by the end of Year 2 by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of pupils' work and behaviour to a consistently high level;
 - ensuring that planning allows for the systematic acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills;
 - ensuring teachers make better use of assessment information to build pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding consistently.
(paragraphs 2, 5, 33, 75, 76 and 78)

 - (2) Raise pupils' attainment in:
 - information and communication technology by requiring them to apply their skills regularly in a broad range of subjects;
 - religious education by improving pupils' knowledge and understanding of religion and how it influences their own and others' lives;
 - history by increasing the range of learning opportunities to challenge pupils to extend their skills, knowledge and understanding, teaching more subject-specific vocabulary and providing more opportunities for extended writing;
 - music by improving teachers' subject knowledge to a consistently high level.
(paragraphs 14, 19, 20, 22, 33, 92, 94, 97, 103, 111, 114 and 116)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	61
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	38

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	1	19	18	19	3	1	0
Percentage	2	31	30	31	5	2	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	13	260
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	45

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	74

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	27

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	19	15	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	15
	Girls	12	14	15
	Total	27	29	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (84)	85 (92)	88(95)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	16
	Girls	13	15	14
	Total	28	31	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (89)	91 (95)	88 (95)
	National	85(85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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
	2002	23	18	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	16	18
	Girls	15	16	15
	Total	31	32	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (81)	78 (79)	80 (95)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	16	14
	Girls	14	15	11
	Total	27	31	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (98)	76 (93)	61 (93)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
138	1	0
0	0	0
6	0	0
10	0	0
1	0	0
3	0	0
11	0	0
20	0	0
6	0	0
2	0	0
5	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
5	0	0
10	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.2
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	28
Total aggregate hours worked per week	558

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	82.5

Financial information

Financial year	2001 / 02
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	£
Total income	648880
Total expenditure	667857
Expenditure per pupil	2469
Balance brought forward from previous year	35947
Balance carried forward to next year	16970

Number of pupils per FTE adult	6.5
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	10
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	12

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	273
Number of questionnaires returned	114

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	40	5	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	46	48	4	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	55	8	4	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	41	13	5	4
The teaching is good.	53	41	4	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	51	16	4	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	25	8	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	43	2	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	28	52	15	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	44	47	5	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	42	7	2	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	45	9	1	4

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

51. Children attend the nursery on a part-time basis. At the time of the inspection there were two reception classes. In one class, children have been in school since September. In the second class, the children started school in January. The school has an attractive area that is organised well to provide a good range of learning activities. The outdoor area has been improved recently and further development is planned. Staff plan different activities for this area each day. Wheeled toys are available on some days and on other occasions there are writing and counting opportunities. There is no fixed climbing apparatus but children have opportunities to develop their climbing and balancing skills through using apparatus in the school hall.
52. There is a good team approach, with all staff contributing to the effective organisation of the learning activities. Teachers regularly record observations of children and track their progress through different activities. However, some of these observations describe what children do rather than evaluating their progress. These records are not developed enough to assess children's attainment consistently, particularly when there are larger numbers of children present in the nursery and reception classes. Good teaching in all areas enables all children, including those from ethnic minorities, to make at least sound, and often good, progress, in all areas of learning. They settle quickly and are likely to achieve the early learning goals in most areas of learning. However, their below average attainment in language on entry to the school indicates that many of the children are unlikely to attain their goals in communication, language and literacy, and knowledge and understanding of the world by the time they start in Year 1.

Personal, social and emotional development

53. Children make good progress in this area of learning. The school's assessments on entry show that the present group of children joined the school with personal and social skills that were below average. Staff provide good opportunities for children to work and play together in different situations. In lessons children play well together. They are developing good levels of concentration and stay with their chosen activities for a reasonable length of time. Children are happy and settled in the nursery and reception classes. They form good relationships with each other. Several of them enjoyed re-enacting the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' in the role-play area and using the puppet theatre. At snack time, children carefully offer the fruit to one another and say thank you when accepting it.

Communication, language and literacy

54. When children start in the nursery their language skills are below expected levels; for example, several children have already been identified as being in need of speech and language therapy. When given a free choice of activities, children often choose activities that do not involve talking to others. Staff do not always track this with enough care to ensure that children benefit from the opportunities provided. When playing outside with construction blocks, the nursery nurse encouraged children to use mathematical language by asking them which of the towers they built was taller, and how many more blocks they needed to make a tower taller than themselves. Children enjoy signing their names on a chart to show which activities they have chosen. They like writing cards and letters to each other. Few children in the nursery are writing recognisable words other than their names. They write strings of letters and some are beginning to leave spaces to form words. A small number of children recognise some letters and associate these with the correct sound. Most know the initial letter of their name and its sound. Children in the reception classes are beginning to write independently. In nursery and reception classes children enjoy books. They know that print conveys meaning and that in English they read from left to right. They join enthusiastically in repeated parts of stories. When a group of children used the puppet theatre to tell the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk', one child confidently acted as the

narrator using the pictures to tell the story. They are beginning to sequence parts of the story in the right order.

Mathematical development

55. Children in the nursery count confidently to five and a small number count confidently beyond this. In the reception classes, children match objects to numerals as they count but more-able children in the nursery do not do this. Reception children recognise numbers out of sequence and put them into the correct order. Teachers use registration sessions well to talk about the days of the week and how many children are present in the class. Children enjoy singing number rhymes and games. Staff provide good opportunities to develop children's mathematical language and they make good progress. They ask them to jump backwards and forwards on to different coloured circles and children respond well. They talk about who will be first, second or third in a line. Older children in a reception class say which number is one more or less than a given number. They compare objects to say that one is heavier or lighter than another. Children recognise simple regular shapes such as squares, circles and triangles.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

56. When they start in the nursery, most children have below average knowledge and understanding in this area of learning. They enjoy the story of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' and know that caterpillars form cocoons and eventually become butterflies. They are interested in how and why things work. They enjoy using computers and confidently use the mouse to move objects on the screen. They use tape recorders well to listen to favourite stories. Children are interested in things that happen to themselves and their families. They talk about how they have changed since they were babies. However, the below average language skills of many children hold back their development in this area of learning and few are likely to achieve their early learning goals.

Physical development

57. Children make good progress in this area of learning. They enjoy using the newly developed outdoor area to play with wheeled toys. Several of these toys need two children to move them and this contributes to developing children's social skills. Children balance confidently on beams and jump in and out of tyres. The outdoor area is still being developed and as yet does not have any climbing apparatus. Children use the hall for physical development activities. They move round the hall confidently, showing good awareness of other children. Their movements are agile. When changing for these lessons, most children manage their clothes well and only need help with collar and cuff buttons. In the classroom, children use pencils, brushes and other small tools with increasing skill, though some have difficulty in using scissors. The school has special scissors for use by left handed children and these children are well supported in their physical development. Children enjoy using construction materials to make models.

Creative development

58. Children benefit from a good range of creative activities and make good progress. They clearly enjoy painting and using different materials to make pictures and patterns. They use construction materials to make models and confidently explain their work. In the nursery, children paint and make models to illustrate the 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' story. Children play well together in the role-play area and enjoy taking the role of the giant in 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. They particularly enjoy wearing the giant's very large boots. Children enjoy playing with musical instruments and listening to songs on tape.

ENGLISH

59. Pupils attain standards that are in line with those expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. These largely reflect the national test results in 2002. Since the time of the last inspection,

standards for pupils in Year 6 have been maintained at an average level. Standards are below the above average level reported for pupils in Year 2, although there is a higher than usual number of pupils with special educational needs currently in the year group. Pupils' rate of learning is good overall. They make especially good gains in Year 6. This is because the recent focus on improvements to teaching and learning is promoting pupils' achievements. Although girls have achieved better than boys in recent national tests, inspectors found no significant difference in their attainment. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve appropriate levels as a result of focused support, based on carefully identified needs.

60. Many pupils start school with below average language skills. They often make good progress in extending their vocabulary and using more complex sentences. However, their limited vocabulary means their responses to questions are short and they are not always able to explain their reasons adequately. Most pupils are attentive in class and respond to teachers' good questioning. A good example was noted in a lesson in Year 1 where the teacher skilfully used a specific activity to improve pupils' ability to ask and answer questions. Pupils' speaking and listening skills improve as they move from year to year, particularly when teachers provide good role models and encouragement for pupils to report back verbally on topics they have investigated. Their speaking skills are supported better in Year 6, with some good opportunities in drama. Although they show improved confidence, they are not yet articulate in explaining what they mean or in making the connection between ideas. Pupils discuss their work in pairs or in small groups, and the few more able pupils express their ideas clearly and confidently. Those pupils in the early stages of learning English are given good support and make good progress. The progress of those pupils who are beginning to extend their English language skills is satisfactory overall, although occasionally limited by the availability of suitable resources. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and use praise effectively to encourage the reluctant speakers to participate actively in class discussions. Pupils listen well to the teachers' advice and some demonstrate growing confidence to share opinions and ideas about stories and poems. Standards in speaking and listening broadly meet expected levels by the end of Year 6.
61. Pupils progress well across the school to attain average standards in reading by Year 6. There are many confident and fluent readers in Year 6. Where teachers skilfully organise guided reading sessions, pupils enjoy reading and achieve well. They show a growing understanding of what they have read and are fast developing a range of strategies to work out words they find difficult. This was noted in a lesson in Year 2, where pupils used their knowledge of sounds well to read independently words such as 'eventually' and 'successful'. Detailed records kept by most teachers include clear and relevant information about pupils' strengths and weaknesses. These are used effectively to improve standards in reading. The match of reading books to pupils' levels of ability is mostly accurate, and this supports their progress. Reading diaries involve parents well.
62. Most pupils have favourite authors and enjoy talking about the books they have read. While lower-attaining pupils still interpret words literally, most pupils of average ability show a growing understanding of more complex language. Most pupils find it difficult to identify underlying meanings or appreciate the subtleties of humour. They explain the difference between fiction and non-fiction and how 'Contents' and 'Index' point the way to specific information, but they rarely study non-fiction texts. Pupils' ability to read quickly for information and make meaningful notes is limited. They make insufficient use of reading skills to search for information in subjects such as history, geography and religious education. The school library has fiction and non-fiction books of a satisfactory range and quality. Pupils regularly borrow books to read at home, but the library is currently not used enough for research purposes. Pupils' skills for accessing information from CD-ROMs and from the Internet to extend their reading are improving.
63. Standards in writing are average. From a low starting point in Year 1, pupils achieve well and, in their independent writing, make suitable attempts of their own to spell words. Most pupils try hard to present their work neatly but some have not developed a consistent handwriting style. Some pupils write sustained stories with good attention to characterisation and plot. By the time they are in Year 6, most pupils have a satisfactory grasp of grammar and punctuation, and a

growing awareness of any careless errors in their work. Pupils write for a range of purposes including narrative, description, letters and instruction. Competence in spelling and punctuation is developing steadily. Pupils are aware of features of good poetry. For example, one pupil wrote, 'Night begins its darkness race, 'til day regains its rightful place.' By Year 6, pupils are introduced to the main features of specific styles of writing, for example, play-scripts and report writing. Most pupils write neatly and develop their own personal style, but many do not consistently use joined-up script or present work neatly. Although a few are still striving to express themselves clearly in writing, most pupils are beginning to write fluently. However, opportunities to produce extended writing across other areas of the curriculum are limited, for example, when reading and writing about past events in history, or explaining and recording a scientific investigation. Pupils' use of computers to draft out and word-process their work is not developed fully.

64. The teaching of English is good overall. Some very good teaching was seen in Year 6. The more experienced teachers have a secure understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and implement it well. The provision of good professional development and the consistent monitoring of teaching enable newly appointed teachers to teach literacy more effectively. In their planning most teachers show appropriate regard to the targets identified for pupils with specific learning difficulties, as well as those in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Teachers always allow time to reflect on pupils' previous learning and provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to repeat and consolidate new learning. Pupils show obvious enjoyment and enthusiasm in lessons, which are well structured and engaging. Most teachers are very encouraging and use praise positively so that pupils respond well and try hard in lessons. They make sure that pupils know what they are expected to learn. The management of pupils' behaviour is very good in most lessons. Teachers' marking is regular and encouraging. The comments help pupils focus on mistakes and improve the quality of writing.
65. The management of the subject is good. The literacy co-ordinator is very thorough in her work. She is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and there is effective forward planning to focus on improvement. The procedures for assessing pupils' progress are good, and the results of all tests are effectively analysed in order to set individual targets. Useful additions have been made to resources in classes to support the implementation of the literacy strategy. The monitoring of pupils' work is good and the school is well placed to secure further improvements in standards.

MATHEMATICS

66. Pupils attain nationally expected standards by the end of Year 2. This reflects a decline since the last inspection when pupils at the end of Year 2 attained good standards. Inspection evidence indicates that this decline in standards is due to a number of contributory factors. There is a higher number of pupils with special educational and behavioural needs in the current Year 2. These pupils find it difficult to discuss their work in mathematical language or to give reasons for their answers. An over-dependence on worksheets deprives pupils of opportunities to set out their work in an organised way. It does not allow teachers' marking to be effective in showing pupils how to improve. It does not give pupils a clear view of the progress they are making or identify ways to enable more able pupils to attain consistently above average levels. Teachers do not always manage the challenging behaviour of some pupils well enough in some Year 2 lessons. This disrupts not only their own learning, but also that of others in the class.
67. Pupils attain above average standards by the end of Year 6. They have improved since the last inspection. Recent improvements in the leadership of the school and the very good management of the subject have resulted in pupils achieving well. Some of these improvements have included consistency of teachers' planning, setting arrangements, the introduction of individual targets for pupils, and improved questioning, which challenges pupils to explain their thinking. These initiatives, together with a thorough analysis of test results to identify areas of weakness, have raised standards.

68. Teaching is good overall, especially in Years 3 to 6. It was good in most lessons for pupils in Years 1 and 2. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. Of the 10 lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning was excellent in one, very good in three, good in two and satisfactory in three. One poor infant lesson was seen where, because of weak behaviour management, learning was poor. Common features of most lessons are detailed planning, teachers' good knowledge of the subject, which allows them to teach the basic skills well, and the very good management of behaviour through positive relationships. As a result, pupils are interested in their work, behave very well and work hard. The calm learning environment and very good relationships established by most teachers effectively supports pupils' spiritual and social development. Where teachers' expectations of pupils' work and behaviour are not high enough, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
69. The pace of teaching is generally brisk because lessons are carefully structured so that pupils' interest is maintained. There is a very good balance between direct teaching and independent learning. For example, in a very good Year 4 lesson, pupils were using their knowledge successfully to solve practical problems. They had been motivated to learn by a brisk, challenging mental session, which moved smoothly into a brief but effective whole-class question and answer session. The teacher intervened quickly to pick up and correct misconceptions. The high quality teaching and support and challenge for pupils as they worked on individual or group tasks ensured that the very good pace of learning was maintained throughout the lesson. However, in some lessons, the pace of learning slowed when, after a stimulating mental session, the teacher spent too long explaining tasks rather than challenging pupils to try to apply their skills and knowledge. In these lessons, teachers did not allow enough time to rigorously teach and challenge at appropriate levels as pupils worked on group or individual tasks.
70. Impressive activity was seen throughout the school in number work and its application, which are central to National Curriculum and National Numeracy Strategy requirements. There is a strong emphasis in both infants and juniors on mental computation. Pupils benefit from regular practice at the start of lessons, and their understanding of mental strategies is well developed through the school. In most lessons, teachers ensure that all pupils are fully involved in the mental sessions and use the well trained support staff effectively to ensure the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. A measure of the school's success is the number of these pupils who attain national expectations by the end of Year 6. The quality of support also ensures that pupils with English as an additional language make the same progress as all other pupils of similar ability. The very good relationships that exist between all members of the school community give pupils of differing attainment the confidence to offer answers and to ask questions, knowing that they will be appreciated. Teachers use an effective range of resources, such as digit cards and white boards, to allow all pupils to answer, checking each response quickly. In these lessons, questions are carefully targeted to challenge all pupils at a level appropriate to their abilities. For example, in a good infant lesson, the teacher used an imaginative strategy to include all pupils through closely targeted questions. As a result, lower-attaining pupils might be adding numbers to six, while the more able were adding numbers to 50, and no learning time was lost. Girls have been attaining higher than boys in recent national tests. However, there was no evidence during the inspection of a difference in their attainment, although in some classes boys do not offer answers as readily as girls.
71. Pupils develop a good understanding of the number system and of place value. Most pupils in Year 2 are beginning to understand the place value of different digits and use this to add, subtract and multiply. In an excellent lesson in Year 1, pupils made good use of their basic knowledge to work out that $6+17=23$ by counting on 17 steps from 6 or by counting on 6 from 17. All pupils were fully included in learning through a highly interesting range of teaching methods. By the end of the lesson, they had gained a very good grasp of basic addition and related vocabulary, with more able pupils using larger numbers. Work in books shows that pupils in this class use advanced strategies, for example, when they add 9 and 12 by first adding 9 and 20 and taking away 8. The work indicates consistently good teaching.
72. By the end of Year 6, guided by high quality teaching, most pupils make good use of their understanding of place value to multiply and divide whole numbers and decimals by 10, 100 and

1000. They devise efficient strategies to quickly work out practical problems. Pupils calculate fractions and percentages of quantities accurately. In a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils were well challenged to apply their knowledge of decimals to solving problems such as 'Lucy's schoolbag weighed 5.75 kg. She removed a text book weighing 0.875 kg and her lunch box weighing 0.55 kg. What does her bag weigh now?' This is a very good example of how well teachers make links between using and applying mathematics and the other required aspects to ensure that all are understood to sufficient depth. Throughout the school there is a consistent approach to teaching pupils the correct mathematical vocabulary. By the end of Year 6, pupils show they understand situations by describing them mathematically with accurate use of symbols, words and diagrams. By the end of a good lesson in Year 3, pupils described subtraction as 'take away', 'difference', 'minus' and 'less than', because the correct terminology had been taught and used throughout the lesson. A special feature of the teaching of strategies for adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing is that formal methods are only introduced when pupils, through using a wide range of methods, have a good understanding of their purpose. 'Booster' lessons in Year 6 are effectively used to raise pupils' attainment. Teachers use the small number of pupils of similar abilities in each group to teach rigorously at an appropriate but challenging level.

73. All aspects of mathematics are taught well. Recent improvements in information and communication technology have provided pupils with opportunities to develop their data handling skills in meaningful ways across the curriculum. Most pupils, by the end of Year 6, collect separate data and use a frequency table to represent it, while more able pupils explain the conclusions demonstrated by graphs and diagrams including pie charts. Teachers also use other subjects such as science, design and technology and geography to support pupils' work in mathematics effectively.
74. Teachers throughout the school are well focused on what they want pupils to learn. Learning objectives are clear and precise and these are shared with pupils so that they focus on what they are to learn. Lessons end with a good feedback session, which gives pupils an understanding of what they have learnt. This also allows teachers to evaluate their lessons in the light of what pupils have or have not understood. Assessment information is very well used to plan work for different groups of pupils. Teachers regularly mark pupils' work. Most are successful in showing pupils how they can improve, either through positive feedback in lessons, or by written comments in their exercise books. Pupils are also asked to comment on their work identifying how they thought they had improved. Teachers make good use of homework to consolidate what pupils have learnt in class. There is a strong commitment to improvement and the school is well placed to succeed.

SCIENCE

75. Pupils attain standards at the end of Year 2 that are below the national average. They are below those reported at the last inspection. Pupils attain average standards by the end of Year 6. These are similar to those reported previously. Too few pupils attain above nationally expected levels. The current pupils in Year 2 are attaining standards that are similar to the below average levels shown in last year's teachers' assessments. Fewer pupils are attaining above average levels as the current year group has a higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Infant teachers do not have expectations that are consistently high enough. Some do not use assessment information effectively to build pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding onto prior learning. This means that infant pupils do not make sound progress in their learning. Junior pupils make good progress overall, promoted by good, and often very good, teaching, especially in Years 4 and 6. Pupils make good progress in lessons in developing and applying their skills of scientific enquiry. However, the school has not established rigorous assessment procedures to ensure that pupils build successfully on science topics taught earlier in the school's revised science curriculum, for example, on forces. Very effective partnership teaching allows pupils for whom English is an additional language to be fully included in practical investigations and to make good progress. Teachers work closely with learning support staff to provide good quality help for pupils with special educational needs. They are given effective help

and guidance, especially when carrying out difficult investigations, and make good progress in their learning. More able pupils, in some classes, are not always challenged to apply their knowledge and understanding to justify their predictions or to explain their results. This means that they do not always achieve the standards they could.

76. Most pupils in Year 2 show a sound knowledge and understanding of how humans change as they grow. They know the five senses and accurately identify which body part is linked to which sense. Many use a structured 'activity plan' to develop their skills of enquiry. For example, in their work on forces, they guess what will be the best way of moving a toy boat - using a small fan or blowing through a straw. In some classes, teachers require more able infant pupils to write their predictions and their results. Teachers encourage them to apply their literacy skills and to think carefully about how to present their results. However, this was not consistent in all classes. An analysis of pupils' work showed that some teachers did not expect pupils to extend their literacy and scientific skills, and too little work was achieved. Too often pupils completed a very brief answer on a prescribed worksheet. There was a limited amount of science work covered in the current topic approach. In the lessons observed in infant classes, teachers used an interesting practical investigation into friction, involving ramps and toy cars, to grab pupils' interest. Pupils were very enthusiastic to carry out their investigation and in some classes, good teaching enabled pupils to extend their knowledge of how to carry out a fair test. For example, pupils in Year 1 realised, with some prompting by the teacher, that the different ramps had to be level with each other before releasing the cars. However, inconsistencies in class management and some uncertainties in teachers' subject knowledge meant that some pupils did not carry out their investigation in a controlled and fair manner. This led to inaccurate measurements, and did not allow pupils to check which car they had predicted would travel furthest with their test results.
77. Most junior pupils make good progress in developing their skills and knowledge. Pupils in Year 4 show a secure understanding of how to carry out a fair test when investigating which carrier-bag is the strongest or which type of soil drains best. They record their results in a good variety of ways; for example, in detailed written descriptions, in graphs and diagrams. Many use their knowledge well to explain why a bulb or a buzzer will not work in a circuit. Some lower-attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 made good progress in their knowledge and understanding of fair-testing when they planned and made a parachute that would have the largest air resistance. Very good teaching enabled pupils to see that by changing one feature at a time - for example, the parachute size - and comparing results with those from a 'control' parachute, they could understand well the impact of each alteration. Older junior pupils work together very well. They show very good independence and responsibility to plan and carry out investigations. They discuss their ideas enthusiastically and are keen to test their predictions; for example, when testing the friction of different surfaces. This positive and co-operative attitude helps them to achieve and record results for each investigation. With teachers' good questioning and prompting, some pupils try to explain their results to achieve higher standards. There was limited evidence of this being done consistently with accurate use of specific scientific terminology to help more pupils attain above expected levels.
78. Teaching is good, and often very good, in Years 3 to 6. It is satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2, although it is more variable, with examples of some very good teaching and some unsatisfactory practice. Where teaching is of a very good quality, teachers organise interesting and challenging scientific activities. They have high expectations of pupils; for example, they expect pupils to organise and carry out their own investigations. Teachers prepare well to ensure that pupils have access to a good range of resources and can pursue their ideas. Teachers manage their classes very successfully to help pupils sustain interest, and so that pupils can record their results as investigations proceed. This was very evident in a very good lesson in Year 4 on electrical circuits. The teacher's excellent control enabled her to gain the pupils' attention immediately, despite their committed involvement to what they were doing. Pupils responded very quickly to the teacher's request that they stop their investigation briefly to record some results. This allowed the teacher to check on the progress of different groups in a large class, and to provide further instructions or questions where needed. She also checked with other teaching and support staff to monitor the progress of different pupils. This teaching of a high quality enabled all pupils to be fully involved and to achieve well. Some teachers make good use of information and

communication technology to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example, in a lesson in Year 5, good use was made of a microphone, linked to a computer, to record results of an experiment into sound levels. The pupils then presented the information as a graph. However, inconsistencies in teaching in the infants restrict the progress of some pupils. For example, inspectors observed two infant lessons investigating the effects of friction on a toy car. In one lesson, referred to earlier in paragraph 13, good teaching enabled pupils to make good progress in their knowledge and understanding. However, in another lesson, the teacher did not ensure that pupils knew clearly what was required of them. She did not control pupils consistently and this limited the amount of work achieved, and its accuracy. Pupils were so keen to get on with their investigations that they did not listen carefully to what they were required to do. Some set up their equipment incorrectly and were not able to measure the distance travelled by the toy car accurately. This meant that they did not make sufficient progress in their learning.

79. Science is currently a priority for school improvement. The new subject co-ordinator is aware of the need to improve aspects of planning and assessment. She has received good training and support from the headteacher and from the local education authority's support staff. She has improved her knowledge and understanding of the subject's strengths and areas for development through discussions with staff, looking at samples of pupils' work and pupils' questionnaires. The co-ordinator is giving a good lead by focusing on ways in which standards can be raised, although these have yet to improve attainment levels.

ART AND DESIGN

80. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection. Work on display and in pupils' sketchbooks indicates that standards are in line with those expected nationally by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The school has made satisfactory progress overall in art and design since the last inspection. Pupils use their sketchbooks soundly to try out techniques and explore ideas. In Year 6, pupils sketch things accurately from different perspectives. They use a variety of pencils successfully to try the effects of different methods of shading. Work is well linked to other subjects; for example, pupils design different kinds of shelters in design and technology. They also design hats in the style of the Victorians, linked to their history topic. Their designs are well annotated and pupils evaluate their work successfully.
81. Work on display shows that pupils use different media to create patterns, models and pictures. Pupils in Year 2 make clay tiles accurately, depicting aspects of reading in the school. These are to be made into a wall panel. In the past year pupils have worked with a sculptor to create a totem pole, which stands outside the school. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology to promote pupils' artistic skills and understanding. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 use a computer program accurately to create pictures in the style of the artist Kandinsky.
82. There was not enough evidence to make a secure judgement on the overall quality of teaching. However, the range and quality of work covered by pupils indicates that it is at least satisfactory. Teachers respond regularly to pupils' work in sketchbooks but their comments do not always encourage pupils' development in the subject. They do not give pupils further guidance as to how they could improve their work. In the lesson observed, teaching was good. The teacher had good subject knowledge and used this effectively to develop pupils' understanding of how to create different textures using a variety of fabrics. They used textured fabric that they had made to decorate the hats they were making. Pupils approached their work enthusiastically and many said that they look forward to their art and design lessons.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

83. Only four lessons in Years 3 to 6 were observed during the inspection. Further evidence was obtained from discussion with teachers and pupils, by looking at pupils' completed work in books and on display, and by scrutinising teachers' plans.
84. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards in line with those expected. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards above those expected. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when pupils in both age groups attained average standards. The teaching in the four lessons seen, and all the other evidence, indicates that teaching is satisfactory and often good. The good teaching promotes good progress in pupils' learning. Most teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do, and continue to teach and develop their skills successfully as they work on tasks. The effective use of national guidance for the subject is helping teachers to identify accurately the skills to be taught and to teach the subject confidently. Where teaching support assistants or parents have particular expertise in the subject, such as in food technology, teachers use this well. However, one lesson for junior pupils was unsatisfactory because the teacher's expectations of what pupils could achieve during the lesson were too low. This limited the progress they made in the lesson.
85. Throughout the school, teachers plan tasks that offer interest and challenge at the right level. Discussions with staff and pupils, work on display and photographic evidence show that teachers develop pupils' designing and making skills successfully; for example, when pupils in Years 1 and 2 design and make vehicles with moving parts. Pupils evaluate their work as it develops, identifying possible improvements. Although the school has only one cooker, teachers plan and organise opportunities well to develop pupils' skills in food technology soundly. Pupils design healthy diets, linked to their work in science, and bake cakes from recipes. Although design and technology is taught as a separate subject, teachers identify links effectively between this and other subjects. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 design and make hats of good quality that they wear in their performance of a Victorian Music Hall and this links to work in history.
86. Work in lessons and work on display show that pupils of all abilities are fully included in lessons and have full and equal access to the curriculum. Pupils enjoy the subject and apply themselves well to produce work of good quality. Their good behaviour, and their ability to work together constructively, make a strong contribution to their learning. Pupils' work is generally imaginative and demonstrates the pride they take in completing it.
87. There is an adequate range of resources, including tools and textiles, to support teaching and learning. The co-ordinator manages the resources well to ensure that they are readily available to teachers. Recent training that teachers have had in information and communication technology leaves the school well placed to make greater use of this to support pupils' learning in design and technology. The co-ordinator gives a good lead and plans to develop more consistent assessment procedures to ensure that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are progressively developed year by year. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' mathematical skills as teachers expect pupils to measure and assemble precisely. Teachers encourage pupils to use vocabulary that is specific to the subject. This supports pupils' literacy skills. The technology clubs, and technology days, run by the local Setpoint organisation, are popular with pupils and strongly support their learning and interest in the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

88. Pupils attain standards that are below those expected by the end of Year 2. Standards are in line with those expected by the end of Year 6. They are similar to those reported for Year 6 in the previous inspection but below those reported for Year 2. Inspectors observed only one geography lesson. Further evidence was gained from an analysis of pupils' work in books and topic folders, displays of work and by talking to staff and pupils. The school's topic approach in the infant curriculum does not provide a broad range of learning opportunities and is not linked closely to assessment procedures in geography. An analysis of pupils' work shows that this topic approach does not ensure that they build effectively on their existing skills and knowledge. Although assessment procedures are not established fully in the juniors, there was more evidence

of specific geography teaching promoting soundly the skills, knowledge and understanding of junior pupils.

89. Infant pupils have some knowledge of the lives of people living in the Amazon rainforest. They begin to understand how they get their food and how we receive food, for example, bananas from St Lucia. Infants use the travels of Barnaby Bear to locate and compare some other countries; for example, Barnaby Bear receives postcards from a range of places, such as France, Spain and Australia. Barnaby's travels promote pupils' learning about maps and about the differences between places. Pupils in Year 2 carried out a traffic survey on the nearby Cambridge Road and used their results well to produce bar-charts to show how busy it is at different times of the day. However, there was little evidence of infant pupils using appropriate geographical vocabulary to describe the local area or to compare it with other places. Pupils use the school field and environmental area to note seasonal changes, although they are not encouraged to extend their thinking and their literacy skills, for example, by describing their main geographical and environmental features. Some infant pupils write about their visits to other places, for example, Paris. Teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough and, as a result, teachers do not extend pupils' literacy skills by providing them with more detailed descriptions that include suitable geographical vocabulary. Too often pupils complete worksheets that only require them to complete single-word answers and then colour a drawing. The analysis of work shows that teachers do not build infant pupils' specific geographical skills consistently; for example, teachers do not promote pupils' early mapping skills, nor their use of information to develop their knowledge and understanding.
90. Teachers' plans for Years 3 to 6 show that they use national guidance soundly to provide more opportunities to promote pupils' skills and understanding. For example, lower junior pupils show a good knowledge and understanding of how their lives differ from those of children living in the Indian village of Chembakoli. They write in detail about how a day in their life compares with that of a child of a similar age in Southern India. Many locate India and Chembakoli accurately on large-scale maps. Older juniors extend these skills soundly in their 'water' topic. For example, they use their mapping skills to show sources of water on a map of the school and locate water features, such as rivers and lakes, successfully on an Ordnance Survey map of the local area. Many apply their knowledge effectively to describe why the infant playground is often muddy. Some investigate ways in which they could improve the situation, for example, by relocating and improving the drains. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a sound knowledge of how water gets to their homes and how it is treated and cleaned. Some teachers challenge pupils to use their literacy skills effectively to describe how their homes get water. However, teachers do not match learning activities consistently to the range of abilities. For example, in some classes, all pupils completed worksheets that only required them to copy labels onto a diagram. More able pupils were not challenged to apply their knowledge of the water system to explain the location of some of the features of our water supplies. This meant they did not achieve the standard they were capable of.
91. There was insufficient evidence to judge the quality of teaching, although an analysis of pupils' work showed that teachers did not extend pupils' skills satisfactorily, especially in Years 1 and 2. Teaching was satisfactory in the one lesson observed. The teacher challenged pupils successfully to extend their knowledge and use of key geographical terms, for example, the differences between 'developed' and 'developing' countries. She used questions such as 'Are they producing it for us?' to clarify pupils' thoughts and encourage them to use their knowledge. Teachers make sound use of information and communication technology, for example, by getting pupils to use the Internet and look for information on 'water'. Geography is not a priority for improvement. The subject is managed soundly. The co-ordinator has monitored teachers' plans and notes on assessments of pupils' attainment and progress and has evaluated samples of pupils' work. She has improved some aspects of resources. She has still to develop a detailed analysis of how teachers assess pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding consistently, and how they are to use this information to guide teaching and learning.

HISTORY

92. Only one history lesson was observed during the inspection. Judgements on the standards of pupils' achievements are based on the analysis of work in their books and on display, interviews with staff and pupils and a review of teachers' planning. Pupils' historical knowledge and understanding are not at the expected levels by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, and pupils do not make enough progress as they move through the school. This represents a decline in the satisfactory standards noted at the previous inspection. This is partly due to the school's decision to put greater emphasis on English and mathematics. The topics in history are not studied in appropriate depth. Assessment procedures for tracking pupils' progress in the subject and identifying areas for improvement are not developed fully. Many pupils are learners of English as an additional language and some are currently on the early stages of English language acquisition. This affects their progress in developing the required knowledge and understanding.
93. Most pupils in Year 2 develop a sound understanding of the past and are able to put events and objects into the correct historical order. For example, pupils in Year 1 learn about growth and change from when they were babies. They learn about famous people in the past, for example, Christopher Columbus. Pupils in Year 2 know about George Stephenson's 'Rocket' and make suitable attempts at producing a timeline for the railways. Most pupils lack confidence and skill in the correct use of words and phrases that relate to the passing of time. Analysis of work by pupils in Years 1 and 2 and a discussion with pupils in Year 2 indicate that pupils have little knowledge of facts and lack confidence in describing their own work. For example, they found it difficult to remember that Christopher Columbus was a famous person and then to explain why. Most pupils enter Year 1 with below average standards of speaking, reading and writing. They find it difficult to gather information from a wide range of texts, to explain why people acted as they did, and to record their findings in writing.
94. An analysis of work and discussion with pupils in Year 6 indicate that pupils are often given undemanding tasks that mean pupils do not make enough progress. For example, they are expected to complete worksheets based on The Ancient Egyptians by selecting words from a list. These tasks do not challenge them to apply and extend their literacy skills. Some pupils in Year 6 looked for information about Britain since the 1940s and created simple fact sheets about fashion, pop music, cars and homes. Teachers give insufficient attention to developing a clear understanding in pupils of why particular things change, or why particular events might be more important than others. Teachers do not regularly challenge the more able pupils. Most of pupils' work is either copied or completed on photocopied worksheets that do not require pupils to use their own ways of recording what they have learnt. This indicates that pupils of different ages and abilities in the same class often do the same work. Many pupils' work is hampered by their lack of literacy skills and of the ability to use subject specific vocabulary in their writing. Most pupils are not sufficiently skilled in using and interpreting a wide range of historical sources and evidence. Many do not confidently ask questions about the past in order to develop historical enquiry. There is too little extended writing. Although most pupils show an interest in history and begin to ask some basic questions about the past, the range of work is limited for the average and the more able pupils to demonstrate skills of historical analysis.
95. There is not enough evidence to make a judgement on the quality of teaching, although an analysis of pupils' work shows that teachers do not build historical knowledge and enquiry skills satisfactorily overall. In the one lesson observed, teaching was good. The teacher made effective use of her subject knowledge and understanding and used suitable strategies, such as discussions and good questioning. Pupils watched a video that supported pupils' learning effectively, and they made good use of resources, such as books and charts. Work shows that some teachers focus well on developing pupils' use of key vocabulary through the use of pictures and artefacts that bring history to life.
96. The new co-ordinator has a clear direction for the subject and recognises the need to review policy and the scheme of work. Although some monitoring of work has been carried out, the process is not yet systematic enough to ensure that the rigour and focus required to raise standards takes place in every class. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop consistent

procedures to assess pupils' progress and to guide teachers in their planning to take account of pupils' prior attainment.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

97. The improved leadership of the school has enabled the development of information and communication technology to be a major focus over this year. At the time of the last inspection, resources for the subject were poor and teaching was unsatisfactory. As a result, pupils' learning was unsatisfactory and attainment was below expectations. The school has provided training for all members of staff. They are supported well by an enthusiastic co-ordinator and a technician, who provide good advice. All pupils are now taught through the very much improved resources in a newly developed mobile suite. These initiatives, together with a good scheme of work for each year group, based on national guidance, and regular support from the local authority adviser, are promoting pupils' skills consistently in all year groups. However, these improvements have been too recent to raise standards enough to meet expected levels. Standards are below expectations for pupils by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, although pupils are now achieving well. Pupils have not yet had time to experience all aspects of the information and communication technology curriculum or to extend the skills they have been taught in a broad range of subjects.
98. The quality of teaching is good overall and often very good. It promotes good learning. Teachers plan effectively and evaluate their lessons in the light of what pupils have or have not achieved. Explanations are clear and pupils of all abilities understand what they are to do. However, the absence of a projector or interactive whiteboard to support whole class teaching means that teachers have to do a lot of individual teaching as pupils work. Occasionally, this limits the pace at which pupils develop their skills. Teachers often make good use of more able pupils to support less able pupils or those with special educational needs. Pupils' enthusiasm, very good behaviour and willingness to discuss their work and to help each other make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning.
99. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in learning to save, retrieve and print their work. They are taught to present information graphically and to communicate this in a variety of forms, including text and tables. In a very well prepared lesson in Year 1, pupils were observed making effective use of their skills to change words presented as a horizontal list of letters into a vertical list. The quality of teaching and support in this lesson was very good so that pupils of all abilities made very good progress in the development of computer skills. Planning shows that, by the time they are seven, pupils will have been taught to use information and communication technology to find, organize, and classify information.
100. By the end of Year 6, pupils enter text and manipulate it by changing font, size, style and colour. They confidently compose and edit their work on screen. They produce work with text, maps, graphs and pictures. Pupils in Year 6 used a drawing program to plan an arrangement of tables in the hall for the school fair. The very good teaching ensured that all pupils worked hard to overcome problems. They made very good progress. The pace of learning and work was maintained throughout the lessons because of the secure knowledge of teachers and support staff. As a result, pupils were very well supported during all stages of the lessons through effective intervention. The planning and the work on display shows that all aspects of the subject are given due consideration. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 use a drawing program to create a composition in the style of Kandinsky. By the age of 11, pupils have experience of multimedia presentation and confidently access information using CD-ROMs and the Internet.
101. Data handling skills are now being suitably developed across the school. This is having a positive impact on pupils' knowledge and understanding of data handling in mathematics and across the curriculum. For example, pupils investigated the sound insulation properties of a range of materials in a science lesson, and went on to present their information graphically using computers. Information and communication technology is also being increasingly used to support work in other areas of the curriculum, and the school plans to extend this provision.

102. Pupils have been assigned their own folders to save their work and teachers use this information to assess pupils' work and to provide extra support where necessary. However, assessment information needs to identify more clearly the skills to be taught, so that these are progressively developed as pupils move from year to year. Computer clubs, run by the headteacher, the subject co-ordinator and the technician, enhance the curriculum and allow pupils to apply the skills they have been taught in lessons. The school is now well placed to continue to raise standards in the subject.

MUSIC

103. At the time of the previous inspection standards were judged as satisfactory. Pupils now attain standards that are below those expected nationally by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Current inspection findings show weaknesses in pupils' attainment and limited progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding. This means that progress since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Subject co-ordination is not promoting the subject well enough. Teachers are not confident in teaching music and pupils do not make the progress they are capable of. Teachers do not all have sufficient subject knowledge to teach music confidently and effectively; for example, some infant teachers are not confident in the most effective methods of teaching pupils to sing well. They do not pay enough attention to guiding pupils in their posture and breathing for them to sing well. As a result, pupils' singing is not as tuneful as it could be.
104. In a successful junior lesson, pupils practised reading music and playing the recorder. They made good progress, concentrated well and worked with effort. This was because the teacher had good subject knowledge and planned the lesson very effectively, building well on pupils' previous knowledge and understanding. In other lessons for this age group, the tasks did not promote pupils' musical skills effectively. In these lessons, teachers' subject knowledge was weak and, as a result, pupils' learning was slower than it should have been. In performance, pupils did not understand that they all needed to start at the same pitch. Pupils playing instruments were unsure of where they were supposed to play. This resulted in ineffective performances. In some lessons the tasks were not well managed. Groups were too large to enable pupils to practise their skills, which meant that they did not make enough progress.
105. Some teachers did not encourage pupils to develop their own musical ideas successfully. For example, in one lesson the teacher asked how a piece of music might be changed to evoke a different mood. When a pupil suggested that the pitch could be changed this was not accepted as the teacher had expected pupils to want to change the tempo. This limited the effectiveness of pupils' responses to the lesson. There were considerable variations in the quality of teaching in the lessons observed, from very good to unsatisfactory. However, it is unsatisfactory overall as it does not ensure that pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are developed consistently and well enough over time.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

106. Pupils attain standards that are in line with those expected nationally by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards have been maintained at a similar level to that reported previously. During the inspection, the focus was on developing pupils' skills for games and dance. The school makes effective use of its good facilities, supported by a good range of extra-curricular clubs and competitive matches, to promote pupils' skills successfully in all required aspects. Good links with the local community enable pupils to benefit from some specialist coaching, for example, in rugby and lacrosse. The school makes good use of residential trips to Cuffley Camp and to the Isle of Wight to broaden its range of physical activities. Some uncertainties in aspects of teachers' subject knowledge limit the development of pupils' skills and knowledge, for example, in dance.

107. Most infant pupils know that exercise makes the heart beat faster, for example, during a warm-up activity. They controlled themselves soundly when developing a variety of movements to reflect the different parts of the life-cycle of a butterfly. This was linked to work in science. They listened attentively to instructions and followed them carefully, linking them together satisfactorily to a musical beat. Most remembered the movements of the different creatures that they had tried to imitate earlier in the lesson, and linked them well in a short sequence of movements. Some pupils in Year 1 demonstrated their short sequences enthusiastically, although pupils were not encouraged to look for ways in which they could improve the quality of their performances. This did not ensure that pupils, especially the more able, always achieved the standard of work of which they were capable.
108. Older junior pupils linked their work in dance to their work on rainforests in geography. They work hard to develop their movements, although their performance reflects closely the quality of teaching. In one lesson, pupils showed a limited range of ideas as they tried to represent the movements of big machines cutting down the trees. The teacher asked questions soundly to encourage pupils' thoughts; for example, she asked 'What will a bulldozer do?' She provided too little time for them to develop and improve their movements. The teacher did not maintain a brisk pace or make her expectations clear to pupils so that they knew what they were expected to achieve. She did not encourage pupils to evaluate the quality of their work and identify ways in which it could be improved. This meant that pupils were unable to attain the expected standards, especially those pupils whose control was affected significantly by trying to perform in stockinged-feet. In a similar lesson, most Year 5 and 6 pupils achieved some very good quality work. They all worked hard and produced a very good range of movements to illustrate how different animals would try and get away from the big machines. The teacher maintained excellent control and a brisk pace throughout the lesson. She encouraged pupils to demonstrate their sequences to others and challenged the observers to evaluate the quality of the movements. This raised the standard of the work. Year 5 and 6 pupils show sound control of their sticks when receiving and passing the ball in lacrosse. They use their skills successfully to co-operate with others in small group activities. Their awareness of tactics and the need to create and use space effectively in team play are not developed fully.
109. Teaching varies in quality but is sound overall. Teachers control and manage their pupils very well. They encourage them to participate enthusiastically. However, when the teacher is uncertain about how to develop pupils' skills, pupils' progress and attainment in a lesson are restricted. For example, in an unsatisfactory dance lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teacher did not provide enough opportunities for pupils to practise their skills, nor expect them to identify ways in which they could improve the quality of movements. This resulted in little progress being made in extending pupils' understanding and skills in dance. However, where the teaching was very good, the teacher ensured that pupils had enough time to practise, evaluate and improve their movements. She made very good use of demonstrations by pupils to illustrate good quality work and to encourage others to try to attain similar standards. The teacher made excellent use of a 'cooling-down' activity at the end of the lesson to reinforce the objective of the lesson and to prepare pupils for future work. She encouraged two pupils to read aloud a poem about environmental issues relating to their topic on the rainforests. This focused pupils' thoughts very successfully and ensured that pupils valued their work in both physical education and geography.
110. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The temporary co-ordinator monitors resources and improves them where needed. However, the subject is not given clear leadership. It is not a priority for improvement and there is no purposeful direction for improving weaknesses, for example, in assessing pupils' physical skills.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

111. Pupils' knowledge and understanding does not meet the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The standards have declined since the last inspection. Pupils do not achieve satisfactorily; for example, most show limited gains in their

knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major faiths over their time in school. A very limited amount of written work was seen in most classes. Pupils made some progress in the few lessons observed. Based on the scrutiny of recorded work and discussion with pupils in Year 6, progress for most pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language, is limited and uneven over their time in school. Religious education contributes satisfactorily to aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is planned appropriately to ensure progression of skills, knowledge and understanding, although it does not have a clear enough focus and broad enough range of opportunities within the school curriculum. This is partly due to the school's decision to put greater emphasis on English and mathematics.

112. Younger pupils begin to develop their own ideas about appropriate personal responses to right and wrong by looking at events in their own lives. Pupils in Year 2 learn about what happened on Good Friday, and know why people eat hot-cross buns. In a lesson in Year 1, after hearing the story, a pupil asked a very sensible question, 'Why is it called Good Friday, when such a sad thing happened?' Pupils improved their knowledge and understanding by learning that it meant 'God's Friday'. Some pupils remembered some of the things that had been pointed out on their visit to the local church, but most pupils showed a poor recall and could not name objects seen. Pupils have a very basic knowledge of religious festivals. They know about Christmas, but few can retell the story with events in the correct order, or recall anything about Jesus' teaching.
113. Pupils in Year 6 acquire adequate knowledge of their own religion, but they have little idea of how God is worshipped in different ways by different faith communities. Pupils' understanding is largely confined to facts about festivals such as Christmas and Easter. They recall some stories from the Bible, but most do not understand the deep meaning of religious stories. This was noted in a lesson in Year 6 where pupils had difficulty in identifying the real meaning of some statements from the Gospel, for example, 'I am the bread of life', or 'I am the light of the world'. In most lessons, pupils do not link well to their own experiences or make significant links with their own and others' religions.
114. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the major religions of the world such as Christianity, Judaism and Sikhism, and the life of people from various cultural backgrounds, are very limited. They have insufficient knowledge of the festivals of other religions, the key people, the places of worship or the holy books. The development of pupils' knowledge and understanding is inconsistent. As a result, they are unable to draw sufficiently on and learn from the positive actions of important religious figures, such as Jesus or the Sikh founder, Guru Nanak, to help them make decisions about their own lives and to make sense of what they see around them.
115. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was satisfactory overall. In a good lesson in Years 1 and 2, the teacher used pupils' art and design skills successfully to enhance their learning by making clay models of the hill where Jesus was crucified. Pupils' attitudes and responses to learning are good. They listen carefully when information is given. Pupils behave well and respond to questions with confidence. Most pupils show a positive willingness to talk about and share personal experiences.
116. Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' speaking and listening skills. However, pupils across the school are not encouraged to record their knowledge and write their own creative accounts. School assemblies make some contribution to religious education, although this is not developed consistently. The absence of an agreed approach to recording and assessing the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding limits teachers' ability to plan future lessons based on what pupils have already achieved.
117. The subject is managed soundly overall. The co-ordinator is clear about the future direction for the subject. She has carried out some monitoring of work. However, it is not yet rigorous enough to raise standards in every class. Resources are satisfactory overall. The school has bought a few multicultural artefacts and books about religions of the world. Pupils have visited the local church, but have not had the opportunity to invite visitors from other religions, nor to visit other places of worship.

