

INSPECTION REPORT

CHAULDEN INFANTS' SCHOOL

Hemel Hempstead

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117202

Headteacher: Mrs S King

Reporting inspector: John Messer
15477

Dates of inspection: 28 - 30 October 2002

Inspection number: 247740

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infants'
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Row Chaulden Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire
Postcode:	HP1 2JU
Telephone number:	01442 264588
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Denise Hudson
Date of previous inspection:	1 December 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15477	John Messer	Registered inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Foundation Stage English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9561	Husain Akhtar	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents? How well does the school care for its pupils?
22274	Vera Rogers	Team inspector	English Geography History Religious education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
8534	David Price	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music Physical education Educational inclusion	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This much smaller than average infant school has 82 boys and girls attending full time. A further 32 children in the nursery attend for the morning session only. The number of pupils on roll has been falling steadily and the school is now much smaller than at the time of the last inspection. Around an eighth of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. A small number speak English as an additional language and most of these speak English fluently. About a third of pupils are entered on the school's register of special educational needs because they need some extra help with their learning and nine have statements of special educational need. This is well above the national average because a local authority speech and language unit is located in the school. This caters for pupils with specific problems in communication skills. All pupils in this class, who come from further afield, have statements of special educational need. The proportion of pupils who enter and leave the school part way through this phase of their education is above average. Children's attainment on entry to the school is broadly average but there is a wide spread of ability in each year group.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school that provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. As a result of the sound teaching, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards are average in writing and mathematics, though they are not high enough in reading. Standards are average in all other subjects. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The school helps pupils to develop a sound grounding in the basic skills of writing and mathematics.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good and promote good attitudes to learning.
- Governors and teachers work well together as they strive to improve the quality of education that the school provides.
- Pupils have an enthusiasm for learning; they are well behaved and are keen to do well.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted effectively and pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and learning support assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- Standards in reading.
- The use of information on pupils' attainment to plan the next steps in learning more precisely.
- Teachers' expectations of the standards that pupils are capable of attaining.
- The role of curriculum leaders and senior teachers so that they are able to evaluate standards, identify areas for improvement and make a greater contribution to improving standards.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in December 1997, the satisfactory standards that pupils attain in writing and mathematics have been maintained. The school's performance in national tests has improved in writing and mathematics but not in reading, where standards are below average. Standards in physical education have improved, but the above average standards in science and art and design reported previously have not been maintained. Standards in these subjects are now at expected levels. Teaching is more consistent and there is now no unsatisfactory teaching, which is an improvement, but the high proportion of very good teaching seen at the time of the last inspection is not in evidence. The key issues for action from the last report have been tackled and improvements have been made in subject planning, but this still does not focus sufficiently on the sequential development of skills. Overall, the degree of improvement is satisfactory.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	E	E	E	D
writing	E	E	C	C
mathematics	E	E	D	C

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

In recent years, the school's performance has been well below average when compared with schools nationally, partly because the lower attaining pupils in the special speech and language class are included in the comparative data. The school's performance has now improved significantly and this is reflected in the latest national test results, even though nearly a fifth of the group that took the tests were from the speech and language class. The school's performance in the tests improved this year in writing and mathematics but not in reading. There has been an improvement in the school's performance in writing and mathematics. There has been no similar trend of improvement in reading. Throughout the school, pupils' achievement is generally satisfactory but in reading a significant minority do not make as much progress as they should. Pupils' achievement and the standards attained are adversely affected by the above average proportion who move into and out of the school during the course of each school year.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They work willingly and concentrate hard in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons and at playtimes. Pupils are polite and co-operative.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities and the very good relationships help to promote a willingness to please.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupils like coming to school.

Pupils are confident and they work and play happily together. They are good at taking turns and are considerate towards the feelings of others.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery and reception	Years 1 and 2
Lessons seen overall	satisfactory	satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory but within this general picture there are significant strengths, as well as several areas for development. Teachers manage pupils well so that pupils are keen to please and eager to learn. Pupils demonstrate good levels of interest in their work and concentrate hard on the tasks they are set. They love listening to stories. Teachers encourage good levels of independence so that pupils are able to work without reference to teachers or other adults. Teachers' expectations of pupils' performance are not always high enough, however, and day-to-day assessments of pupils' learning are not sufficiently precise to inform plans for the next steps in learning. English and mathematics, as well as skills associated with literacy and numeracy, are taught satisfactorily. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and the achievement of these pupils is satisfactory. The support for pupils with English as an additional language is appropriate and these pupils make sound progress in developing speaking, reading and writing skills in English. The school has not identified any pupils who may be particularly gifted or talented.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory, but there is insufficient attention to identifying and assessing the progressive development of skills in each subject.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are given good support and classroom assistants provide skilful assistance and enhance the quality of pupils' learning well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. The very small number of pupils who are at an early stage of acquiring English speaking skills are given appropriate support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for moral, social and cultural development is good and it is satisfactory for spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. A supportive, caring learning environment has been established.

A good range of visits to places of interest in the locality and a good number of visits from members of the community, such as the police and members of local religious groups, extend learning opportunities well. The school works hard to build a partnership with parents and parents give good support. Pupils in the speech and language class receive good support; they are well integrated and take a full part in all school activities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership but there are weaknesses in the management of the curriculum. There is no co-ordinator to lead developments in the Foundation Stage and the roles of senior teachers and subject co-ordinators are under-developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are closely associated with the school and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The chair of the governing body provides exceptionally good support.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school identified differences in attainment between boys and girls and addressed the issue appropriately by improving boys'

	performance.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Computers are not always used sufficiently to support teaching and learning.

The school presents particular challenges caused mainly by a falling roll and an above average movement of pupils into and out of the school. With the able support of the headteacher, the governing body has successfully managed the decline in income caused by the falling roll and has been able to create small class sizes and keep good numbers of learning support assistants. The roles of senior teachers and subject leaders are under-developed. The governing body works hard to raise the profile of the school in the community it serves and is focusing on improving public relations. The accommodation is good and resources are maintained at levels that are sufficient to support teaching and learning satisfactorily. The governing body evaluates provision carefully and ensures that the principles of best value are applied to the decision making process. Allocations of money are used prudently and the governing body has accrued a substantial reserve that is earmarked to improve the building and grounds.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school and make good progress. • They would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. • The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is well led and managed. • The school helps children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about how their children are getting on. • The partnership with parents. • The range of activities outside lessons. • The amount of homework.

Nearly a quarter of parents returned questionnaires and one parent attended the pre-inspection meeting for parents. The inspection team largely agrees with parents' positive comments. Inspection findings show that parents receive good information from the school but that reports tend to record what activities pupils have experienced rather than what they have learned and what future targets in learning should be. The inspection team found that the amount of homework is appropriate for this age group. There are no after school clubs, as is common to schools of this type, but a good range of visits and visitors provide good learning opportunities outside the classroom.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

'Standards', the judgement of how well pupils are doing compared to others of the same age nationally, may be judged from national test results, or against the levels defined in the National Curriculum or the Early Learning Goals as 'expected' at certain ages. The other judgement, 'achievement', is a judgement made against pupils' starting points. The achievement judgement shows whether, in the longer term, enough progress is being made.

1. Children enter the school with the usual range of skills, for example in communication and in behaving independently, but there is a wide range of attainment in each year group. Children's achievement is satisfactory in the nursery and reception classes so that most are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals in each of the areas of learning, specified in national guidance, by the time they enter Year 1. Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is good and children achieve especially well in this area of learning so that most are likely to exceed the expected standards by the end of the reception year.
2. As a result of the sound teaching they receive, pupils' learning is reasonable in Years 1 and 2 and their achievement is satisfactory. By the end of Year 2, the standards that most pupils attain in almost every subject are in line with what is normally expected of pupils of this age. The only exception is reading where standards should be higher than they are. Standards in speaking and listening, writing, mathematics and science are broadly average. These findings are not fully reflected in the most recent national test and assessment results. This is partly because the school's published results include the results of pupils in the speech and language class who tend to be lower attainers due to their often complex learning difficulties. In 2002, the school's performance when compared with all schools nationally was average in writing, below average in mathematics and well below average in reading. In science, the teacher assessments indicated that the proportion of pupils who attained the average target was lower than usual, but the proportion who attained the higher than expected level was above average. When compared with schools that have pupils from similar social backgrounds, the school's performance was average in writing and mathematics but below average in reading.
3. There was no evidence of any significant difference in the standards of work produced by boys and girls during the course of the inspection. In recent years, the girls outperformed the boys in reading, writing and mathematics but the school has taken effective action to improve the performance of boys so that this year's results show greater uniformity. The school analyses pupils' attainment and takes appropriate action. An analysis of national test results over recent years, for example, indicated the need to improve pupils' understanding of subtraction. The school took steps, therefore, to improve pupils' understanding of subtraction and their ability to calculate subtraction sums accurately. This resulted in an improvement. The development of writing skills has also been a priority. As a result, the school was successful in improving standards such that the proportion of pupils who attained the higher Level 3 standard in writing in 2002 was well above the national average.
4. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards in speaking and listening that are average. Pupils talk confidently and sensibly about their work and express their opinions clearly. They love listening to stories. They write for different purposes, such as letters to Father Christmas and evaluations of their work in design and technology, and use punctuation with increasing accuracy. Pupils in the speech and language class enjoyed writing ingenious excuses for not going to bed. Most pupils have positive attitudes to reading and enjoy books but their ability to read fluently is not as well developed as would normally be expected for pupils of this age. This is because there is not enough emphasis on teaching reading skills, for example the links that exist between letter sounds and words. Similarly their knowledge of children's fiction is not well developed. Literacy skills are used well in other subjects where reading and writing skills are used to find information and record work in history and geography for example. Pupils have a good understanding of

numeracy and use their skills purposefully in different areas of the curriculum, such as weighing quantities in cooking, measuring dimensions in design and technology and conducting traffic surveys in geography. In one registration period the pupils counted the number of seconds it took for the register monitor to return from the office. This represents good consolidation of counting skills. Pupils' computer skills are developing satisfactorily but opportunities are missed to use computer programs to support teaching and learning in other subjects.

5. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs are set clear and appropriate targets and make steady progress towards meeting them. Although the standards that they reach are below the average, their achievement is satisfactory in relation to their starting points. They are well supported by class teachers and the learning support assistants who work closely together to ensure that the pupils are provided with work that is appropriate. Pupils within the speech and language class are supported by generous numbers of staff and make steady progress towards their targets. Pupils with English as an additional language are provided with appropriate support and this enables them to achieve as well as their classmates.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. The overall picture is similar to that at the time of the last inspection; pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and relationships are very good. Pupils arrive in good spirit in the mornings and even the youngest pupils show good motivation and are happy to be independent of their parents for a while. In their responses to the inspection questionnaire, parents overwhelmingly confirmed that their children like the school. In lessons, pupils approach work with enthusiasm, as in an art lesson where pupils in Year 1 were mixing colours and painting with enjoyment. In a mathematics lesson, pupils in Year 1 showed great enthusiasm and this helped them to achieve well in their number work. Another example of their interest is their joy of singing which makes a good contribution to their spiritual development. The photographic evidence of visits indicates that pupils participate enthusiastically in outside activities. Those pupils with special educational or language needs are well integrated and respond well to the support that they receive and achieve satisfactorily. This was evident in the speech and language class lesson where pupils were exploring materials; they showed keen interest, listened carefully and made sensible, thoughtful contributions. Pupils' growing knowledge of the work of composers and artists makes a good contribution to their cultural development. Very good relationships and good opportunities for pupils' moral and social development positively influence their performance and personal development.
7. Pupils show independence from parents and organise themselves well. This was evident, for example, at the start of the school day and in play activities. They have a well-established sense of routine. They take turns and share equipment fairly and achieve good standards in their personal and social development, including behaviour. Pupils are willing to take initiative, work independently and choose their activities. Where given the responsibility, they show good commitment as, for example, in collaborating to devise class rules. Pupils take the attendance registers to the office confidently and help out at school events. Pupils who take part in out of school visits organise themselves well. As pupils progress through the school, their confidence develops very well.
8. Pupils with special educational needs generally show positive attitudes to their work and good levels of concentration as they are well supported within group or individual tasks. They try hard and take a pride in their achievements, particularly when working in small groups.
9. Pupils behave well in lessons and this supports their learning effectively. They settle well to the tasks and concentrate, especially when the work matches their ability and interest. For example, in a Year 1 English lesson, pupils concentrated well and made good progress in learning about 'adjectives'. A small number of pupils, including some pupils who have special educational or emotional needs, are not sufficiently interested in the work and can behave in a challenging way, but they are generally managed well in lessons. The vast majority of pupils behave well outside lessons, including during the lunchtime period where they readily do what the lunchtime staff ask them to do, even sitting on the hard area in the playground before retuning to the classrooms at

the end of the lunchtime. There is a little boisterous behaviour at times but otherwise the school is calm and orderly. Inspectors saw no incidents of any oppressive behaviour. Pupils treat school property, including displays, with care. Exclusions of pupils for inappropriate behaviour are not a feature of the school.

10. Pupils form very constructive relationships with adults and other pupils. All groups of pupils mix well. This was evident in lessons and during breaks where pupils played together happily. Pupils respect others' views and feelings. For example, they listened courteously to others in assemblies, and in lessons where matters of interest were debated. In Year 1, for example, pupils entered into a lively debate about whether there was any justification for 'Guy Fawkes' attempts to blow up Parliament. They show good care and concern for others by following safety instructions in practical activities.
11. Attendance is satisfactory, being broadly in line with the national average. Absences are not confined to any groups of pupils. A few families, known to the authorities, show less appreciation of the need for regular attendance. Whilst illness accounts for most of the authorised absences, a sizeable number of absences are due to some parents taking their children on holidays during term time. There is some absence for reasons that may not be genuine, but it is below the national average. It is recorded as such because the parents have not supplied a reason for the absence. Most pupils arrive on time in the morning and the school day starts promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

12. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In a half of the lessons seen teaching was good and occasionally very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching for children in the Foundation Stage, the nursery and reception classes, is satisfactory. Teaching in each of the subjects of the curriculum, where there was sufficient evidence to form judgements, is satisfactory. There was insufficient evidence available to form judgements about teaching in design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology (ICT) or music. There were examples of good teaching in English, mathematics, science, art and design, physical education and religious education. Most aspects of literacy are taught satisfactorily and pupils use their reading and writing skills well to support learning in other subjects. Numeracy skills are taught satisfactorily and there are opportunities for pupils to use their skills in other subjects, such as design and technology, and in purposeful activities such as cooking.
13. Teachers are hard working; lesson planning and preparation are thorough. Classroom assistants make a strong contribution to the quality of pupils' learning. They are involved in planning and are particularly effective when supporting lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. The exceptionally good ratio of adults to pupils, often one adult to two pupils, in the speech and language class helps to ensure effective teaching. Teachers have adequate knowledge of the subjects they teach but several lack confidence in information and communication technology. Throughout the school, relationships between pupils and teachers are very good. This helps pupils to learn confidently and promotes very good personal development. Routines are well established. Teachers encourage pupils to use their initiative. One excellent strategy in Year 2 involves pupils being trained to file their work independently. The exceptionally clear and precise instructions for using the hole punch and for sticking worksheets into books were illustrated well with photographs created on the school's digital camera. This is a good way of encouraging children to take responsibility for classroom management.
14. Teaching is effective when teachers plan to teach specific skills. Where the learning intention was described precisely in teachers' planning, then teaching was more effective. In a lesson on odd and even numbers in Year 2, for example, the teacher had described precisely what she wanted the pupils to learn and exactly how work would be modified to match the learning needs of the different groups of pupils in the class. This precision helped the teacher to evaluate the effectiveness of the learning; she knew what she wanted the pupils to learn and was therefore able to evaluate the extent of learning fairly accurately. In lessons where planning described what activities were to be provided for pupils but did not specify what the teacher expected pupils would

learn, then teaching was less purposeful and, because the learning intention was unclear, it was difficult for the teacher to evaluate the extent of the learning. This occurred particularly in the teaching for children in the nursery and reception classes. On the occasions when teaching was less effective in Years 1 and 2, it was often because not enough was expected of pupils and they did not learn enough during the course of a lesson. There are occasions when teachers' expectations of the quality of work that pupils produce are not high enough. As a result, pupils' work does not always meet the expected standards.

15. The teaching of pupils in the speech and language unit is satisfactory overall. The teacher is well supported by teaching assistants and together with the speech therapist they adopt a range of methods to try to engage the interest and raise the standards that the pupils achieve. All concerned work well as a team and provide appropriate experiences to ensure that pupils make steady progress towards their individual targets. The quality of teaching for those pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. The support that these pupils receive is guided by appropriate education plans. Pupils are well integrated into the life and work of their class groups and are able to participate in all lessons, as they receive good support from the well-trained teaching assistants.

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

16. A sound curriculum is provided for all pupils. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is based on recent national guidance for teaching in the nursery and reception classes and is satisfactory. A good range of activities, designed to encourage learning, is provided. The curriculum concentrates on the activities provided and what children are expected to do, however, rather than what they are expected to learn as a result of the activities. Records are kept on what the children have chosen to do in their 'choosing' sessions, for example, rather than records of what new skills, knowledge and understanding they have actually developed in a session. Opportunities are missed to provide specific challenges as part of the activities, such as when children play at the water table. They enjoy floating boats and watching different materials float and sink, but they are not set specific challenges, such as to build a raft to hold as many plastic bricks as possible, or asked challenging questions about why certain materials float and others sink. When children have a free choice of activities they usually enjoy the learning experiences, but there is no guarantee that they are learning as effectively as they might be if greater direction and challenge were to be incorporated in the tasks. The various learning experiences are not linked, by devising a unifying theme to add purpose to the learning. However, the curriculum planned for children in the nursery and reception classes provides a broad range of opportunities and experiences for children and helps them to meet the Early Learning Goals.
17. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2 meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Although this judgement is similar to the one reached at the time of the last inspection, there have been improvements since then. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented successfully and the school has reviewed its long term planning to take into account the recommendations of national guidance. However, many of the school's subject policies are out of date and do not fully take into account recent recommendations. Provision for information and communication technology has improved, but computers are still not used well enough in other subjects. The school is totally inclusive in its approach, allowing full access to the curriculum for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and irrespective of gender, race, ethnicity, disability or life style.
18. Although the school has now adopted recommended guidance for each subject to ensure coverage of all the suggested programmes of study, it has not yet clearly identified which skills pupils should learn each year in each subject. Additionally, because the work in subjects other than English and mathematics is planned over a two-year cycle, skills are not taught progressively from year to year. As a result, there is no adequate structure to keep track of pupils' progress and to plan the curriculum and lessons on the basis of where they are in their

learning. Since the last inspection, there have been improvements in teachers' planning and plans now include learning objectives. However, these are often too broad and do not identify clearly enough exactly what pupils are to be taught in order to achieve the objectives.

19. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. Information about drugs misuse and sex education are taught as part of the science curriculum. Parents are well informed about the arrangements for sex education and have the right to withdraw pupils from these lessons if they wish to do so. Visitors, such as the school nurse, are used in teaching pupils about aspects of health education.
20. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils' individual education plans state clearly what pupils need to learn to make progress. The targets set are achievable and realistic. The pupils with special educational needs are taught within small groups within the classroom. Work set is generally appropriately matched to their needs and pupils are very well supported by teaching assistants to enable them to take part in the full curriculum. The school also provides support for pupils through additional literacy support programmes.
21. Learning is helped by a range of educational visits to the local area such as the local church and areas further afield such as the Natural History Museum and an open-air museum. Visitors to the school include the local police, school nurse, and representatives from the local churches and other faiths. There are good links with other members of the local community and business such as a local pizza café, the road crossing patrol and members of the waste disposal team. Some retired people regularly spend time in school listening to pupils reading. There are no extra-curricular activities at present. The school has good links with the adjacent junior school. There are a number of inter-school activities such as the joint Christmas fair and school productions. Staff mix freely and some curriculum developments are jointly undertaken, with joint teacher training sessions and staff meetings on occasions. There are good opportunities for pupils from the junior school to work alongside pupils from the infants, for example in paired reading sessions. The pupils' move from Year 2 to Year 3 is carefully planned with the transfer of academic and pastoral records, teachers' discussions and visits by Year 2 pupils to the junior school. The school has also developed appropriate links to the other primary school to which children from the nursery transfer.
22. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall, with particular strengths in provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development.
23. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory overall. There are however, strengths within this provision. The school provides a good climate for learning and places great value on relationships and mutual respect. Teachers know their pupils well and place great emphasis on valuing the contributions that each individual can make and on treating their views and ideas with respect. Pupils are given opportunities to explore and reflect upon their lives within regular periods of 'circle time' when they are encouraged to share their thoughts, concerns and feelings and as a result, treat each other with respect. They learn about the religious beliefs of others in religious education lessons and regularly share and celebrate the festivals and customs of pupils from other faiths within the school. Within lessons, teachers use incidental opportunities to promote a sense of wonder; however, occasions to promote this are not specifically considered within teachers' planning. Within the school's assemblies, there are opportunities for pupils to reflect in the form of a prayer but generally assemblies do not create a sufficiently spiritual atmosphere of prayer and reflection. Achievement is celebrated in special assemblies each week with acknowledgement of pupils' personal successes.
24. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. The school places great emphasis on positive expectations of pupils' behaviour and how good conduct will be promoted through the school. The pupils are well aware of the school rules and are involved in regular discussions about the rules within their class and within assemblies. Moral issues sometimes form the basis of displays within the school hall and pupils are invited to make written observations about these and suggestions as to how they can make the school a safe and happy place for all. Pupils' moral development is further promoted through the planned personal and social education lessons in

which pupils learn to understand the difference between right and wrong and to explore moral issues.

25. The school makes good provision for pupils' social development. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and from this relationship pupils develop an understanding of what is expected. The secure relationships help pupils to become confident and develop a sense of belonging to the school community. Pupils have some responsibilities within school, such as taking registers to the office; older pupils help at lunchtime and in assemblies and also help to look after younger pupils at playtimes. Pupils are given opportunities within lessons to work together in groups and teachers encourage them to share their ideas and equipment with each other. Pupils perform in school productions and assemblies and take part in day visits that further help to promote pupils' social development.
26. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The pupils become aware of other faiths and traditions through their religious education lessons and sometimes within lessons, such as literacy, where pupils have the opportunity to study stories from other cultures. The pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are integrated harmoniously into the school community and are invited to share and demonstrate their customs and celebrations. Pupils develop their knowledge of European artists and musicians within the curriculum and from the regular visitors to the school such as musicians, artists and drama groups, so that pupils have the opportunity to extend their experiences. In addition to the regular visits from members of local Christian churches, there are visits from members of the Jewish and Islamic communities who enable pupils to extend their understanding of different ways of life.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

27. As at the time of the last inspection, the school cares for and supports pupils effectively. Staff know pupils well and respond quickly to their personal needs. They ensure that new children settle into school quickly. Supervision at break and lunch times is good. There are satisfactory arrangements to look after unwell pupils. The school provides a secure and supportive learning environment, hence pupils like coming to the school and are able to learn well. Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires confirmed this. The school pays good attention to pupils' pastoral needs and provides them with good support, and this includes the support for pupils who have special educational, or language, needs.
28. The procedures for child protection, unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection, are now good. A child protection policy is in place. The headteacher, the designated child protection officer, is knowledgeable in the child protection issues and keeps others informed of relevant matters, including the needs of pupils in public care and 'child restraint'. The school has appropriate links with the support agencies. The school is vigilant about health and safety matters and the staff pay good attention to safety. The local authority surveyor keenly helps the school in assessing any building-related health and safety risks. Pupils are guided on matters relating to their welfare and development through the curriculum and by visiting specialists, such as the school nurse and the local community police officer.
29. The procedures for attendance are effective in obtaining satisfactory levels of attendance. Registration requirements are met and absences are appropriately identified. The school works closely with the education welfare officer. Follow up of absences is satisfactory. Family holidays during the term time, which contribute towards absences, are discouraged but not very effectively. Monitoring of punctuality is satisfactory.
30. The school promotes good behaviour through a system of rewards and sanctions incorporated in the school's behaviour policy and by valuing pupils. The school's policies on bullying and other oppressive behaviour are well understood and followed by the pupils and the staff. Pupils know that good behaviour is expected of them and respond positively. All this helps pupils to learn in a stress free environment. There is good adult supervision and staff provide pupils with good role models for calmness and respect.

31. Procedures for supporting and monitoring personal development are very effective. Pupils are well managed in lessons. The quality of relationships is very good and, as a result, pupils work well together, are willing to please and follow instructions promptly. Staff expect pupils to behave well, and this helps pupils to make appropriate progress in their learning. Procedures for recording and monitoring inappropriate behaviour are firmly in place. Pupils' behaviour is monitored through completing 'social profiles' and 'behaviour files', which are regularly checked by the headteacher. These files help to maintain a good record of personal development and keep a check on any inappropriate behaviour.
32. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are satisfactory overall but there is scope for improving the use of assessment data to inform lesson planning more precisely. The school reviews pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science each term and evaluates attainment against the standards described in the National Curriculum. The school uses the information it gathers from baseline assessments, made soon after children start school, to track individual pupils' performance in reading, writing and mathematics and to make predictions for individual levels of attainment at the end of each year group. More recently the school has started to use the information to set individual targets in writing which are shared with the pupils. Based on the assessment information available and teachers' day-to-day assessments, lower attaining pupils are identified for additional support in literacy and mathematics. This use of assessment information is good. Assessment information is used less consistently, and thus not as well, to raise the attainment of the average and higher attaining pupils within lessons. Consequently, progress for some groups of pupils is not as good as it could be because teachers do not set sufficiently accurate and challenging tasks. In subjects other than English, mathematics and science, teachers assess pupils' attainment informally at the end of each unit of work. However, there are no clear procedures for keeping a systematic check on what all pupils have achieved within these subjects and what they still need to achieve. As at the time of the previous inspection, procedures for monitoring pupils' personal and social development are good. Teachers maintain careful social profiles for each pupil based on classroom observations.
33. The procedures for assessing pupils' special educational needs are sound. The class teachers set appropriate targets for their learning in their individual education plans. This is done with the help of the co-ordinator for special needs. Parents are consulted and informed of their children's progress and what they can do to help. Pupils are also involved in discussion about their targets. Pupils' progress is regularly reviewed and the plans adjusted accordingly. The school provides good levels of support, particularly by the number of classroom assistants employed, and pupils who have a statement of special educational need receive appropriate full time support. The pupils within the attached 'speech and language unit', all have statements of special educational need. Their progress is assessed regularly and monitored closely and they receive very generous levels of support.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

34. Relationships with parents were good at the time of the last inspection, and remain so. The school has continued its hard work to enable parents to influence their children's education and as result, has established a good partnership with them. Parents take an interest in their children's work and this helps their children's learning at the school. The curriculum and consultation meetings are well attended. The school has successfully run parenting projects, focusing on certain areas of the curriculum like literacy and mathematics. Parents of pupils with statements of special educational needs maintain close contact with the school and take great interest in the review meetings convened to check on the pupils' progress towards meeting the targets set in their individual education plans. The CHIPS association, (Chaulden Infants and Parents and Staff), though informal, is a helpful body which raises money to improve the school's resources. Parent governors participate well in the work of the governing body.
35. Parents have favourable views about many aspects of the work of the school. They like the way in which the school is run and find that the school is approachable, which it is. They believe that the

school helps pupils in becoming mature and responsible; pupils' personal development is very good. They strongly feel that their children like school; the inspection evidence supports this. Some parents are not satisfied with the amount and consistency of homework and the range of extra-curricular activities. Inspectors found that provision for the homework is satisfactory. The opportunities for, and the range of extra-curricular activities, although limited at present, are satisfactory for an infant school. Communication with parents is good but not all parents have a clear idea of what level of homework should be expected for pupils in this age group or what constitutes a satisfactory level of extra-curricular activities.

36. The information provided for parents, including the curriculum meetings and plans, is generally good and helps parents to become involved in the education of their children. The prospectus is 'user-friendly' and governors' reports are informative. Both documents meet the statutory requirements, some by enclosing data sheets showing national test results, although these enclosures are not referred to in the documents. There are frequent consultation and curriculum information meetings for parents and these are usually well attended, for example the recent science workshop. Annual written reports for parents are satisfactory. The reports indicate what pupils can do, but do not give information about what pupils should be capable of. Targets for improvement set in the reports are helpful but do not clearly indicate what the parents can do to help to improve their children's academic standards.
37. The school works hard to ensure that the parents of pupils with special educational needs are consulted regularly about their children's needs and the progress they make. Parents of children with statements of special educational needs are kept well informed and are invited to attend review meetings. They are also kept informed of targets set in their child's individual education plans.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

38. The headteacher provides good leadership and she is supported well by the governing body. The management of the curriculum is satisfactory. The delegation of responsibilities has been difficult. The decline in the number of pupils in the school has been matched by fewer teaching staff to share responsibilities. The part-time nursery teacher and the new reception teacher teach the children in the Foundation Stage satisfactorily, but there is no member of staff responsible for co-ordinating work of the two classes and for taking a lead in managing curricular improvements in this part of the school. The headteacher has taken on responsibility for managing several subjects and responsibility for managing provision for pupils with special educational needs. The new co-ordinator for mathematics has been successful in raising standards, especially in Year 2, and is developing a good overview of provision across the school. A nursery nurse manages the curricular developments in information and communication technology well. There is no deputy headteacher. The two very experienced senior teachers have responsibility for developing literacy and art and design across the school but their roles have not been developed so that they can support the headteacher by taking a more leading role in school improvement. Systems to assess teachers' performance are in place but their impact is patchy. The headteacher and the governing body strive to improve standards but a united drive towards school improvement by the team of teaching and support staff has not been established.
39. The management of special educational needs is good and due regard has been given to the introduction of the new code of practice. It is very effective in maintaining good levels of provision for pupils with special educational needs. Clear communication between teaching and support staff underpins much of the work. Procedures are systematic, organisation thorough and records carefully maintained. Annual reviews for pupils with statements of special educational needs are carried out appropriately and meet requirements.
40. A good school development plan has been produced. It focuses on improving the quality of teaching and learning and on developing an agreed policy designed to promote better teaching. The headteacher visits classrooms to monitor teaching regularly and provides teachers with good written feedback on their performance. Subject co-ordinators have also begun to monitor teaching

in order to identify areas for improvement. The criteria for measuring effectiveness that are incorporated in the school development plan often focus appropriately on standards. The plans for English, mathematics and science, for example, use improved test results as the measure of success. In plans to develop the Foundation Stage, information and communication technology, assessment and the role of subject co-ordinators, there is no equivalent reference to improved standards as a measure of success, and this undermines their effectiveness.

41. The governing body are closely involved with the school. The chair provides exceptionally good support and spends a great deal of time in school. She is also chair of the junior school's governing body and this makes a good contribution to continuity of provision. School accounts are kept meticulously and financial allocations are used wisely to maintain and improve provision. Allocations of money for specific purposes, such as those to provide support for pupils with special educational needs or the money to improve information and communication technology, are used for their intended purpose.
42. The school administrative team provide good support. They ensure that the office runs smoothly and efficiently and that administrative procedures are managed well. The school does suffer from an excessive amount of paperwork and, although the administrative team is allocated an above average number of hours for their work, they are always fully occupied and the headteacher is often obliged to deal with excessive demands for information. One example is a recent demand for details about the school site and buildings which has taken many hours to complete. Sound use is made of computer technology to maintain accurate records of pupils and school accounts. The governing body applies the principles of best value well; they compare the school's performance with that of similar schools and evaluate the effectiveness of their spending decisions by monitoring their impact. The governing body also insists on competitive tendering and checking to see if lower prices for services can be obtained elsewhere whilst also retaining quality. The governors have prudently accrued a substantial reserve of money to ensure that the effects of a falling roll, and the consequent reduction in income, can be managed without undue difficulty and that finances are available to provide for a security fence, new gates and minor building improvements. The headteacher and the governing body have managed the falling roll well and have been successful in maintaining small classes and good ratios of adults to pupils. This provides teachers with particularly good opportunities to foster learning effectively.
43. The school's accommodation is good. Classrooms are spacious and are kept clean and tidy. The high proportion of good teaching, which contributes strongly to the sound standards that pupils attain, and the generally sound quality of educational provision, show that the school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

44. In order to improve standards further the headteacher, staff and governing body should:
 - (1) * Improve the standards that pupils attain in reading by:
 - identifying more precisely the skills to be developed and teaching them systematically;
 - assessing pupils' progress in developing reading skills regularly and using these assessments to identify the next steps in learning;
 - developing children's interest and enthusiasm for literature by studying the works of children's authors in greater depth.(paragraphs 4, 72, 74, 75, 76, 81, 82)
 - (2) * Improve the use of assessments of pupils' learning by:
 - identifying the specific skills to be developed in each area of the curriculum and recording pupils' achievement by evaluating their mastery of these skills;

- ensuring that assessment data give a clear picture of the stages that pupils have reached and using these data to plan the next steps in learning.
(paragraphs 18, 32, 79, 96, 99, 105, 125)

(3) Raise teachers' expectations of pupils' performance by:

- ensuring that activities have a clearer focus on what skills, knowledge and understanding pupils are intended to learn, as a result of the activities provided;
- presenting greater challenge for pupils;
- setting higher standards concerning the quality of work that is produced.
(paragraphs 14, 16, 18, 77, 79, 86, 91, 95)

(4) Review delegated responsibilities and develop the roles of senior teachers and subject managers by requiring them to participate more fully in leading and managing curricular and other developments. (paragraph 38)

Other less significant areas for improvement:

- * Opportunities are missed to use computers to support teaching and learning.
(paragraphs 4, 80, 92, 109)

* These areas for improvement have already been identified by the school and feature as priorities in its development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	36
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	43

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	1	17	18	0	0	0
Percentage	0	3	47	50	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	16	82
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	17

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6	27

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3

National comparative data	5.6
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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	20	20	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	19
	Girls	13	15	15
	Total	28	31	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (78)	79 (76)	87 (83)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	17	16
	Girls	13	14	13
	Total	32	31	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73 (83)	78 (81)	70 (78)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
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 of pupils on roll
50
0
4
0
0
1
0
2
0
0
0
0
0
0
0
1

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0

No ethnic group recorded

6

0

0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16
Average class size	20.5

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	196

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.25
Number of pupils per FTE adult	5.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

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.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	421 262
Total expenditure	416 207
Expenditure per pupil	3 277
Balance brought forward from previous year	69 851
Balance carried forward to next year	74 906

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

98

Number of questionnaires returned

24

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	52	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	22	70	4	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	43	17	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	39	17	4	17
The teaching is good.	52	30	9	0	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	30	9	0	9
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	39	9	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	35	9	4	4
The school works closely with parents.	26	43	13	9	9
The school is well led and managed.	57	39	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	43	4	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	9	17	22	9	43

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

Since the previous inspection a new curriculum that follows national guidance has been introduced for children in the nursery and reception classes. National guidance recommends six areas of learning and these are:

- *personal, social and emotional development;*
- *communication, language and literacy;*
- *mathematical development;*
- *knowledge and understanding of the world;*
- *physical development; and*
- *creative development.*

The curriculum details 'stepping stones' in each area of learning that lead to 'Early Learning Goals' for each area.

45. Most children in the reception class are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals described in national guidance in their personal, social and emotional development and to meet these goals in the other five areas of learning. On entry, their development is broadly in line with that expected of children at this age although a significant proportion experience difficulty in using language to express ideas. Teachers and support staff are very caring and quickly establish warm and friendly relationships with all children. As a result, the children rapidly feel safe and well supported. Children with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and those from differing ethnic backgrounds are all well integrated. The nursery nurses, one of whom is also a trained teacher, provide especially strong support for children's learning in the nursery. The teacher who normally leads the teaching in the nursery class was absent for most of the period of the inspection due to illness but the supply teacher and nursery staff maintained the standard of teaching and learning well during her absence.

Personal, social and emotional development

46. Children achieve well in this area of learning in relation to their attainment on entry to the school, so that they are on course to exceed the expected standards by the end of the Foundation Stage. Teaching and learning are good.
47. Classrooms are carefully organised and activities well prepared and set out so that children are able to settle quickly to their tasks. Routines are well established so that children know what is expected of them. For example, after playing in the outside activity area, children come in when asked, hang up their coats and settle quietly on the carpet awaiting fresh instructions. They understand the system of choosing activities from the 'choosing box'; they select an activity, find their name card and place it against a card representing the activity they have chosen. Children become engrossed in activities that interest them, such as when creating complex patterns with regular two-dimensional wooden shapes. They sit still on the carpet and maintain concentration in large groups when stories are read. Children are encouraged to co-operate with each other in many ways, such as working together in a circle to raise and lower a parachute. Throughout the Foundation Stage, teachers, nursery nurses and other supporting adults are warm, friendly and sensitive towards the children so that relationships are positive.
48. Children with English as an additional language are given time to observe what others are doing and encouraged to join in as they feel more confident. Most children are happy and secure, seeking help and support as they need it and moving confidently from one activity to another. They negotiate well with each other when problems occur, such as who should be the proprietor of the café and who the customers. Squabbles do occur but the children themselves usually sort them out without the need for adult intervention. Staff praise children who behave well and work hard to remind them about what is expected. Children are encouraged to use their initiative. In

the reception class they manage the reward system themselves by maintaining records and filling in charts. They are trained to turn the lights off and shut doors as they leave the classroom. Consequently, good habits are promoted well and behaviour is good and often very good in class and around the school.

Communication, language and literacy

49. Children achieve appropriately in relation to their attainment on entry to the nursery. Most are well on course to attain the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning by the end of the reception year. Teaching in this area is always at least satisfactory. Examples of imaginative teaching were seen in the reception class where children were identifying words that rhyme. In one lesson the introductory activity involved passing a hat around a circle of children, putting the hat on when the music stopped and finding a word that rhymed with hat. The next day a similar activity was used as children passed a pen around and had to think of a word that rhymed with pen if they were holding it when the music stopped. Tasks are not always well matched to children's particular stages of development, however. In the reception class the words that class were concentrating on reading and writing during the week were 'in' and 'it'. This presented insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils. Similarly a word exercise that involved cutting words from catalogues was too hard for the lower attaining children.
50. The teachers and nursery assistants extend children's speaking and listening skills appropriately during practical activities. In one lesson, children in the nursery studied a book entitled 'What Do I Look Like?' and used mirrors to examine their faces in order to determine the similarities and differences between the children in the class. This generated much discussion and helped the children to develop a deeper understanding of the terms 'same' and 'different'. They have opportunities for play acting in the class café and enjoy taking orders over the telephone. They are polite to customers and complete orders conscientiously. Most children in the nursery can 'read' their play writing and the lists they make. They can write at least the initial letter of their names and the older children write their names clearly. The equipment provided for role-play is limited and areas, such as the home area in the nursery and the outdoor learning area, are not well developed to promote effective learning. The school has identified this as an area for development and it features in the school development plan. The use of these areas is not yet sufficiently well planned to fully promote the development of children's skills in communication, language and literacy.
51. Children in the reception class make good use of the equipment in the nursery class when it is empty in the afternoons. There was evidence of computers being used effectively to support children's language learning in the nursery although such use was more limited in the reception class. In both classes headphones and audio-tapes are used well to assist with the acquisition of language skills. Staff give clear directions so that the majority of children understand and follow instructions well. In the nursery most children speak clearly and can make their needs known although a significant minority has limited vocabulary. In the reception class, children enjoy studying nursery rhymes to identify the words that rhyme. Many found such tasks very challenging and several could not match the word 'fall' with 'wall' when reciting 'Humpty Dumpty'. One lower attaining child found great difficulty in finding rhyming words in a simple puzzle. They write their names clearly though not all letters are correctly formed. In the reception class, children are using a widening range of words to express their thinking.
52. Children enjoy looking at books and classrooms have an appropriate range of accessible books. In the nursery, a library book borrowing system is well established and parents are encouraged to share stories with their children. In the reception classes, reading books are taken home daily and parents are invited to comment on their children's responses in a reading notebook. Although teachers read these comments, they miss the opportunity to use these notebooks to record progress and to indicate targets for future learning to parents. Most children have a positive approach to reading. Older, higher attaining children in the reception classes are beginning to recognise individual words and are able to recall parts of the story. They use the pictures and their knowledge of the stories to prompt their reading. When asked, they recognise the initial sounds of some letters but they do not readily use their knowledge of letter sounds to help them

with unfamiliar words. Most children rely heavily on memory when 'reading' simple stories. They match words such as 'go' and 'the' on request but when reading show limited understanding of the links between letters and the sounds that they make. Lower attaining children learn the story by heart, using the pictures as prompts as they read. They understand the sense of what they are reading and talk readily about the pictures.

Mathematical development

53. Most children are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals in this area by the end of the reception year. The teaching observed was satisfactory and there were many strong features. One lesson began exceptionally well when a patchwork quilt was imaginatively introduced to the class. The children were appreciative, 'Look, they're diamonds' and 'It would take a very long time to sew that all up.' Children took off their shoes and walked carefully along the coloured patterns in the quilt. The teacher skilfully involved children who have English as an additional language and are at an early stage of developing English speaking skills. One was asked to walk across the green coloured squares and as she did so it was clear that good levels of understanding were being developed. As they studied the quilt, children were introduced to the word 'diagonal' and recognised that the patterns were made from squares and rectangles. The idea of a repeating pattern was introduced exceptionally well. Unfortunately this excellent introduction was not followed up with related activities. The lesson lost momentum as the children returned to their 'choosing' routine because the stand in teacher felt obliged to follow the plans provided for her.
54. Children experience a suitable range of mathematical activities including number work and counting, shapes, learning the days of the week and the months of the year, recognising the different parts of the day and telling the time. Their understanding of number, time and mathematical language is reinforced by singing nursery songs, such as 'One, Two, Three, Four, Five, Once I Caught a Fish Alive' and 'Five Little Monkeys' that reinforce counting and promote an understanding of addition and subtraction.
55. In the nursery children are at widely varying stages of development. Several found difficulty holding up three fingers on each hand and held up four instead. Few recognise numbers related to their addresses. Others love counting to what are for them really big numbers, such as 20, although occasionally there is some confusion around 16 and 17. They know the names of regular two-dimensional shapes such as triangles, rectangles and semi-circles. In the reception class children recognise certain numbers, such as five, 'It's my year old', easily. They are fascinated by the patterns that numbers make. In one lesson they created columns of one, then two, three squares up to ten. They commented on the pattern, 'Look it's come to stairs'. Higher attaining pupils experimented by creating higher steps with squares, 1, 3, 5, 7 and 1,4,7,10, 'It still looks like ladders – don't they?' They develop an understanding of 'more' and 'less' but find it very challenging to determine how much less five is than eight, for example.
56. In the reception classes, good use is made of daily routines such as completing the register and calculating how many more children are having cooked meals than are having sandwiches. Classrooms have an appropriate range of mathematical equipment for counting and sorting. Children are adept at swiping credit cards as well as using plastic coins as payment in the café. Some evidence was seen of children using computers to support this area of learning, such as when children in the nursery used a number matching program and 'built' pictures of houses on screen using a range of two-dimensional shapes, which most printed out without assistance.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

57. Most children are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals in this area by the end of the reception year. The teaching observed was satisfactory and there were many strong features. The lesson that featured a patchwork quilt, for example, also included the study of an electric sewing machine. The children understood that the plug had to be pushed into the socket and switched on before electricity would run through the cable to make the machine work. The lesson featured a good demonstration of how to join pieces of material by sewing them together. This captivated the children's interest. Again this excellent start to the lesson was not followed up by

providing related activities. The opportunity to capitalise on this exceptionally good beginning and to build on the interest that had been generated was lost. Children gain an appreciation of time passing by studying photographs of themselves as babies and toddlers.

58. Computers are available for children to use in both the nursery and reception classes. During the inspection, however, little evidence was seen of any systematic teaching of computer skills or linking the use of computers with a particular theme, such as repeating patterns, to consolidate learning. In one productive activity, led by the nursery nurse, children used magnets to sort and classify which materials were attracted to the magnet and which were not. They discovered that magnets would never pick up things made of wood, plastic or rubber but that magnets would pick up most things made of metal. They were puzzled by this and wondered why certain metals refused to stick to the magnet. Curiosity was also stimulated as children noted that some conkers floated and others sank. Here the beginnings of scientific enquiry were being developed well.
59. Although a good range of everyday activities, such as the sand and water trays, are available to the children, these activities lack a clearly planned focus with a level of challenge well-matched to the next steps in children's development. Consequently, the learning from these activities is less effective than it might otherwise be.

Physical development

60. Most children are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals comfortably in this area by the end of the reception year. Children benefit from the use of the outdoor play area and from a good-sized hall. The teaching and learning observed were satisfactory overall and children achieve appropriately in relation to their attainment on entry to the school.
61. During one session in the hall, an older group of children from the nursery enjoyed moving around the hall in different ways. They moved rapidly but were conscious of others and skilfully avoided knocking into one another. They stopped immediately on command, listened attentively and followed instructions well. They developed a good sequence of bending and stretching movements thoughtfully. The lesson ended well with a cooling down period when the children played a singing game. In the outside area, children pedal tricycles, push prams and propel toy cars around the circuit. They show good co-ordination and control. More clarity is needed in teachers' planning, however, so that it shows precisely what children are meant to be learning when they use equipment. There are regular opportunities for children in the reception class to share the nursery's outdoor area and equipment.
62. Children's manipulative skills are developed through the use of pencils, pens, brushes and a range of tools. Children also have access to a variety of large and small construction toys and to modelling materials such as clay and dough.

Creative development

63. Children are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals comfortably in this area by the end of the reception year. Their achievement is satisfactory in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Teaching and learning are satisfactory.
64. A variety of relevant experiences are available but not all these activities are sufficiently well planned to ensure they are developmentally appropriate for all children. There is, in particular, insufficient challenge built into the activities provided. Children use paint in a variety of ways to create different effects. They use their fingers in thick paint and spatter and drip paint to make patterns. They experiment with colour mixing and discover, for example, that red and yellow make orange. Junk materials are recycled to make models. They cut potatoes to make potato prints as well as printing with sponges.
65. Role-play areas such as the café and home corners are provided to promote imaginative play as well as speaking and listening skills but the home corner in the nursery lacks a good variety of

stimulating and inviting resources. This limits the value of these activities in extending children's creative development and their speaking and listening skills. Children are keen to join in familiar songs and rhymes. They know many of the words by heart and successfully match their actions to the songs.

66. Appropriate links are made with other areas of learning and some evidence was seen of children in the reception class using a computer program to create self portraits.
67. A strong feature of the Foundation Stage is the way teachers, nursery nurses and other adult helpers work together as a team. Everyone works hard and knows their role in the classrooms. Staff model good relationships by, for example, greeting and thanking each other when they meet together for assembly. Routines are clearly understood and consistently implemented so that children feel secure and know what is expected of them. There is a comprehensive induction process in place for children and parents new to the nursery and suitable transfer arrangements for children moving into the reception class. Parents are kept well informed about what their children are doing in school. Good use is made of the rooms available in the nursery to maintain daily contact with parents. After each session in the nursery, the staff take it in turns to meet with assembled parents in one room while they wait to pick up their children. This provides good opportunities for informal discussions about children's welfare and development.
68. Staff observe and record children's responses to a range of activities but the data collected are not yet sufficiently well used to ensure that the activities planned are appropriate for the developmental needs of all children. Assessment procedures ensure that children's progress and attainment are systematically recorded against the stepping stones in each of the six areas of learning but there is no developmental record that shows what letter sounds pupils know and which they need to learn, or what words children know how to read and what specific skills they need to develop next.
69. Since the last inspection, the national requirements for children in reception and nursery classes have changed significantly with the establishment of the Foundation Stage. Consequently, no direct comparisons can be made with the judgements made at the time of the last inspection. In relation to their attainment on entry to the school, children achieve well across the nursery and reception classes in their personal, social and emotional development and their achievement is satisfactory in the other five areas of learning.

ENGLISH

70. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards that are broadly average in speaking and listening and in writing; they are below average in reading. This suggests that standards in reading have declined since the last inspection when it was judged that standards were in line with national expectations, but this judgement was not substantiated by the 1998 National Curriculum results, which showed that standards in reading were very similar to those that are now being attained. Standards have been improving steadily in writing since 1999 but not in reading.
71. Inspection findings are reflected in the school's performance in this year's national tests for pupils in Year 2. These indicated that pupils' attainment was average in writing but well below average in reading when compared with all schools nationally. When compared with similar schools, pupils' attainment was close to the average in writing but below average in reading. The results indicate a much improved picture in the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in writing; there was a more modest improvement in the proportion of pupils who achieved the higher level in reading. The previously marked differences in the achievements of boys and girls have also narrowed. The results include an above average number of pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs. The needs of these pupils are identified appropriately and are included in their individual plans for learning. These pupils make satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them. However, as a result of their difficulties, many are unable to make the rapid rate of progress that would enable them to attain average standards.

72. Since the last inspection, there have been improvements in aspects of English and the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has made a good contribution to maintaining standards. In response to the school's relatively poor performance in English the school initiated a good programme of work designed to improve standards, especially in writing. The initiative was successful and pupils' performance in writing improved. However, there has not yet been the same emphasis placed on improving the teaching of reading. The school has recognised that the improvement of pupils' performance in reading is an issue that requires attention as a matter of priority. Improving standards in reading features in this year's school development plan.
73. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards in speaking and listening that are broadly average. Teachers have maintained the good support identified at the time of the last inspection. They place great emphasis on developing opportunities to promote speaking and listening within many areas of the curriculum. For example, in a religious education lesson in Year 2, the pupils had good opportunities to gain confidence in speaking to the rest of the class through role-play. In most lessons, questioning and discussion sessions are designed to encourage all pupils to contribute and most respond with well thought out answers. In some lessons however, the closing part of the lesson was rushed or not used sufficiently well to encourage pupils to talk about what they had learned. Most pupils listen attentively in class both to the teacher and to one another.
74. By the end of Year 2, the standards that pupils attain in reading are below average. Pupils have opportunities to practise their reading skills and develop an interest in books during literacy lessons and during extra sessions devoted to quiet reading. However, there is insufficient emphasis placed on the development of pupils' individual skills, such as a developing an understanding of the links between letters and sounds. Although the pupils are taught this reading skill within the literacy hour, the work is not always clearly planned to match the levels that the pupils have reached or to provide sufficient challenge. Pupils' reading records do not clearly show what stage the pupils have reached and what the next steps in learning should be.
75. The school has responded to the below average standards in reading by improving reading resources, both for group reading in class and books in the school's library. In response to the lower attainment of the boys in the national tests, the school has reviewed provision to ensure that there are sufficient books to appeal to them. The school is working on improving standards in reading and teaching staff have had extra training and advice on effective reading strategies. The school successfully implements the Early Literacy Support programme each year; this is part of the National Literacy Strategy designed to support lower attaining pupils. Home school contact books are used to encourage the participation of parents and carers in their children's reading. However, these are mainly used to record the books that the pupils have read and not used sufficiently to communicate pupils' progress or to form the basis of a dialogue between home and school. These books are rarely used to record errors and to set short-term targets for improvement. Records of pupils' developing understanding of how letters, and strings of letters, represent sounds are not sufficiently precise nor are records developed cumulatively on a day-to-day basis.
76. When reading aloud, the higher attaining pupils in Year 2 are fluent and confident and are beginning to use appropriate expression. They understand the plot of the story and respond to the humour in the text. They make effective use of letter sounds and pictures to work out unfamiliar words. Most pupils read accurately and carefully but without expression. Their understanding of the plot of the story is less secure. The lower attaining pupils are at the early stages of reading. When reading from simple texts their reading is hesitant and lacks fluency. They make many mistakes and are insecure when meeting new words. Many are good at using the pictures as prompts when describing the sequence of events in the story. Few pupils have a broad knowledge of children's literature. Even though Beatrix Potter's 'Flopsy Bunnies' featured in activities in a Year 1 class, few could recall events from the story and although 'Handa's Surprise' featured as the centre piece for an art and design display, pupils knew very little about the story or its origins.

77. Pupils' attainment in writing is broadly average. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to write independently, putting their ideas in a logical sequence, and are beginning to use a good range of adjectives to make their writing more interesting. They use capital letters and full stops to denote sentences and generally spell simple words accurately. Although they are being introduced to more complex forms of punctuation, such as question marks, they do not use these in their writing. Many pupils forget to use full stops and capital letters when writing. They use a limited vocabulary but spell simple words such as *went, park, slide*, accurately. The lower attaining pupils are at an earlier stage of development. They struggle to write independently, often only writing the initial letters to represent words. Pupils are developing their handwriting steadily, using joined script, but this is not always well formed. The presentation of pupils' work is often untidy and on occasions teachers' expectations of the quality of writing that should be produced are too low.
78. Pupils on the school's register of special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them. Their needs are identified accurately and the good support that they receive from the learning assistants ensures that they are given every opportunity to develop satisfactory speaking and early reading and writing skills.
79. Although the majority of lessons seen during the course of the inspection were good, the scrutiny of pupils' previous work and discussions with pupils, indicated that teaching is generally satisfactory. Across the school there are particular strengths in the quality of teaching; pupils are managed well and very good relationships are formed between pupils and teachers. Classroom support staff make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers' planning clearly identifies the overall objectives that they want the pupils to learn. However, the objectives that they identify are not sufficiently precise and work is not always based on what the pupils already know and can do. As a result, pupils are frequently given tasks that are insufficiently well matched to their particular stages of development. As a result, pupils are not provided with appropriate challenges and this leads to a measure of underachievement. Most teachers use questioning and discussion well to develop pupils' learning. Teachers plan thoughtfully to make their lessons interesting. Pupils' work is marked regularly although much of the response to pupils' work involves oral support and advice on improvements.
80. Pupils have adequate opportunities to use their literacy skills in other subjects, such as history, and they are introduced to a broad range of texts. Although computers are used by teachers in some lessons, there is no systematic programme for teaching word processing and keyboard skills.
81. The school has developed satisfactory procedures to assess the achievements of its pupils, based on regular evaluations by class teachers. This information, alongside that gained from the assessments of pupils' attainment soon after they start school, is used to plot the attainment of pupils as they move through the school and to set individual targets. However, the information is not always sufficiently precise and is not always used as well as it might be to plan and set work that is well matched to pupils' particular stage of development. Individual records of pupils' attainment in reading generally record when each pupil has read to the teacher or parent but they generally lack evaluative comments that will help pupils to improve their reading.
82. The co-ordinator manages the subject satisfactorily. She is beginning to evaluate the pupils' attainment in statutory tests and uses this information to identify common weaknesses in provision, such as the school's below average performance in reading. As a result, improving standards in reading has been included as an area of priority within the school's development plan. The co-ordinator has had some opportunities to monitor teaching and learning within classes and has concentrated on evaluating the effectiveness of group reading. She has sampled pupils' written work in order to identify areas for development. Resources are satisfactory but word processing and keyboard skills are not taught systematically. There is little evidence of computers being used to conduct research. The library has an appropriate collection of books but it is not yet used as well as it should be to consolidate and extend pupils' reading skills and their ability to conduct research.

MATHEMATICS

83. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and by the end of Year 2, most pupils attain standards that are broadly average. At first sight this does not seem to correspond with this year's national test results, which indicate that standards were below average when compared with all schools nationally. However, if the pupils from the speech and language class are not included in the comparative data, the school's performance would have matched the national average. Standards are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection although it is clear that the school's performance in the national tests is now much better than it was in 1998.
84. One strong feature of pupils' work is the quality of discussion that is generated. In a lesson for pupils in Year 2, for example, pupils were studying odd and even numbers. They knew that an even number had a partner and an odd number left part of the number without a partner. In this lesson they explored the result of adding odd and even numbers. A good discussion developed about whether zero was odd or even, 'It hasn't got a partner, so it must be odd', and 'Yes, but it hasn't got one left over either, so it must be even.' 'Look 90 is even and so are all the numbers that end in zero – so zero must be even.' This showed well-developed mathematical thinking skills. The lesson was well structured. The learning objective was explained well to the pupils and work for the higher attaining pupils was challenging. They were encouraged to explore why an even number added to an odd number always equalled an odd number by discussing possible reasons with a partner. Lower attaining pupils were supported well by a classroom assistant. The pupils explained what they had learned well in a short review session towards the end of the lesson, 'We thought that odd plus odd would be odd but it wasn't'. The results of their work were not recorded by the pupils to consolidate learning and form the basis for further work. Most pupils in Year 2 know how to count in twos, fives and tens and recall addition and subtraction facts quickly. They are good at recognising pattern in numbers and know the names of two and three-dimensional shapes. They are developing a broad understanding of the subject.
85. Examples of good work were seen in the speech and language class where pupils were exploring symmetry. Pictures of butterflies and mirrors were used to demonstrate symmetrical patterns. Pupils made ladybirds and placed spots in matching patterns on each wing case. Here one adult per two pupils ensured high levels of support. Pupils understood matching and 'the same as' but their understanding of symmetry was less secure. Discussion sessions were used well to extend language and understanding.
86. Teaching in all the lessons seen was good but the scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils indicates that generally, in the longer term, teaching across the school is satisfactory. A shortcoming of the teaching is that pupils are not always provided with sufficient challenge and, for the higher attaining pupils in particular, teachers' expectations of pupils' performance are not always high enough. There are examples of appropriate challenges. In a lesson for pupils in Year 1, the lower attaining pupils were supported by a classroom assistant as they worked with models of swamp monsters which they arranged in different ways to make five in the group. Other pupils arranged ten cubes on the points of a triangle and recorded the different combinations, such as $3+3+4=10$. Higher attaining pupils had to use four digits to make 15 and record their results in number sentences. In this lesson a number stick, divided into ten sections was used well to illustrate different combinations of numbers that make 10. Although thinking skills and discussion sessions have been established effectively, there is little work recorded in the older pupils' books. There is little evidence of computers being used systematically to support teaching and learning. Teachers' planning is good and follows the format recommended in the National Numeracy Strategy which has been implemented successfully. In several classes teachers add notes to their planning sheets as they evaluate how well the lesson has gone and what they might do to improve learning opportunities in future lessons.
87. The subject is managed well by the co-ordinator who has only recently taken on the role. She is making a good contribution to improving standards. Already she is trialing a new assessment system with her class with a view to extending it across the school. It is more precise than the system used previously and lends itself more readily to informing lesson plans and setting short-

term targets for pupils. Resources are adequate to support teaching and learning. Activities, such as cooking, are used well to enable pupils to apply their numeracy skills in purposeful ways. The school's digital cameras are used well to record the tasks that pupils pursue, such as measuring activities around the school. The school organises good family workshop afternoons when parents are invited into school to join in learning activities. These have proved very successful with up to 35 families attending. This makes a good contribution to developing a partnership in learning.

SCIENCE

88. Pupils attain average standards by the end of Year 2 and their achievement is satisfactory. The pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress both in the speech and language class and in the other classes in the school. The school is committed to raising standards. Over the past four years teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment indicate that there has been a steady improvement. Although the proportion of pupils who attained average standards for science in 2002 declined slightly, there was a marked increase in the percentage attaining higher levels. The school's published performance data are adversely affected by the higher than average proportion of pupils in the school who have statements of special educational need. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly to ensure that pupils experience all the elements of the subject described in the National Curriculum programmes of study.
89. Pupils in Year 1 learned about their senses, for example, by tasting various foods and recording whether the taste was bitter or sweet. In their study of the human body they knew the names of many parts of the body, such as head, arms and legs. Most understood that the body has a bony skeleton, the top part of which is the skull. They are beginning to think about controlling variables in order to make tests and experiments fair. In one class, where they are studying the properties of materials, pupils used a variety of papers and carried out experiments to find out which was the best for specific purposes. In the course of their experimental work, one group, that was making paper aeroplanes, decided that a fair test of the effectiveness of their designs would be to stand in the same place before launching their aeroplanes and recording how far they had flown. These Year 1 pupils knew how to sort materials by certain properties. Through experimental work, pupils understood how materials, such as chocolate, can be changed by heating and then cooling. When studying physical processes, pupils used batteries, wires and bulbs to enable them to build a simple circuit. They also knew of many household items that work by electricity. In one class, the teacher gave pupils some magnets. She invited them to use these magnets to find out to which objects they attracted. When using pairs of magnets, pupils were amazed to find, that in certain positions, the magnets repelled each other.
90. Many pupils in Year 2 are successfully learning to predict before carrying out experiments and observations. They recorded their predictions about what was likely to happen when water, chocolate and an egg were heated and then cooled. Pupils studied the main parts of a plant, particularly the flower, through direct observation before drawing and labelling the parts of the plant. They understood the need for healthy eating and drew, and many correctly classified, items of food such as vegetables, milk and meat. They made satisfactory attempts at discovering the basic materials used in everyday objects. For example, they looked at a wooden table and recognised that it originally started life as a tree. In their study of materials pupils also experimented with materials that might help to clean dirty water. They recorded what effects passing dirty water through materials, such as chalk, sand and carbon particles, had on the purity of the filtered water that emerged.
91. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good and very good teaching seen during the week of the inspection. Teachers generally encourage pupils to experiment and find out things for themselves. They create a purposeful working atmosphere that helps pupils to concentrate on their work without interruption. They have very good relationships with their pupils and manage and motivate them well so that they are involved in, and enjoy their learning. Teachers place an emphasis in lessons on scientific enquiry. They ensure that after completing

experimental work, pupils have sufficient time to discuss their findings and reinforce their learning by recording results in a scientific manner. Teachers stress the correct use of scientific vocabulary in lessons. In some experimental work, however, too much is done by the teacher and there is not enough hands-on activity by the pupils. This does not give sufficient challenge to the higher-attaining pupils.

92. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to improving pupils' literacy skills through writing about their experiments, correctly labelling diagrams, discussing their results and learning the correct scientific vocabulary. Numeracy skills are also supported well as many of the investigations involve measuring, counting and recording skills. For example, pupils in one class had recorded the outside temperature using degrees centigrade. Little work was recorded using computers, although there was evidence of the use of one computer program to enable pupils to print and label the parts of the human body.
93. The co-ordinator is keen to raise standards and has spent time usefully analysing tests results, to discover what areas of the curriculum need to be developed further. She has had valuable support from the local education authority adviser, particularly on lesson observation. Satisfactory assessment procedures, which involve checking on how each individual is doing, have recently been introduced.

ART AND DESIGN

94. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and by the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards that are close to what is expected for pupils of this age. Good links are made with other subjects. Pupils in Year 1 have made a large circular collage from different fabrics to illustrate the story of the Creation and have made good prints with hands and fingers to produce a chart about different ways of making ten. Again in Year 1, pupils have studied the works of Paul Klee and used computers to create a grid of straight lines which they fill in by flooding sections with colour, using a good paint program. In Year 1 pupils have carefully studied cross sections of oranges and lemons and have used colour well to paint these carefully. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of media, including clay, charcoal, pastel crayons and chalks as well as various sketching pencils. They are introduced to an appropriate range of techniques such as wax resist, marbling and printing. These techniques are often used purposefully for things such as covering exercise books with well decorated covers on marbled paper.
95. Teaching is satisfactory overall and much of it is good. Good features include the training of pupils in painting techniques. They follow the routine of washing out brushes, dabbing off excess water on the sponge, which forms part of the palette, picking up a reasonable quantity of powder paint before mixing and applying it. In this way the paint remains clean and the results are clear. Particularly bold self-portraits have been painted by pupils in the speech and language class, using this method of using paint effectively. In the best lessons, explanations are clear and pupils are left in no doubt about what is expected of them. In a lesson for pupils in Year 1, for example, the teacher gave a clear demonstration of the technique of transferring patterns indented over wax crayon to make prints. The teaching was precise and pupils were encouraged to observe carefully as the teacher maintained a running commentary with questions such as, 'Am I leaving any white spaces? Am I covering the paper completely?' On occasions, however, too many different techniques are introduced at the same time and as a result finished work is of mediocre quality. Also pupils are not always sure about the standards of work expected because teachers do not always indicate their expectations clearly. Teachers plan and prepare lessons thoroughly. Records of the activities that pupils have experienced are kept but no systematic records of individuals' attainment and progress. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of artists. In a lesson on landscapes, for example, pupils studied landscapes by Hockney, Chagall, Hiroshige and Lowry. This makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.
96. The co-ordinator offers good support to colleagues and manages the subject satisfactorily. Resources are adequate to support teaching and learning and computer technology is being used increasingly to support teaching and learning. A good planning framework has been developed to guide teachers' lesson planning. There are no systematic procedures to assess and record which skills pupils have mastered. There is photographic evidence showing examples of particularly good quality work produced in the past, such as beautifully drawn and coloured paintings of the birds of prey that visited the school. Although there are examples of high quality work in the school, the above average work identified at the time of the last inspection is not now consistently in evidence. Pupils thoroughly enjoy this subject, they take a keen interest and concentrate well.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

97. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and by the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards that are close to what is expected for pupils of this age. This is a similar picture to the one described in the last inspection report. Good links are made with literacy as demonstrated when Beatrix Potter's 'Tale of the Flopsy Bunnies' was used to create fabric collages based on the pupils' computer generated designs. Good links are made with other subjects such as religious education as pupils made puppets to illustrate the story of the Nativity. In Year 2 numeracy skills were used well as pupils measured their feet and pieces of felt when making boots to wear. The process of designing and making is well established. Pupils also evaluate their finished products, 'What I would change'. They have designed and made good hot water bottle covers and carefully sewn glove puppets.

98. Too few lessons were seen to form judgements about the quality of teaching. However, it is clear that teachers plan lessons carefully and that pupils are introduced to an interesting range of activities, including food technology. In one session pupils were baking cookies with a voluntary helper. Good attention was paid to hygiene as pupils washed their hands thoroughly and girls tied back their hair. Here numeracy skills were reinforced well as pupils measured out ingredients, set the oven temperature and placed their cookies in the oven for eight minutes. In another short session, pupils enjoyed using plastic construction apparatus to make models. This was only satisfactory, however, as there was no clear design brief to add purpose to the task. Although pupils gained from experimenting with the apparatus, there was insufficient challenge to make best use of the activity and to extend learning.
99. Computers are being used increasingly to support teaching and learning but several teachers lack confidence in using computers and are not quite sure how to retrieve situations when the wrong buttons are pressed and tool bars, for example, get lost. The school uses a nationally recommended planning framework to guide teachers' lesson planning but the school does not record systematically the skills that pupils have mastered. Resources are adequate to support teaching and learning. The co-ordinator has only just taken on responsibility for managing the subject and has not as yet had time to have an impact on improving standards.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

100. Due to timetable arrangements it was possible to observe only one lesson in history and no lessons in geography during the inspection. Geography and history are taught in alternate half term blocks during the year. As the emphasis at present is on history, there were no lessons to be observed in geography. Judgements about standards are based on the lesson seen in history, the scrutiny of pupils' previous work and work on display, teachers' planning and discussion with the co-ordinator.
101. Inspection findings indicate that standards in both geography and history are in line with those expected for pupils of this age and achievement is satisfactory. This is similar to the standards reported at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' previous work and planning documents provide evidence that there is reasonable coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study in both history and geography over the course of a year.
102. In geography, pupils have a sound knowledge of their immediate area through a strong emphasis on fieldwork. Pupils' previous work indicates that they have carried out a survey of the local shops satisfactorily and conducted useful surveys of traffic that pass through the locality. They recognise the key features of the immediate area and mark these on a simple plan. Pupils acquire a satisfactory knowledge of contrasting areas of the world when studying the sources of some of our foods. They identify and mark on a world map the countries where some of the food comes from.
103. In history, pupils' previous work indicates that pupils in Year 2 understand that history is the study of people and events from long ago. Pupils in Year 1 are beginning to understand that oral sources and photographs can be used to find out about the past. Pupils in both Years 1 and 2 have studied the differences in lifestyles of people in the 1940s. They are beginning to make inferences about the lives of people during this period when studying objects representing those used in homes and schools, including toys, and make comparisons with similar objects that we use nowadays.
104. It is not possible to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching. From the lesson seen in history and pupils' previous work, indications are that teaching is satisfactory. In the lesson seen, the teacher used a video recording to tell the story of Guy Fawkes. The pupils watched carefully, although the content was rather difficult for the lower attaining pupils to understand, and a good discussion followed that indicated that most pupils had grasped the essential elements of the episode. The teacher used 'costumes' to illustrate parts of the story

during discussion. The pupils responded well and showed interest in the subject. The scrutiny of pupils' previous work indicates that teachers use a range of methods to record work, including opportunities for pupils to use their English skills. However, tasks given are usually the same for pupils of all ability levels.

105. Teachers follow a two-year rolling programme to cover the recommended curriculum and there is reasonable planned coverage of the recommended units of work in both history and geography. However, this planning does not yet indicate the progressive development of knowledge, understanding and skills as pupils move through the school, with no clear guidance for teachers about what the pupils are to learn in each year group. At present there are no whole school systems for the assessment and recording of pupils' progress. This means that teachers are unsure about what pupils already know and can do in order to help them in their planning and move pupils' learning on.
106. The co-ordinator manages both subjects satisfactorily. She has developed the school's overall curriculum plan for the subjects and writes the medium term plan for each class so that she is aware of what is being taught. However, she has not yet monitored the teaching and learning within classes. There is a satisfactory range of resources in school which teachers supplement for history resources by bringing artefacts from home. Resources are enhanced by visits as well as visitors to school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

107. By the end of Year 2, standards are at expected levels, are similar to those in other infant schools and have been maintained since the last inspection. As no lessons were observed during the inspection it is not possible to make a judgement on teaching. A wide range of other evidence indicates that pupils' achievement, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory.
108. The pupils have secure basic skills. They use the computer's mouse confidently and control it well to click on items. Pupils know how to use a number of tools seen on the computer screen. In one design and technology lesson, pupils in Year 1 knew how to select different paint tools and different colours. They understood the terms 'portrait' and 'landscape' in deciding which general shape to use in making designs for sewing. Pupils knew how to print out their work. They knew how to use some programs that support their work in literacy lessons. They write simple text to the screen and save and print their work. They have some experience of using a programmable toy for developing their control skills.
109. There was little evidence during the inspection of computers being used widely across the curriculum. There are few examples, other than those mentioned above, apart from in science where pupils labelled human body parts and printed them out. Opportunities are missed to use computers to support teaching and learning in other subjects.
110. The recently appointed co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and is committed to increasing the use of computers in order to raise standards. She has recently revised the policy for the subject, though this has not yet been discussed with staff or adopted by governors.
111. The school is involved in the 'new opportunities fund' programme for training teachers in the use of computers. Some teachers have yet to complete this training and to feel more confident in their use of computers. The co-ordinator is working hard to support all the staff. The school is hoping to make use of a computer suite that is soon to be established in the attached junior school. The school has Internet links and the co-ordinator is looking at the feasibility of developing a school website. Assessment procedures are being developed and teachers have completed lists of the skills to be developed in their classes. More computers are being provided and the school has recently purchased digital cameras.

MUSIC

112. No lessons were seen, but other evidence and the quality of singing in assembly, indicate that standards are at expected levels and the same as those reported at the last inspection.
113. The school employs a specialist music teacher who takes music lessons throughout the school on Thursday afternoons. As a result it was not possible to observe any music lessons and therefore to make a judgement on teaching.
114. In assemblies, pupils respond well to music used as they come in, for example to 'Music for the Royal Fireworks' by Handel. Their singing is reasonably tuneful and the words they sing are clear.
115. Apart from singing, pupils enjoy playing a range of mostly untuned percussion instruments. As a result of a visit by performers, from a percussion workshop, pupils played on a wide range of instruments and this encouraged them to make their own instruments. For example, some pupils stretched rubber bands over paper tissue boxes to make a stringed instrument. Other pupils made simple percussion instruments by stretching cling film over the top of boxes, in place of the lid.
116. There has been a concentration on composing. Younger pupils use informal symbols, such as the shapes of bears, to record what they have composed. They draw big and small bears in any order and then learn to say and tap the rhythm relating to their written composition. From tapes supplied, it is clear that pupils understand the connection between their writing and the performance, using their voices and instruments such as sticks and spoons. Older pupils produced more complex rhythms, using shapes on a matrix to express rhythms that they composed about machines. Pairs of pupils made very reasonable attempts at performing their compositions. They used their voices to make machine-like sounds, copying the composition drawn on the matrix. In their performances, the pairs of pupils were assisted by the singing of the teacher and the rest of the class.
117. The school has provided a number of opportunities for pupils to see and hear the performance of others, for example by visits to the school by adult singers, violinists and brass players. This develops the pupils' knowledge well.
118. The school has a good range of untuned instruments and a reasonable number of tuned instruments, such as chime bars, glockenspiels and xylophones. There is also a good selection of tapes, records and compact discs. The curriculum is presently being updated but covers the requirements of the National Curriculum. There is very little evidence of computers being used to support teaching and learning. The co-ordinator has produced some useful assessment sheets to record pupils' progress in performing, composing, appraising and listening.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

119. The achievement of all pupils is satisfactory. The standard of their physical skills is broadly in line with that expected for pupils of this age. This is an improvement on the findings in the last report. Dance and gymnastic lessons were observed during the inspection. Pupils also make good use of large climbing equipment situated outside.
120. By the end of Year 2, pupils' work in gymnastics is sound. They understand the importance of warming up before starting on their main activity and from the start of each lesson they work with a reasonable level of energy. Pupils increase their physical strength through running, balancing and carefully controlling their movements in a confined space. They demonstrated that they could move safely in different directions and stop quickly on a command from the teacher. Pupils developed confidence, co-operative skills and spatial awareness as they found imaginative ways to move. The majority understood how to put activities together in a sequence, as seen in one lesson where pupils successfully created a sequence of two moves including a balance and a jump. By watching the performance of others, they learned to evaluate what they were doing and sought to improve their own performances. Pupils' achievement in dance is satisfactory. Both boys and girls move rhythmically to music and change their movements appropriately to

alterations in the rhythm and mood of the music. Some imaginative work was seen with pupils showing great concentration, as they were encouraged to work at different speeds and levels.

121. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. This is an improvement on the findings in the last report where several lessons were recorded as unsatisfactory. Teachers ensure that the pupils are appropriately dressed for physical education lessons and they control classes well. Lessons move at a good pace and teachers spend an appropriate amount of time explaining what they want the pupils to do and then ensuring that they get on with the activities set. Good use is made of demonstrations by individuals and groups of pupils, to share ideas and show good practice.
122. Planning for physical education covers the requirements of the National Curriculum. There are examples of assessments done for individuals highlighting what pupils can perform and understand in acquiring and developing skills and in selecting and applying skills, but these are not used widely. Cameras are used to record examples of good movement sequences. The co-ordinator organises a successful annual sports-day, which is popular with the pupils and well supported by parents.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

123. Pupils achievement is satisfactory and by the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards that meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
124. Pupils in both Years 1 and 2 follow the same programme of work, which is planned within a two-year rolling programme to cover the requirements of the syllabus. They make a sound start in developing their understanding of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. As part of their work in developing their understanding of the nature of God, they learn that God is like a loving father who forgives us when we are sorry. Past work indicates that pupils in Years 1 and 2 are familiar with some of the stories from the Bible, such as the story of the Creation, which they compare soundly with stories of the Creation from other faiths. When learning about 'God the law-giver', they make comparisons between the Jewish and Muslim beliefs. Pupils' previous work also indicates that they are developing an understanding of Christian festivals and the symbols associated with the three faiths. A good feature of pupils' learning is their knowledge and understanding of the beliefs of major faiths and the consideration of how these affect the way we live.
125. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers involve pupils in a good level of discussion, for example when discussing issues relating to 'The story of the lost son'. In these lessons, the pupils were given time to reflect on issues about forgiveness and they contributed some profound thoughts and observations about the story. In a particularly effective lesson, the teacher maintained the interest of the pupils well by pausing before the end of the story to give the pupils time to discuss and record, with support from the teaching assistants, what the ending should be. They responded well with some well reasoned arguments about the possibilities. Pupils' ideas were then discussed as a class before the teacher ended the story. Pupils' previous work indicates that teachers are consistent in expecting pupils to record their learning either in pictures or in writing. However, the same activities are generally planned for pupils of all abilities, which means that pupils with below average attainment and special educational needs have difficulty in recording their work without support. Teachers' planning follows the locally agreed syllabus, which promotes good, progressive coverage of the syllabus. At present there are no formal procedures for assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding or recording pupils' achievements as they move through school.
126. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership. She is responsible for the medium-term planning for each of the classes and is therefore aware of what is being taught. She has not had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning on a formal basis. There is no evidence of computers being used to support teaching and learning. Resources for the subject are satisfactory and cover the religions studied, adequately. They are enhanced well by visitors to

school such as members of the local churches and representatives from the Jewish and Muslim communities.