

INSPECTION REPORT

WOOLENWICK INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Stevenage

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117323

Headteacher: Mrs Gill Grainger

Reporting inspector: Mike Carter
20714

Dates of inspection: 18 - 20 November 2002

Inspection number: 247762

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Nursery School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School Bridge Road West Stevenage Hertfordshire
Postcode:	SG1 2NU
Telephone number:	01438 314885
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Ellam
Date of previous inspection:	16 - 19 February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20714	M Carter	Registered inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Music Special educational needs English as an additional language	What kind of school is it? How high are standards? How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9505	D Haynes	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Pupils' attitudes.
11419	J Underwood	Team inspector	English Foundation Stage Religious education	
31790	M Jones	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History Physical education Educational inclusion.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school draws pupils mainly from a residential area of Stevenage. Although the socio-economic characteristics of the area are about average, the proportion of professional families represented at the school is low and the proportion of pupils claiming free school meals (19 per cent) is about average. The school accepts children into the nursery twice a year and most leave the school at the end of Year 2 to go to the adjacent junior school. However, there is an above average number of pupils joining or leaving at other times (15 per cent last year). There are fewer pupils than at the time of the last inspection but the roll has now stabilised with 123 full-time pupils and a further 44 who attend the nursery on a part-time basis. About 10 per cent of the pupils are from a wide mixture of ethnic-minority backgrounds, including Irish, black-Caribbean, and Bangladeshi. One of the six pupils for whom English is an additional language has external support. There are 25 pupils identified as having a learning difficulty or specific individual need and this is a little lower than average; three have statements of special educational need and this is above average. The proportion of children on entry with typical or better attainment for their age is a little below average and a significant number have limited vocabularies, undeveloped speaking skills, and often lack verbal confidence.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good, improving school and a substantial majority of pupils make good progress compared to their attainment on entry. From a relatively low start, particularly in their speaking skills, most pupils achieve well. The school is a happy place for all to work and learn. Although still weak in science, writing, and speaking, standards are average and rising in reading and mathematics. A good number of effective ways to make improvements are being implemented by a very effective headteacher and senior teachers. Finances are prudently used and the school offers good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards and provision in information and communication technology.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff are very good.
- The school provides a very effective environment for learning, in which the pupils are cared for well.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to use their initiative, become responsible, and learn to socialise well.
- The range of extra-curricular activities is very good.
- The partnership with parents is very good.

What could be improved

- Standards in science.
- Standards in speaking.
- Standards in writing.
- The challenge provided for higher attaining pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1998. Since then, it has a new teaching staff and headteacher. All the issues raised in the last report have been improved. Procedures to check the pupils' progress are now good. There are clear and effective management roles, which contribute well to development planning. Teaching has improved and progress is more even. Standards in religious education and music are now at least satisfactory. Standards in information and communication technology have risen to good. However, writing is still not used enough across the curriculum. Standards overall have risen at a similar rate to the national rise but in writing and science they are below average. The school's leadership and management are more effective and improvements overall have been good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

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

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

Standards since 1998 have risen in line with the national trend and are now getting close to where they should be. Starting from generally below average attainment on entry, the pupils achieve well. In mathematics, the proportion of pupils achieving high standards is above average. However, there is room for improvement in science, where standards are below average, and in writing, where standards are below average compared to schools in similar economic circumstances. The pupils' skills in speaking are below average and although much is done to improve them, this weakness affects the pupils' achievement in other subjects. Nevertheless, standards in reading are satisfactory and supported well by staff, helpers, and parents at home. Weaknesses in attainment in music and religious education have been overcome and standards in information and communication technology are now good, due to staff training and much improved facilities. In the Reception year, most pupils are on course to reach the expected standards except in communication, language, and literacy. In Year 2, the large majority of pupils achieve the expected standards in reading and mathematics, although fewer do so in speaking, writing, and science. However, there is a degree of under-achievement by higher-attaining pupils because the challenges set for them are not always sufficiently different. The numbers of pupils in the 2002 national tests coming from minority ethnic groups was so small that comparisons are statistically unreliable. The evidence from current work shows that pupils from minority ethnic families are making satisfactory progress and most of them are attaining the expected standard for their age. The few pupils with English as an additional language are making satisfactory progress in their acquisition of English. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them. The school sets overall targets for attainment, which were largely met in 2002 and add a degree of challenge for 2003.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The pupils enjoy the school and take part in all its activities well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The pupils' self-esteem is promoted well and this helps them to abide by the commonly-known rules.
Personal development and relationships	Good. They show good initiative and take responsibility well.
Attendance	Well below average, although unauthorised absence is low. Statistics are unduly affected by a very small number of pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good overall. It has improved since the last inspection and is similar to the national picture. There are strengths in the teaching of reading and information and communication technology and teaching is good in English overall. The proportion of good lessons is greatest in the Foundation Stage. Many teachers are comparatively inexperienced but are effective in helping the pupils to learn well and make at least satisfactory progress. The

teaching of speaking and listening is satisfactory but there are missed opportunities to help pupils remember new words. The pupils are slow to learn new vocabulary and need much repetition. In writing and mathematics, the teaching and the pupils' learning are satisfactory although few reach high standards. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well in the nursery and Reception classes and satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2. The teaching of science is satisfactory but sometimes the main learning points are not emphasised enough. Teachers check the pupils' learning well and provide interesting lessons, managing the pupils' behaviour effectively. Consequently, the pupils are well motivated and are keen to meet their personal targets. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties are met with detailed support from assistants. Higher attaining pupils are identified but are not always given learning that is sufficiently challenging.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Requirements are met well and the curriculum is broad and varied. It is also enriched well with special events and a very good range of popular extra-curricular activities. Pupils withdrawn from lessons occasionally miss important learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The records of the pupils' progress and the support they receive are good. Checks are regularly made on progress towards the targets in the pupils' individual education plans but not on progress through the National Curriculum.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. The care and support for these pupils is good, but there are few specific resources for individual pupils' needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good, with very good provision for the pupils' social development. The school's council helps the pupils to gain a sense of responsibility. Through discussion lessons and in assemblies the pupils are clearly taught right from wrong and gain a sense of other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Child protection and the support for pupils' personal development are very good. Procedures to encourage regular attendance are satisfactory and they are good in checking up on the pupils' academic and personal progress and ensuring their welfare.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Very good. The school is friendly and open for parents to talk. It provides very good information for parents, who mostly respond well in supporting the children's education. Parents have strongly positive views about the school and its leadership.

An effective policy is in place to combat racism.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. A clear vision, sense of team-work and the use of good strategies for improvement is helping to raise standards. The professional development and induction of teachers is good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good with all the statutory requirements met. The governors also have a clear overview of the school and its needs, while both supporting and checking up on progress.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. There are rigorous checking procedures and effective identification of needs leading to clear areas for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. Governors provide funding for the most important improvements and are effective in arranging for the best value to be obtained.

The school's accommodation is very good and provides well for a variety of activities. Resources are at least satisfactory and for some subjects, such as information and communication technology, they are good and helping the pupils gain skills well. The good number of teachers and support staff further supports this learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How much the children like the school.• The good progress pupils make.• How open and friendly it is.• How well it is led and managed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A few feel after-school activities are limited.• More explanations for the parents about mathematics teaching.• Better clarity about how to use reading record books to communicate.

Inspectors noted how positive parents' views are. They also found that the children like school and, generally, their progress is good. They found the school welcoming and open to ideas. Inspectors also found that the leadership and management of the headteacher, in particular, is very good. Inspectors found a very good provision for extra-curricular activities and disagree with the few parents who felt there should be more. They found a good degree of explanation and information provided for parents but can understand that a few parents wish for more particularly in the light of the mathematics games that are loaned. They also understand those parents who were not clear about how the reading record book could be used as a form of home-to-school communication.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Overall, the school's performance is close to what it should be because the teaching is often good and helps the pupils to achieve well from a slightly below average start. Current standards in Year 2 are average in reading and mathematics but below average in writing, speaking and science. The results of the national tests and assessments made of the Year 2 pupils in 2002 largely reflect these findings. In comparison with schools having pupils from similar economic circumstances, the 2002 results were average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. Results of the teachers' assessments in science were well below average. However, the assessments in science may have been affected by incomplete record keeping due to staff changes at this period. The trend in results over the last five years has been generally positive and similar to the national picture. Nevertheless, standards in speaking, writing, and science have not risen as fast as in mathematics and reading and are not as high comparatively as they were at the time of the last inspection largely because there are currently too few pupils with high attainment for their age.
2. Although in the 2002 national tests, the boys performed slightly less well in writing than the girls, the difference was smaller than that found nationally and in other subjects it was very small. The performance of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds was a little lower than that of other pupils in the 2002 tests but it was based on a small number of pupils and lacks statistical significance. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory general progress. Despite a low level of provision for the very few pupils at the early stages of English language acquisition, satisfactory progress is made. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory because teachers make a special point of including them in class discussions and the support staff offer good guidance in working towards the targets in their individual education plans, carefully recording their achievements.
3. The progress of all pupils on entry in the Reception year is charted and suggests a target for their attainment as well as the possibility of quantifying their progress after the Year 2 national tests. The pupils' degree of progress can be compared with the local education authority's average. Nineteen per cent of the pupils in reading, 23 per cent in mathematics, and 40 per cent in writing made less progress than average. In writing, progress was weakest. However, in each case, over half the pupils made average progress or better, confirming a picture of good progress and achievement overall. Nevertheless, in these subjects there is a small number of more-able pupils who do not achieve high results in the national tests and who should do. The provision for higher attaining pupils is not sufficiently effective although the school does have stated procedures for 'gifted and talented' pupils, which are designed to provide for higher attainers.
4. Targets are set for the proportions of pupils to achieve the expected standards and higher levels at the end of Year 2. These were met for those reaching the expected standards in 2002 but not for higher levels in reading. The targets for 2003 are clearly based on a sound knowledge of the pupils and their progress and add a degree of challenge. Progress is satisfactory towards meeting the targets for the expected standards but less secure for the levels of higher attainment. The pupils currently in the Foundation Stage are largely on course to attain the nationally agreed early learning goals by the end of the Reception year in all the areas of learning except in communication, language, and literacy. In this latter area, children start in the nursery with generally low levels of skill, particularly in knowing enough words to express themselves sufficiently. They make typical amounts of progress in talking, reading and writing but despite the many learning opportunities, and good learning in some cases, fewer than the average proportion of children achieve the nationally expected standards in communication, language and literacy by the end of the Reception year.
5. Although much is done to help the pupils gain skills in speaking and communicating, by Year 2 there are still weaknesses and a significant number of pupils find it hard to articulate their thoughts accurately because they forget, or are not clear about, the best words to use. For example, in a lesson for Year 2 pupils, many found it difficult to form sentences using words to extend the meaning such as 'and' or 'which'. This lack of language significantly affects the pupils' learning in other subjects, for example, in science some suggested the brightest torch was the one with "most space" meaning the largest reflector. The relatively inexperienced staff members sometimes miss opportunities to reinforce language.
6. Despite the satisfactory teaching in writing, few pupils have high standards because of the limited accuracy of their spoken language and because they easily forget new words or phrases. The pupils' standards in reading

are aided by a number of support assistants and voluntary helpers. This, together with satisfactory systems for recording progress, the teaching of reading in literacy lessons and support at home, promotes satisfactory standards. The satisfactory standards in mathematics are the result of teaching that is carefully planned with a good emphasis on the lessons' main teaching points. However, some more able pupils under-achieve because there are not enough challenges at their level.

7. Standards in information and communication technology are good and have improved since the last inspection. This is because of the new provision of a well resourced computer suite which has helped teachers to be more confident in their teaching and because of the good level of training provided for staff. Standards are satisfactory in art and design but not as high as at the time of the last inspection. There are occasional examples of good work but many pupils' drawing skills are relatively immature. In history, standards are satisfactory and the pupils show good interest, gaining knowledge well but their understanding of the key elements, such as a sense of time, are weaker. In music, standards have improved since the last inspection when they were unsatisfactory. The quality of the pupils' singing is often good. The teachers work hard to overcome any lack of expertise they may have in music. A good number of activities enrich the pupils' musical experiences. Standards have also risen in religious education since the last inspection, when they were unsatisfactory and the planned curriculum was not taught fully. This has been corrected and standards are satisfactory. In physical education, standards are satisfactory and have been maintained. The pupils gain a range of appropriate experiences and skills, although they seldom are asked to think about how they could improve their movements. In geography and in design and technology there was insufficient evidence to judge standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are good and contribute well to the positive learning environment that exists within the school. The school's aims and values are appropriate contributing well to the positive atmosphere in the school. Pupils are keen to enter school and settle quickly into the daily routine without undue intervention from the class teacher. During nearly all lessons, the majority of the pupils concentrate well and show enthusiasm.
9. Behaviour is good. Starting in the nursery and continuing throughout the school, teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour are high and the pupils live up to these expectations most of the time. Behaviour and attitudes to learning in lessons are good though the standard varies with the quality of teaching. Moral development is good and pupils know the difference between right and wrong and what is expected of them. Behaviour around the school, in assemblies and at play is good. No incidents of bullying or oppressive behaviour were seen and this type of behaviour is not reported as a problem by either parents or pupils. However, there was one fixed-period exclusion last year. The school is an orderly community. There is no evidence of vandalism. Learning resources and property are treated with respect. Social development is very good and is evident in a natural courteousness to adults, which was well demonstrated by pupils from all year groups as they walked about the school and during lunch times. Pupils relate well to each other and to all members of the teaching and non-teaching staff. They gain good social skills despite the limited vocabulary of many. Pupils were at ease discussing 'Harry Potter' and aspects of their own family life, this was particularly evident during informal discussions with pupils when they talked about their likes and dislikes and about the behaviour of children around the school. Award assemblies are held regularly where individual pupils receive recognition with the awarding of stickers and certificates for improved attitude or performance.
10. The school offers a range of opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school including being friendship monitors. The monitors are proud of their position but the effectiveness of the scheme could not be assessed. Other pupils help around the school, in class and are members of the school council. Levels of inclusion are good. The very good range of after school activities that included science, art, gardening, dance, and team sport clubs, are well-attended and are open to both boys and girls of all abilities. Personal development is encouraged by allowing pupils to take decisions in lessons and receiving appropriate praise. Pupils reflect on the feelings of people of different cultures, ages and religions. The school supports local and national charities and pupils are aware of those less fortunate than themselves.
11. For the reporting period, overall attendance at 92.2 per cent is well below the national average, a level that is lower than that found at the previous inspection. This is largely because of official requests that a few pupils remain on the school's roll despite temporarily living elsewhere. However, the level of unauthorised absence is 0.3 per cent and slightly lower than the national figure.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. Teaching is good overall. Just over 40 per cent of the lessons were satisfactory, half were good, and nearly ten per cent were very well taught. There were no lessons that were unsatisfactory. This picture of teaching quality is better than at the time of the last inspection and similar to the national picture. The quality of teaching is similar throughout the school with a majority of lessons being well taught for the nursery and Reception years as well as in Year 2, while in Year 1 the proportion of satisfactory lessons is slightly greater. There have been a large number of changes in teaching staff over the last two years and currently the large majority of teachers are in the first few years of their teaching experience and three are newly qualified. While teachers' inexperience is sometimes evident with missed opportunities to reinforce learning or to match correctly the level of learning to pupils' abilities, there is a particularly strong desire to gain effectiveness and improve the pupil's learning.
13. Teachers' management of the pupils in their classrooms is often good and this helps the pupils to concentrate and maintain their interest well. The best teaching employs a number of strategies, such as counting down to end group discussions. However, of great importance is the way in which the teachers value the pupils and their contributions thus supporting their self-esteem and providing an example of listening and making positive comments, which other pupils learn to follow. For example, in a lesson for pupils of Year 2, one pupil with behavioural difficulties made several interjections, which the teacher and other pupils listened to respectfully without interrupting and on one occasion spontaneously praised the good suggestions. On other occasions, behaviour that is likely to reduce the learning for other pupils is converted into productive activity by learning support assistants, sometimes by withdrawing the pupil for other work. The pupils also behave generally well in lessons because the content and the activities are interesting, explained clearly and the staff give supportive feedback. Because of these facets of teaching, the pupils generally make good efforts and work hard despite a slow rate of writing.
14. The teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is good in the nursery and Reception classes and satisfactory through the rest of the school. In the nursery and Reception classes the teachers make good use of a host of activities to remind the children what they have been learning. For example, in the nursery class, a computer program directly related to the learning of numbers that the children had been doing and, in the Reception class, the choice of activities following a class discussion about numbers and sizes helped the children apply what they had been discussing. In Years 1 and 2, basic skills are usually taught satisfactorily and the pupils are sometimes reminded of them in group-work with support assistants. However, there is generally too little repetition, as well as some missed opportunities, to remind the pupils of recent learning, particularly when pupils are working at another subject. For example, in a Year 2 religious education lesson, many pupils forgot to write using joined letters and spelling was very inconsistent. In a Year 1 science lesson, the pupils were reminded about the specific words they had been taught about light sources but not provided with reminders about more general vocabulary.
15. Planning is usually done well and teachers follow the guidance provided and plan together with others who teach the same age range. This provides similar learning for pupils of each age group. Expectations for the pupils' learning and for their work are good in the nursery and Reception classes and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, where in a significant number of lessons the activities are too easy and very occasionally too hard for the more able pupils. However, teachers throughout the school make their expectations for behaviour clear and usually share each lesson's intended learning with the pupils at the beginning. Teachers check up on the pupils' progress and often record their achievements. This helps them to know the general levels of the pupils' knowledge and plan appropriate work. However, this is sometimes not sufficiently different for higher-attaining pupils, although it is for pupils with learning difficulties.
16. The learning support assistants make extensive records of the daily achievements of pupils with learning difficulties. These records involve detailed descriptions rather than succinct evaluations of how close the pupil is to meeting the targets set in the individual education plan. Classroom assistants are seldom used to record pupils' responses during whole class discussion sessions. The teaching of pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory and teachers are good at providing learning that is well related to that of the rest of the class and to their individual needs. Occasionally, when assistants teach these pupils, the intended learning is not sufficiently emphasised and the pupils' progress is slower. The teaching of the few pupils for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory and they make sound progress both in the subjects being taught and the acquisition of English language. Staff members are careful to identify and provide for their needs and this helps the pupils to progress soundly. One pupil is at an early stage of learning English and is supported by a

visiting specialist but this expertise does not extend to provision of advice and materials for the school.

17. The school has a good policy for providing for pupils who are gifted or talented and applies this to those with higher attainment. However, the policy is not embedded in the school's practice and consequently higher attaining pupils are not always identified in subjects other than English and mathematics. This results in too little difference made for their learning in these subjects and consequently their progress is satisfactory but not good. Teachers discuss and track the progress of pupils of different ages within each age year group, those from ethnic minority backgrounds, and that of boys and girls and try to overcome any significant differences.
18. Homework is set well in Years 1 and 2 and some of this is regular and designed well to support the pupils' learning, for example, of spellings and reading tasks. Other homework is less regular but relevant to the pupils' learning. The teaching of reading and of information and communication technology is good and the pupils learn well making good progress. The teachers are confident, have been well trained and have good resources enabling the pupils to make good progress in these subjects. In speaking and listening, the pupils' progress is satisfactory from a low starting point. Teachers' questioning is usually good and provides opportunities for pupils to respond but there are missed opportunities to repeat words and teach phrases. In science, teaching is satisfactory but the staff's knowledge and understanding of the subject is not strong enough for sufficient emphasis to be made on the key points to learn. Teaching is satisfactory in all the other subjects observed.

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

19. The curriculum meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum, and for religious education. The curriculum for the children in the nursery and the Reception year is planned using the nationally agreed Foundation Stage curriculum for this age group. Throughout the school the curriculum meets the needs of those with learning difficulties and those for whom English is an additional language. It takes good account of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, whose basic skills are satisfactorily promoted. It is devised to provide equality of access and opportunity for all pupils, although there are occasional times when pupils miss learning when taken out of lessons to be involved in other activities. The provision for personal, social and health education is good and mostly provided in planned discussion lessons. Overall, the quality and range of the learning opportunities is satisfactory and often good, particularly in the Foundation Stage.
20. Taken overall, the curriculum is broad and relevant, and reflects the aims of the school. The school has successfully overcome shortcomings in time allocations for subjects. The time available for lessons is above the average for this type of school. Policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects. The school development plan has a programme for the staged review of guidance for each subject to ensure that subjects are addressed in order of priority. Issues about the implementation of the agreed syllabus for religious education, which were discussed in the last report, have also been overcome. However, the use of writing in other subjects remains under-developed.
21. Teachers of year group classes plan together and this promotes equal access to the curriculum. Planning is thorough and detailed. Co-ordinators check the teachers' plans and they have all started to observe some lessons. Members of the governors' curriculum committee are effectively involved in the school. They visit classes on a regular basis and prepare a report on an agreed aspect for the curriculum committee.
22. The school's policy for educational inclusion is comprehensive and contains aims and objectives regarding different groups of pupils. Teachers are familiar with the relevant equal opportunities legislation covering race, culture, gender, and disability. Pupils with learning difficulties have full access to the curriculum, which is amended well to meet their needs. They are usually supported well by classroom assistants and given tasks at an appropriate level, often being withdrawn to work in a quiet environment. There is also some withdrawal of pupils from lessons for other activities such as recorder tuition and choosing books from the library. These withdrawals sometimes disrupt the pupils' learning and progress of the lessons for others. For example, in a science lesson for Year 1 pupils, a large proportion of the class missed important teaching to attend a recorder lesson and this disadvantaged them in the following work, despite the teacher's further explanations. The school is rightly considering the effect of withdrawing pupils on their opportunities in other subject areas, but does not keep a regular check on the impact of withdrawals.
23. The curriculum is enriched by visits from experts and enthusiasts in the community and good use is made of

the local environment. Parents and grandparents have a good level of involvement in the school as voluntary helpers and this is highly valued. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities provided, including music and sport. Furthermore, the school has good relationships with other local institutions such as the junior school to which most pupils move at the age of seven. Some aspects of curriculum policy, for example, sex education, are discussed in common and agreed between governors of both schools.

24. There are many strengths in the school's provision for social development, which is very good. For example, there is a school council and this is not often found in an infant school. It meets monthly and has affected the dinner menu and asked for music to be played at lunchtimes. The Year 2 pupils are responsible for the "friendship posts" in the playground. Opportunities are provided for pupils to work together either in pairs or small groups. The involvement of the pupils in activities out of school, such as representing the school at a local council meeting, in fund-raising for charity and a range of visits, also help to develop their social skills.
25. Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is good. Pupils' spiritual awareness is increased through assemblies, for example, when a candle is lit to help them focus on the *"quiet time to reflect"*. Pupils respond sensitively to the atmosphere created, often through a simple prayer or thought. The telling of stories from the bible by visitors from different Christian faiths helps to broaden the pupils' understanding of Christianity. Opportunities are presented to pupils during discussion lessons about assembly themes or any issues arising and for them to learn to respect the views of others. Teachers know their pupils well and through praise and encouragement help to raise their self-esteem. A weekly assembly is held to celebrate pupils' successes and to award certificates and stickers. The pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. The behaviour policy, rewards system, and ethos of the school have a positive effect on promoting acceptable behaviour.
26. The pupils are made aware of their local heritage by visiting important local sites such as museums, theatres, shops and a garden centre as well as through visitors, for example, local authors. Through geography, they learn about other cultures, for example, as they study Mexico. The school is hoping to link up with a school there and already has a link with a school in Zimbabwe. There are few displays celebrating other faiths and customs. However, the pupils learn about these through religious education lessons, assemblies, and visitors who follow other faiths. For example, a parent came to talk about Diwali and a representative of the local Hindu community led an assembly. Pupils listen to a range of non-western music such as African drumming and have looked at African art. All these experiences enhance pupils' understanding of living in a culturally diverse society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

27. The school cares very well for its pupils. The headteacher is responsible for child protection and her knowledge of pupils and their backgrounds together with clear guidance for teaching staff provides a very good level of protection. The very good guidance on child protection given to classroom staff does not extend fully to other staff and those adults assisting in school. Record keeping and communication within the school is very good and contact is maintained with outside specialists and their services are effectively used when required. First aid provision is good and the children know what to do should they be hurt. The site manager and team of cleaners maintain a high level of cleanliness and any aspect of maintenance is attended to promptly. This helps create a safe learning environment and instils high values in the pupils that are reflected in their respect for property and for learning resources. The health and safety awareness of the governing body is at a high level and the site manager submits an annual report on the state of the premises. Whole-school safety inspections and risk assessments are carried out at a general level and records sometimes lead to improvements that are included in the school development plan.
28. The school has few rules but they are well known and the school's aims and values are prominently displayed around the school. The pupils know what is expected of them. Aspects of personal hygiene and behaviour are taught effectively in personal, social and health education lessons. The class teachers teach safety in lessons; this was very clear in a sewing lesson for Reception children. Good procedures are in place to promote good behaviour and there were no incidents of harassment or bullying during the inspection. The head teacher is very active in supporting the class teachers to establish and maintaining high expectations of behaviour. This is particularly evident in assemblies and through the school's communications to parents. There are good procedures for the collection of younger pupils by parents at the end of each day. A very good level of supervision is provided when the children are at play. A box with hoops, balls, and skipping ropes is available but not all the supervisors are active in guiding the pupils' play activities. The procedures concerning

supervision help to maintain a consistent approach to managing the pupils' behaviour and personal development. The support for, and procedures to keep a check on, the pupils' personal development are very good.

29. Registration is quickly taken and there are very few pupils arriving late. Registers are maintained correctly using both a manual and a computer-based system. The administration staff are very confident and competent in analysing the data. A good feature is the return of the registers to the office after each registration; any late comer having to report to the office. The school does not contact parents on the first day of absence if no notice has been received. However, there are satisfactory procedures in place for monitoring absence. The class teacher monitors attendance patterns and the education welfare officer is involved once per month and when required. Opportunity exists for the office staff to become more involved in registration procedures and absence monitoring. Overall, attendance statistics are adversely influenced by a very small group of pupils. The school is very aware of this and is trying to improve it, despite the fact that the attendance of the rest of the pupils is average.
30. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are of good quality and contribute effectively to curricular planning particularly in English and mathematics. Assessments based on the national tests, supported by a local authority' analysis service is presented in a range of formats. The school effectively monitors the attainment and progress of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and those for whom English is an additional language. Records are maintained well and regularly updated. Assessments in other subjects are conducted two or three times a year. A local authority scheme for the assessment of personal development is used that sets targets and checks up on progress towards them. This is very good practice. Class records follow the pupil through the school and are passed on to the receiving junior school.
31. During lessons, teachers and teaching assistants often question pupils carefully to find out their levels of understanding. They then work with identified groups of children to help them gain a greater understanding. Curriculum leaders carefully examine the pattern of results in the national tests to identify the knowledge and skills that could be taught more effectively.
32. The school regularly checks the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and reviews of their individual education plans are held at regular, planned intervals. The information is used to plan the next steps in each individual pupil's learning. The pupils themselves are involved in reviewing progress towards their targets. Staff members emphasise that pupils learn in different ways, in order that pupils with learning difficulties do not feel different to other members of the class. Pupils in the early stages of learning to speak English are supported well and cared for to ensure they integrate successfully into the school community.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

33. The partnership with parents is very good and has improved since the last inspection, when it was good. Parents' views as expressed in the parents' questionnaire and at the parents' meeting are very positive. Parents particularly appreciate the fact that their children like school, that they are making good progress and there is an expectation of hard work. Parents regard staff as very approachable and all the parents responding to the questionnaire think the school is well led and managed. The only areas of concern raised by a small number of parents involved homework and the school's partnership with parents.
34. The school offers parents an opportunity each term to meet class teachers and discuss the progress of their children. The school has a flexible timetable for these meetings to accommodate working parents. The quality of information provided for parents is very good. A weekly school newsletter informs of general events and celebrates pupils' achievements in the previous week. Parents particularly appreciate the newsletter. The annual report to parents on pupils' progress is good; it is comprehensive and contains details of progress particularly in English, mathematics, and science. Progress in other curriculum subjects is also separately detailed and there is a section on personal development. Areas for improvement are clearly identified. The school prospectus is a lively and colourful document, comprising all the necessary information and presenting a good face and a welcoming invitation to the reader. There is also a separate 'Welcome to the Nursery' booklet and home visits are made for children starting nursery.
35. The contribution of parents to their children's learning at school and at home and their impact on the life of the school is good. Most parents make good use of the reading record book and the spelling record book to confirm work undertaken at home. The level of homework is satisfactory and managed well. The friends

association organises social events and events that raise valuable funds for the school. Parents, staff, and pupils worked with the adjacent junior school on projects to maintain the school grounds. Overall, the impact that parents have on the work of the school is good. A home/school agreement is in place. Parents are welcome to assist in school and those that do are made very welcome and used effectively by individual class teachers or in the school library. Not all parents working directly with children have had sufficient training to encourage a pupil's conversational skills and vocabulary extension. Parents have attended 'Help Your Child With....' sessions for mathematics and English for which the school provided a crèche; however, parents are not invited to assemblies.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

36. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are very good and a major strength of the school. There are significant improvements since the last inspection, such as a greater clarity of roles and delegated responsibilities and the support provided for pupils, parents and teachers. This support is recognised through the school's recent accreditation as an 'Investor In People' and by the parents' very positive views about the school's leadership. The school's aims strongly emphasise the importance of learning for pupils and adults and this is reflected, for example, in the good provision made for newly qualified teachers. The importance of raising standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science, is also a priority, which is reflected in the school's development plan and daily practice. Teachers have a strong desire to improve their provision and the pupils' learning.
37. There are rigorous systems to check the school's provision, particularly the teaching and learning, where they are very good. Governors and senior staff are very aware of the number of recent staffing changes and the high proportion of teachers who have relatively little experience, nearly half being newly qualified teachers. The headteacher observes lessons regularly and checks are made on planning and the pupils' work. These activities are of very good quality, and consequently feedback is accepted well and having an impact on the quality of teaching, especially on issues such as teachers' questioning, marking and class management. It is not yet sufficiently effective in promoting learning that is at the correct level of challenge for higher attaining pupils. The school's otherwise good policy for teaching and learning does not provide examples of how to plan for pupils of different abilities. The information gained about teaching and the standards of pupils' work is used in providing further staff development in meetings at the school and to identify appropriate training for teachers. Test results are analysed and the outcomes discussed with staff. All these checks are used well to form priorities for whole-school development and, consequently, the school's development plan is of good quality with appropriate priorities. The level of discussion and the support provided for teaching are helping to overcome any lack of experience that teachers have and this is complemented by the good statutory procedures for performance management.
38. The governors provide strong and effective support for the school's management and all their statutory responsibilities are carried out well. Through reports from the school, their own visits and involvement in the school's decisions, the governors have a good understanding of the school's main strengths and weaknesses. They are keen to see further improvements and have a view of the school's development over the next few years. For example, they were alert to a falling roll and had projected a diminishing budget but a marketing drive has averted this. In fact, there was a large, ten per cent of unused income last year, which has now been partly used to augment the capital expenditure made on replacing and equipping the new nursery building and its adjoining corridor. Governors are involved in budget setting and are keen to identify funds to enable the action plans supporting school development. For example, they are aware that standards in science and writing are weaker and are keen to find appropriate funding to support improvements. Resources are used well, especially any specific grants, to make the improvements intended. Some governors bring particular expertise to spending decisions using the principles of best value for money, although past major decisions are not always evaluated for their effectiveness. Overall, the principles of best value are applied satisfactorily.
39. The day-to-day running of the school is efficient and effective. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily in the running of the school. All the staff are clear about their responsibilities and there are now well-defined job descriptions for all the adults. The subject co-ordinators take part in checking activities and this is helping to improve the provision across the curriculum. The management of provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good and consequently these pupils are provided for well and make satisfactory progress. However, there is currently no co-ordinator for the school's provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language and, consequently, provision relies heavily upon the knowledge of individual teachers and support staff. There is a good number of teachers and support staff for the number of pupils and the

school's resources are satisfactory; in a number of subjects, such as information and communication technology, they are good.

40. The headteacher has developed very effective links with the adjacent junior school. These include operating joint policy meetings for such aspects as behaviour and curriculum content. The Friends' Association at the junior school is newly formed and help offered by the head teacher to the junior school has been well received and activities are scheduled so as not to conflict.
41. The accommodation is very good and positively supports the pupils' learning. All classes have separate quiet areas, tabled areas and a shared work area. The newly installed computer suite is of high quality and centrally located. Decoration, the standard of maintenance and cleaning reflect the high expectations of the headteacher and governors. The hall is of adequate size, carpeted and used well. Outside areas are maintained well. An adequate hard play area with benches, a newly installed adventure area, and a large area of grass, also has provision for seating.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

42. In order to make the school more effective, the governors, headteacher, senior teachers and other staff should:
- improve standards in science by:*
 - increasing the rigour of the curriculum using new planning guidance;*
 - promote progression in the learning of skills through the use of the new assessment system,* especially for scientific processes;*
 - increase the training available for teachers and others lacking confidence and knowledge in teaching the subject and the National Curriculum levels;
 - monitor planning regularly to ensure guidance is followed* and that sufficient challenge is provided for more able pupils;
(Paragraphs 1, 5, 14, 18, 22, and 73-80)
 - improve standards in speaking by:
 - increasing the range of strategies for pupils to learn skills, for example, through the use of tape recorders, telephones, talking partners, word lists;
 - providing more opportunities for all pupils to speak at length;
 - promoting more regular teaching of vocabulary, similes and metaphors;*
 - making training available for assistants in giving pupils speaking opportunities throughout the curriculum;*
 - (Paragraphs: 1, 5, 6, 14, 16, 18, 43, 48-50, 58, and 59)
 - improve standards in writing by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length;*
 - promoting greater speed in writing by providing more aids to support independence;
 - creating more opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in other subjects;*
 - (Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 6, 46, 48, and 56-65)
 - providing more well-matched yet challenging work for higher-attaining pupils, particularly in subjects other than English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that learning objectives are consistently clear;*
 - monitoring planning to check that the more able have well-matched learning;
 - checking that the curriculum for each subject provides learning from higher levels of the National Curriculum.
(Paragraphs: 3, 4, 6, 17, 50, 61, 73, 75, and 76)

Those issues marked * have already been identified or work started to make improvements.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	4	21	17	0	0	0
Percentage	0	10	50	40	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)	22	123
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	24

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6	19

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	29	29	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	20	23
	Girls	29	28	29
	Total	52	48	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (81)	83 (79)	90 (83)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	22	21
	Girls	29	29	27
	Total	52	51	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (75)	88 (81)	83 (89)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	104	1	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.5
Average class size	24.6

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	225

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	44
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	63
Number of pupils per FTE adult	12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6

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	2001/2
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	£
Total income	486964
Total expenditure	484083
Expenditure per pupil	2589
Balance brought forward from previous year	42047
Balance carried forward to next year	44928

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	167
Number of questionnaires returned	53

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	24	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	36	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	40	2	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	57	6	2	3
The teaching is good.	57	36	2	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	43	9	0	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	34	2	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	45	0	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	28	62	8	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	58	42	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	49	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	46	8	2	11

Other issues raised by parents

Parents have very positive views of the school. They found it hard to think how the school could improve.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM AND SUBJECTS.

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

43. Provision for the Foundation Stage is in a Reception class and a nursery unit. The provision for the youngest pupils has improved since the last inspection with a new purpose-built nursery unit. Because there are two intakes a year, a second Reception class is formed each January. The teaching is good in both the nursery and the Reception class with no teaching that is unsatisfactory. This has improved since the last inspection when there was some unsatisfactory teaching. All lessons are now well planned with appropriate learning objectives and tasks matched to the needs of the children. The support given by the nursery nurses and teaching assistants has a positive effect on children's learning. Relationships are good and, as a result, the children are calm and settled. Because the quality of teaching and planning has improved, so progress in the Reception class has improved and the children now make good progress towards the nationally agreed early learning goals for the end of the Foundation Stage. Currently, the progress the children make is good overall. They enter the school with below average attainment in many areas and by the time they enter the Reception class they have improved in most areas although still below average in communication, language and literacy. The provision for children with learning difficulties is good and the children's needs are considered carefully in all areas of their learning. An emphasis is placed on communication skills and great attention is given to developing children's skills of speaking and listening, together with personal and social skills. There are two attractive secure outdoor play areas, one for the nursery and one for the Reception children. The climbing equipment is shared between the two classes who take it in turns to use it. Twice a week they use it together so the children in the nursery mix with the older ones. Overall, the provision made outdoors is good in providing experiences related to each area of learning.
44. Strengths in provision for the Foundation Stage:
- a good range of well-planned activities, which help to raise achievement of children by the end of the Reception year;
 - good organisation and effective use of resources;
 - early identification of children's needs and the stages of development closely related to the stepping stones (the nationally recommended step-by-step approach to the curriculum for children of this age) so they can make good progress towards the early learning goals;
 - the teamwork between all the staff in the Foundation Stage;
 - the knowledgeable and effective co-ordinator, providing guidance to Foundation Stage staff;
 - the positive relationships between staff and children;
 - the very effective use of support staff in the nursery and the Reception class.
45. Areas for development:
- the tracking of children during free choice activities;
 - joint planning between the nursery and Reception particularly from January with new teacher and intake.
46. The school has assessed the children's attainment on entry to the nursery and found that standards are below average, particularly in communication, language, and literacy. Despite the emphasis on developing children's speaking skills; this area remains below average as the children move into the Reception class. There are good day-to-day checks on the children's progress, particularly for activities where adults teach groups directly. However, checks on progress are very limited for children's chosen activities. In such free-choice sessions, there is a limited degree of checking on what the children choose to do and what they learn. Nevertheless, because progress is good the children achieve well, and a good majority of children are on course to achieve the expected standards at the end of the Reception year, in all areas of learning, except communication, language, and literacy.

Personal, social and emotional development

47. The provision and the teaching for children's personal, social and emotional development are good. The children enjoy coming to school, have settled into the routines of school life, and respond to the rules. At the start of each session they find their names and register their presence. They are eager to learn new skills and, when the activities are exciting and stimulating, they put effort and concentration into the tasks. Emphasis is put on helping children to understand the consequences of their actions. They learn the importance of listening and of only speaking when it's their turn. They play games and take turns using the dressing-up clothes. In role-play, they learn to play together and to relate to each other. They share

equipment such as the construction toys; children were observed in the nursery enjoying a road play map with vehicles, crashing into each other and generally having a good time. They also share when experiencing sand or water play. Through the planned lessons, they learn to appreciate themselves and to respect others. They have opportunities to work together; an example was observed in the Reception class when pairs of children painted patchwork cushions on the chairs for the three bears. They happily painted the squares collaborating about the choice of colour. There are also opportunities for children to develop a sensitivity for other people, their different religions, customs and ways of life, through religious education and the celebration of festivals such as Diwali. A good majority of the pupils are on course to achieve the expected standards by the end of the Reception year.

Communication, language and literacy

48. Despite the good teaching and an emphasis on language development, a smaller than average proportion of the children are on course to achieve the expected standards in this area of learning. They are given many and varied opportunities to develop language skills with each other and with the adults who work with them. Teachers ensure there is plenty of time allocated for children to talk and share their thoughts. There are well-planned activities such as story time and literacy sessions as well as opportunities for role-play. The nursery has a nursery rhyme castle for role-play and in the Reception class, it is the three bears' cottage. In the nursery, the children talk about Jack and Jill, occasionally recognising rhyming words. In the Reception class, children explore a big book and respond with enthusiasm when the teacher asks questions. However, many children have a limited vocabulary and tend to misuse words more than usual for their age. For example, one child said "short" for small and another said "bottom" for the beginning of a line. All children are encouraged to be good listeners. In both classes children enjoy nursery rhymes and action songs. Despite the good quality planned activities which link many areas of learning while emphasising the children's language skills, a majority is not yet confident in the use of less familiar words and are somewhat reluctant to extend their vocabulary.
49. Children in the nursery enjoy sharing books and will often retell the story in their own words. During the sessions, children can be seen sitting curled up on the teacher's chair "reading" a book. They are aware that books communicate meaning and handle them with care. They enjoy discussing the nursery rhyme "Jack and Jill". In the Reception class, the children are enthusiastic when they share a big book. Many are keen to participate in the discussion about what is happening in the story. The teacher uses questions effectively and ensures all children have the opportunity to respond including those with learning difficulties. Children are beginning to recognise letter sounds and the higher attaining children can recognise a small number of words. Other children can point to letters in their name. However, the lower attaining children struggle to recall letter sounds or to recognise letters from their names.
50. Children in the nursery are beginning to be aware that writing is a form of communication. The majority cannot write their name independently but a few are trying hard to copy letters. For example, when making "get well" cards for Jack, a few copied "get well". In the Reception class, the higher attaining children are beginning to form letters correctly, and can write their name and the initial letter of each word in a simple sentence. The lower attainers can write their names but the letters are not well formed. Children enjoy making their own books and telling the story that they have written.

Mathematical development

51. Teaching is good and the learning is carefully planned so that, the activities can often be managed by other adults. The classroom assistants, particularly in the nursery, support the children using games to develop their counting skills. Teachers make it fun so children gain confidence in their counting and begin to understand numbers. In the nursery, activities are well matched to the children's needs and expectations are appropriate. For example, the lower attaining children concentrate on basic counting to 10, whereas the higher attaining children count backwards from 10 and are beginning to understand what simple addition and subtraction are. For example, they know that if there are 4 snakes, and 2 are taken away, there are 2 snakes left and if you add on 2 snakes you have the original 4 altogether. In the Reception class, the children count confidently to 10 and back and recognise simple two-dimensional shapes such as square, circle, triangle, and rectangle. They know a triangle is so called because it has three sides. They are taught appropriate vocabulary when comparing size but if asked to explain in what way a particular object is bigger they find it difficult to express their reasons. The teacher gives the lesson a sense of fun as the children recite and sing number rhymes with great enthusiasm. A majority of the children are on course to achieve the expected standards at the end of the Reception year.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

52. The children are very interested in the world around them. They enjoy the many and varied activities provided. The nursery children were very interested in a cookery session making biscuits using moulds shaped like Jack and Jill. They were amazed when the melted chocolate set and the crisp rice particles held together. The Reception children were fascinated by a collection of bears, one of which belonged to the headteacher and another to their class teacher. They were challenged to put these bears in order from the oldest to the youngest. Some of the children found it difficult formulating questions to find out relevant information about a particular bear; their vocabulary was limited. Children have made books about themselves, including their favourite toys, food, colour, television programme and members of their family. Computers are available to the children and they enjoy the opportunities to explore a range of programs: mathematical, language and drawing. Mouse control is developing and most children observed using a computer are quite skilful. Teaching for this area of learning is good and most children are likely to achieve the expected standards.

Physical development

53. Teaching is good and the staff members provide a good range of activities so that the children make good use of the physical resources in the school. The teachers make sure the children are given experiences to match their needs and to extend their understanding about themselves. The children enjoy taking part in vigorous exercise but equally enjoy the outdoor play areas. Nursery children ride on the wheeled toys with confidence avoiding other apparatus in the play area. The Reception children's activities are more advanced, for example, using traffic lights to control the tricycles. All the children have opportunities to climb on the attractive new equipment recently installed in the play area. As part of the nursery rhyme topic, the younger children explore different ways of moving '*up the hill*' during a movement lesson in the hall. They are developing spatial awareness and ways of moving. They can walk, jump, hop, and run but they cannot skip. However, the Reception children move round the hall safely in response to music, changing direction when a tambourine is struck, showing good body control.
54. Many opportunities are provided to help children develop their manipulative skills through cutting, practising handwriting patterns, building with small construction equipment, threading and colouring tasks. Most children in the Reception class hold their pencils correctly and are beginning to form recognisable letters. However, they find sewing, especially threading a needle, a challenge. They are on course to meet the expected standards by the end of the Reception year.

Creative development

55. The children are given a wide range of activities to develop their skills and interests in music, art, story, and imaginative play. The teachers encourage them to explore a variety of materials and discover for themselves how different materials can be used. They do this through collage, printing, painting, and sewing. They have used primary colours to make secondary colours. The role-play areas reflect the class topic and children in both classes are beginning to play together and act out different scenarios. The children's musical skills are above expectations as they sing in tune and beat in time to the music. The teacher's knowledge and enthusiasm motivates the children to succeed and they respond with confidence. They also enjoy singing action songs and participate. The expected standards are likely to be met because the teaching is good.

ENGLISH

56. The pupils' attainment in Year 2 is currently average in reading but below average in writing and speaking. There is presently no evidence of high attainment in writing although a few pupils are on course to achieve a high level in reading. These findings are similar to those of the 2002 national tests in reading but slightly lower in writing, reflecting the present lack of high attainment in this aspect of the subject. Given the low standards on entry, pupils make good progress and achieve well overall particularly in reading.
57. Strengths in the subject are:
- the questioning by teachers' to reinforce the pupils' knowledge and understanding;
 - the good relationships and trust between pupils and teachers;
 - objectives for what pupils should learn are shared and reviewed at the lesson's end;
 - teaching is enthusiastic and interesting helping the pupils to gain good attitudes and maintain good

- behaviour;
- the good use of support staff.

58. Areas to develop are:
- standards in writing and speaking;
 - the use of writing in other subjects and writing at length;
 - the consistent provision of tasks with accurately matched challenge for groups of pupils of different ability, especially the more able pupils;
 - the range of opportunities for pupils to learn, reinforce and use new words.
59. A large proportion of pupils come to the school with language skills that are below average for their age. They make satisfactory progress developing these but good progress in developing their listening skills. Listening skills are good and in most lessons pupils are attentive and listen to both the teacher and their peers. However, speaking skills are unsatisfactory and sometimes affect the pupils' work in other subjects. When responding to questions, pupils used limited vocabulary and, although they answer in sentences, there is often a misuse of words to express what they want to say. Many examples of this were noted across the curriculum.
60. All pupils enjoy a range of reading books, both fiction and non-fiction and standards are average. The higher attaining pupils are confident, accurate readers, although they do not read with much expression. They offer their opinions about favourite books and retell the stories. The lower attaining readers have skills for working out unfamiliar words such as sounding them out or using picture clues. All pupils know the difference between fiction and non-fiction books and how to use the latter for information, mentioning the terms '*contents*' page' and '*index*'. The school is aware of the small differences in attainment between boys and girls and has recently purchased more fiction and non-fiction to appeal to boys.
61. Pupils are given a variety of writing tasks ranging from retelling stories, instructions, poems, diaries, and imaginative writing. But despite these opportunities, standards are below average. At present, there is no evidence of high attainment in writing. However, the pupils are grouped according to their ability in a new weekly session. These sessions plan to provide opportunities for the more able pupils to progress towards higher standards. Punctuation and spelling, although taught, are often forgotten when pupils write for themselves. Vocabulary is limited and few interesting or adventurous words are used to make the writing more descriptive and exciting. This has been and still is a priority area for development, already identified by the school. Handwriting is well formed and joined, presentation, particularly in pupils' English books, is often neat with a date and title.
62. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress. They are well supported by teaching assistants who prompt their answers and encourage them to listen carefully and participate in discussions. They show increasing confidence. Reading and writing activities are supported where necessary to help these pupils achieve their potential. The few pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. This is because of the satisfactory personal support they receive in classrooms from staff. One child receives a little help from an external specialist. The school lacks a co-ordinator to identify needs and ensure adequate provision. The academic progress of each pupil is carefully checked through the school's systems. An analysis of the National Curriculum test results of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds revealed similar progress to that of other pupils but the proportion with low attainment was slightly greater.
63. The quality of teaching across the school is good overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection when there was some unsatisfactory teaching. Where the teaching is good, lessons are planned to build on pupils' previous experiences and to develop their skills further. Questioning is used effectively to reinforce or extend pupils' knowledge. Relationships are good so pupils are confident to respond to questions and are not afraid to answer even if they are incorrect. For example, in one lesson a pupil with low attainment felt confident to answer a spelling question and although incorrect, the teacher was full of praise for the attempt. It helped to raise the pupils' self-esteem. In many lessons, the learning objectives are shared with the pupils and then revisited during a final class discussion to check if they have been achieved. Pupils then have an idea of what they should have learnt and can judge their own progress. The teachers' interest and enthusiasm has a positive effect on pupils' learning and motivates the pupils to concentrate and do well. Teaching assistants give good support particularly in the group sessions of literacy lessons. They work closely with the lower attaining pupils or those with learning difficulties who benefit from the additional input.
64. Where teaching is satisfactory, time is not used effectively, and plenary sessions are shortened providing less

time to go over what was taught and remind the pupils of any new words learnt. Tasks are often matched well to the lower attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties but do not offer sufficient challenge for the higher attaining pupils. For example, in one lesson the higher attaining pupils copied work off the board to punctuate whilst the middle attaining pupils had a photocopied sheet of the same sentences. The higher attaining pupils were then expected to write their own examples but it took them most of their time to copy the sentences. There was however, an example where inappropriate work was set for the lower attaining pupils who struggled to complete the task even with help: the task required reading and their reading skills were not sufficient. Marking is generally of good quality, supporting the pupils' learning and often having comments that will help them to improve.

65. The curriculum overall is satisfactory. The school has various methods of assessment that it uses to identify specific learning needs. Opportunities to meet these needs are then planned through help in "booster" sessions or through small group lessons based on a national scheme of early literacy support. Individual targets are set for the pupils' learning in literacy and these are used to plan tasks for specific ability groups. Teachers are good at introducing new words to pupils and questioning them, especially during whole class literacy sessions but also in lessons of other subjects, such as science or religious education. However, there are some missed opportunities to provide and reinforce vocabulary when pupils are working in small groups. In writing, the pupils sometimes forget to use the skills they have gained, especially during lessons of other subjects. Overall, the use of literacy skills across the curriculum is satisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

66. Attainment remains in line with national averages as it was at the last inspection. The results of national tests over the last two years show steady improvement although they fell to below average in 2000. In 2002, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level increased by 7 percentage points from the 2001 level to equal the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving higher than expected levels was above both the local education authority's and the national average in 2002. The trend in these tests over the last five years shows a gradual improvement overall. There is very little difference in the attainment of boys and girls, by date of birth or ethnicity, and standards are satisfactory in comparison with schools in similar contexts. Progress over time is satisfactory, and in relation to pupils' attainment on entry, it is better than average. Overall, the pupils achieve well. The school's implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy makes a positive contribution to developing the pupils' numeracy skills.
67. Strengths in the subject are:
- the steady improvement in standards;
 - clear learning objectives that are shared with pupils and checked;
 - teachers usually give clear explanations;
 - the good relationships and positive support for pupils self-esteem;
 - good checking activities by the co-ordinator.
68. Areas for development are:
- the limited range of strategies for mental calculation used by pupils;
 - the slow recall of number facts;
 - some work is not matched accurately enough to the pupils' different abilities;
 - there are some missed opportunities for the pupils to discuss and explain their thinking.
69. Pupils in Year 2 have limited strategies for undertaking mental calculations and have difficulty explaining their methods of working and reasoning logically. They are slow in recalling number facts. However, they correctly sequence numbers to 100, count forwards and backwards in tens, from different starting points, and perform addition and subtraction tasks confidently. The pupils identify, name and describe a range of two and three-dimensional shapes and are capable of gathering, organising and using data, such as of pupils' favourite breakfast food, to produce a simple graph. They recognise the value of coins and can sort them correctly to create different totals. They understand simple fractions and are beginning to tell the time.
70. Pupils in Year 1 accurately sort, match, and sequence numbers to 20. They are familiar with number symbols and are beginning to create and calculate simple number sentences. They recognise and continue repeating patterns of shapes and start to identify simple number patterns, such as doubles. Their ability to draw and measure lines in centimetres is developing well.

71. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and there is the occasional very good lesson. Lessons are planned well and organised with clear learning objectives, which are explained to pupils at the start of each lesson and discussed at the end. The matching of tasks to the pupils' ability is not always accurate, especially for the least and the most able pupils. Opportunities are often missed for the pupils to explain their thinking, or regularly to apply their mental strategies or skills. Teachers give clear explanations, use praise effectively, and mark work regularly, giving positive comments. They have a good relationship with the pupils and are very supportive. This helps the pupils to have good attitudes towards the subject. Most concentrate well and stay on task. They have good relationships with each other and collaborate well when necessary. A few of the younger pupils lack concentration and do not listen to their teacher's explanations enough.
72. Planning and teaching are effectively checked by the co-ordinator who has regular non-contact time and a good awareness of standards across the school. Teachers' expertise and strategies for effective teaching are being developed through in-service training linked to the National Numeracy Strategy. Resources are of good quality, accessible, and well used. There is satisfactory use of numeracy skills in other subjects, for example, in forming simple graphs, but this is currently not systematically planned for.

SCIENCE

73. The results of the 2002 national assessments, carried out by teachers, indicated that standards were well below average. The proportion of pupils gaining the expected level was smaller than the national average and the proportion gaining a higher level was slightly lower than average. These results are reported as being insecure because of incomplete record-keeping resulting from staff changes at this period. Nevertheless, they were below those of 2001 and the school has not kept up with the national rate of improvement since the last inspection.
74. Strengths in the subject are:
- the emphasis on learning through investigation;
 - the correct scientific words are taught;
 - there are detailed and regular checks made on the pupils' learning;
 - some work is stored with comments explaining the standards achieved;
 - the subject is well managed and there is a good number of special enriching experiences provided.
75. Areas for development are:
- the number of pupils achieving the expected or above expected standards;
 - inconsistently accurate match of tasks to the pupils' different abilities;
 - the pupils do not learn enough about ways to plan experiments to be fair;
 - inconsistency in teachers' and support assistants' own knowledge of the subject.
76. The current standards in Year 2 remain below average but more pupils are on course to attain the expected national level in 2003 than in 2002. The school is aware that standards are weak and a robust action plan has been started to raise them. In lessons, the pupils' learning is satisfactory and overall their achievement is satisfactory as they go through the school. Few children enter the school with high standards of attainment that will support their learning in science. However, at the beginning of Year 1, most have sufficient knowledge to start learning from the National Curriculum. Progress is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, although the pupils' rate of work is slow with a fair amount of unfinished tasks in their books.
77. The school is rightly keen to promote a greater emphasis on learning through investigation and this is helping the pupils to gain scientific knowledge and skills. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils made string telephones to help them learn how sound is related to vibration. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher and her pupils tried out different torches in a darkened room and the pupils were learning about light sources and their intensity, although a significant number of pupils missed important parts of the lesson being withdrawn for recorder tuition. The pupils are often asked to predict the outcomes of investigations but are less often asked how to make the tests fair. The emphasis on practical investigation is not sufficiently well developed to promote a sense of rigour in scientific experiments but it does help the pupils to be interested in the subject and to maintain concentration well. The correct scientific words are frequently taught and re-emphasised and this is particularly important because the every-day vocabulary of many pupils is limited for their age. In the results of assessments, standards are still below average in scientific enquiry and this is reflected in the pupils' past work, which has little evidence of them considering how to make tests fair.

78. The school's long-term planning outlines a satisfactory programme of learning which is detailed in the teachers' medium-term planning. Good use is made of planning guidance that is nationally recommended and some that is from other schemes. Consequently, the pupils study a satisfactory range of aspects of the subject and this is reflected in the work in their books. However, the level of this work is sometimes insufficiently challenging for the higher attaining pupils of Year 2. For example, the pupils have learnt about what healthy foods are but not how they support life processes. Pupils in Year 1 can use appropriate words such as 'light source' 'natural' and 'man-made' but not compare events or record their observations systematically. Teachers sometimes annotate the pupils' work to help them to understand and record the level each child has reached and this strongly supports the good system recently introduced for recording each child's progress. This is partly in response to difficulties encountered last year in the accurate checking of each pupil's attainment in National Curriculum levels.
79. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. It is good when teachers are enthusiastic and clear about what the pupils should learn. The pupils then learn well and gain enthusiasm too. Well-chosen videos are often used effectively to provide background information and emphasise the lesson's main teaching points. They also promote further interest and motivation to learn. However, at other times, there is not enough emphasis on what the pupils should learn and this is occasionally exacerbated when classroom support assistants miss opportunities to go over the main learning points when they lead groups. The knowledge and understanding that teachers have of the subject are not clear. Several teachers were not seen teaching the subject and the co-ordinator has little information about the newest teachers. However, the correct words are taught and used well, but teachers miss opportunities when the pupils' learning could be extended. For example, when testing their string *telephones*, several pupils placed their fingers on the vibrating end of the plastic cups. The damping effect of the fingers on the vibrations was not pointed out or discussed.
80. The planning for classes of pupils of the same age is satisfactory and carried out jointly by their teachers. Consequently, all the pupils are taught the same things. However, not enough difference is made for pupils of higher prior attainment and the level of challenge reflected in their past work is similar to that for all the pupils. In a lesson for pupils of Year 1, a small number were able to make good suggestions as to the reasons why one torch may be brighter than another. A Year 2 pupil with learning difficulties often offered very thoughtful ideas, explaining them articulately and these were well received by the adults and the pupils. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties are well provided for. However, there is too little challenge for higher attaining pupils. The pupils' work is marked but with few comments to suggest improvements and although there are now overall targets for attainment in the subject, none are set for individual pupils and their learning. Lessons are often quite long enabling some extended activities but can lead to a slow rate of work by the children and a loss of emphasis on the main points to be learnt by the staff. However, the subject is led well and there is a good number of activities that enrich the curriculum, such as a club, visits, a special curriculum week and the school's grounds all of which provide further learning for the pupils.

ART AND DESIGN

81. Standards and the pupils' achievement are in line with national expectations, although not as high as at the time of the last inspection. Few lessons were seen but the pupils' past work and displays were reviewed. The pupils' observational drawing is immature but there are some examples of good work on display.
82. In a Year 1 lesson, the pupils worked in small groups at drawing activities. Some drew what they saw through a cardboard frame in two different venues outside the classroom and some extended a cut-off photograph. Both these tasks were a little too challenging for the pupils, whose skills in representational drawing are limited. Nevertheless, the pupils made good attempts showing satisfactory standards overall. The work of pupils in sketchbooks and displays indicates satisfactory standards. Year 2 pupils have gained skills in mixing paint colours and forming pictures with graduated colours. They have used a variety of pencils, pastels, and other media to create pictures and there is a small amount of evidence suggesting that they have looked at famous paintings, although such appraisal is limited. They have planned and made sculptures. The past work of Year 1 pupils shows some experience of different media, for example, a painted tree picture with leaves, branches, and trunk.
83. The pupils' experiences indicate satisfactory standards overall but with limited drawing skills. The pupils have used a good range of techniques appropriately but experience of viewing and appraising pictures is limited. Teaching is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is rightly keen to extend the pupils' drawing skills and experience of other's pictures. The curriculum is organised well but not linked enough to work in other subjects. A "Golden

Paint Brush" award is presented for good work once a term and this helps the pupils to know that the subject is valued. The school's generous accommodation helps teachers to provide a good amount of space and the appropriate facilities for work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

84. No lessons were seen and standards of attainment and teaching cannot be judged. The subject was not taught during the inspection and is often taught for periods of each term. A small number of displays around the school show that the pupils learn about processes, such as writing instructions to make stick masks, and making face pictures using paper plates. There is some evidence of pupils having used techniques such as sewing, joining and cooking. There are some photographs of previously completed work and pupils' books indicate a small number of experiences such as planning Easter egg decorations, recipes for cooking, and pattern making. A fabric wall hanging completed for the Millennium and a model of the school buildings provide dated but good quality examples.
85. The subject is led satisfactorily and a new cooking area has provided additional interest for the pupils and is becoming more regularly used for teaching food technology. Teachers regularly record the pupils' achievements. The long-term curriculum plan is used together with units of work from a nationally recommended scheme. Teachers are said to be confident in their knowledge of the subject and staff members discuss the assessments, using portfolios of completed work to focus discussions. They are reminded to give appropriate health and safety advice. Resources are good and this enables teachers to provide appropriate equipment and materials easily. The subject has been featured in occasional special weeks.

GEOGRAPHY

86. An accurate judgement about the pupils' learning and progress in this subject could not be made during the inspection because of the lack of relevant evidence. No geography lessons were planned or observed. Very few examples of work from the previous half term were available for scrutiny or to stimulate pupils' memories.
87. The co-ordinator ensures progression, continuity, and coverage by reviewing some of the pupils' work and the teachers' planning. She is aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and has identified the greater use of fieldwork and of structured enquiry for future development.
88. The curriculum is based on nationally recommended guidance and a long-term curriculum plan has been introduced recently to identify clearly the key aspects of the subject as the basis for planning the work. All classes have adequate access to resources but the quality and quantity of suitable globes are unsatisfactory.

HISTORY

89. Pupils make satisfactory progress and reach the standards expected nationally. Pupils who have learning difficulties also make satisfactory progress. These findings are similar to those of the last inspection.
90. Pupils in Year 1 are developing a sense of chronology and an understanding of the past through comparing objects used long ago, such as a carpet beater, with those in use at the present time. They are beginning to notice the differences between the past and present by looking at and discussing changes in people's lives, for example, in ways of shopping and the effects of electricity.
91. Through their study of famous people, pupils in Year 2 understand why people in the past acted as they did and learn about some of the events of the period. They recognise the changes, for example, in nursing, from the days of Florence Nightingale to that of today. They appreciate that eye-witness accounts, such as those of Samuel Pepys about the Great Fire of London, are not always accurate and reliable but are a source of knowledge and understanding of the period. Pupils have a good recall of facts about the Great Fire and show a good understanding of why it spread so quickly. The pupils' awareness and understanding of time in the past are under-developed because of a lack of suitable time-lines in the school. Nevertheless, most pupils have a positive attitude towards their work and enjoy the stories they hear about in lessons. Some use is made of artefacts, visits, visitors and role-play opportunities to create interest and enjoyment. Because of these the pupils listen well and ask sensible questions, showing great interest.

92. Teachers' planning is thorough and covers the National Curriculum programme of study. Overall, the teaching is satisfactory and their subject knowledge is good. However, older pupils are not given the opportunity to consider situations and events and formalise their own questions and answers from the information given. As such, pupils' enquiry skills are not being fully developed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

93. At the last inspection, standards were judged to be in line with national expectations. They are now above national expectations. The computer suite is having a very positive impact on the pupils' progress, which is good. All the pupils have good opportunities to practise and develop skills, with no more than two pupils sharing a computer at one time.
94. Pupils in Year 1 develop word-processing skills by copying simple sentences and explore changing size, font and style of text, making choices to produce different outcomes. The quality of their finished pictures, drawings and patterns shows good control of the mouse. This is also seen in their ability to click on an item and drag it around an image to create the desired outcome, for example, 'building a bug'.
95. In Year 2, pupils can enter, save, and retrieve work. They generate, edit, and print their work with increasing confidence. Pupils make increasing and effective use of the Internet to research topics in several subjects, for example, famous people and events in history. They confidently follow spoken instructions from some of the software, which are used to practise and develop literacy and numeracy skills. The more able pupils can enter data and produce graphs and pie charts of their findings, for example, the different numbers of pupils' pets. Pupils are able to program a wheeled vehicle to make it perform a sequence of movements to arrive at a pre-determined point.
96. All pupils have a positive attitude to their learning. They share and take turns well and take care of the machines. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated well in all the activities and are given equal opportunities, with good support, to make satisfactory progress in their learning. Resources are good; there is a computer suite and one computer in each year group. The pupils confidently use the digital camera and the listening centres.
97. Teachers are developing their confidence and competence and give clear instructions to the pupils. Consequently, teaching and learning are good. However, the use of information technology skills across the curriculum is underdeveloped. Assessment is well used during the lesson and useful records are kept of pupils' experiences and achievements. Pupils respond well to these experiences with enthusiasm. The current arrangement of classes being time-tabled for whole-class sessions in the computer suite; the increased confidence of staff, who have all received training; and the way in which the co-ordinator has raised the profile of the subject; have all contributed to the rise in standards since the last inspection. The curriculum adequately covers the programme of study and provides for a clear development of computer skills across the school. The school has recently created its own web site.

MUSIC

98. Standards of attainment are satisfactory overall and the pupils' standard of singing is good. This is a much better picture than that at the time of the last inspection. The pupils of Year 2 have been taught to play simple percussion instruments effectively and do so. Most have a satisfactory sense of rhythm and can, for example, clap the syllables of their names correctly. Most can also keep a simple pulse. Their singing is in tune and in time and they produce a good quality of sound, although they are often quiet. In an assembly, all the Year 1 and 2 pupils learnt songs well and were able to remember words and actions as well as the tunes of new songs.
99. In a Year 2 lesson, the pupils were able to remember what had been practised in a previous session and because they were taught well, they learnt some simple methods to record small compositions using percussion instruments and voices. They worked well in small groups showing enjoyment and a good degree of collaboration. Although not part of the National Curriculum, a quarter of the pupils have lessons in playing the recorder and have already attained well at this because of good teaching. They are withdrawn from lessons for this tuition and the school is rightly considering the impact of this on other learning.

100. Teaching is satisfactory overall and in some cases it is good. The school has considered how to overcome the lack of confidence that some teachers have in the subject and the strategies used have been successful. The teaching seen indicated a good understanding of the key elements of the subject and how to teach it. The pupils enjoy the lessons because teaching is clear and provides both interest and the right level of challenge. Class management is good and teachers use a number of appropriate strategies to maintain good discipline. Those pupils with learning difficulties also make at least satisfactory progress because the teachers ensure that they are included and have equal chances to answer questions, play instruments, and join in with activities. The pupils are sensible with the good stock of instruments and are taught to handle them well. Teachers record any significant learning for each child. The subject is enriched well with opportunities to perform and occasional visitors. This provision helps the pupils to be keen on the subject. However, the school's provision of a wide and varied diet of music to listen to and appraise is a little limited because not enough multicultural music is played or performed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

101. Standards have been sustained since the last inspection. They remain in line with those expected for this age group, including those with learning difficulties.
102. Pupils in Year 1 make good use of space and show a growing awareness of how they can use different parts of their bodies to produce a range of movements and shapes. They are beginning to link actions together in pairs and demonstrate good imagination and control when miming. Their hand and eye co-ordination is developing satisfactorily through various throwing and catching activities with beanbags.
103. In Year 2, pupils create a sequence of movements, which includes a jump, a roll, and a balance. They successfully transfer their chosen sequence onto benches and stands. Although they jump confidently, there is a lack of control in their landing and the finish position. Their evaluation skills are under-developed due to a lack of opportunities. They understand the reason for warming up and cooling down, before and after exercise, and are aware of the effects of vigorous exercise on their bodies. Extra-curricular activities, such as basketball, help to promote good skills and attitudes.
104. Most pupils work hard and make a determined effort to improve their own performance. These pupils are well disciplined and behave sensibly, especially when moving apparatus. They listen and follow instructions well, showing an awareness of safety issues.
105. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory and pupils respond well to the opportunities for physical activity. Lessons are planned well with clear objectives, which are explained at the beginning. These objectives are sometimes not met because of timing issues. Opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own and other pupils' performance and to discuss ways of improving are often missed.
106. The co-ordinator is aware of the physical activities provided by the school and has identified areas for future development to improve standards. Resources are adequate for the delivery of the curriculum.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

107. Attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for Hertfordshire. There was no teaching that was unsatisfactory and progress is now satisfactory. These are improvements made since the last inspection when standards were below expectations, progress was unsatisfactory, and there was some unsatisfactory teaching. Achievement is now satisfactory. The quality and quantity of pupils' writing is limited and indicates little about standards in the subject. Opportunities are missed because pupils seldom write about their thoughts and feelings, particularly the higher attaining pupils.
108. Pupils in Year 1 were very unsure about the celebration of Diwali and, although many had learnt about this in the Reception class, few could recall many facts, whereas in a Year 2 lesson the pupils could talk with more confidence about being a Muslim. After role-playing Muslims at prayer, the pupils wrote their thoughts about how they felt during the experience: *"I felt scared...It was a funny feeling... I felt embarrassed in case I got it wrong... I felt respectful."* All the pupils were very serious about the activity and found it very interesting. Pupils know about the symbols and signs that represent each religion studied and are aware of the special

places in the church.

109. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. Where it is good and stimulating activities are provided, the pupils are fascinated by other faiths. They remain on task and the atmosphere created within the classroom is one of calm and respect for the religion they are studying. Relationships are good and questions used effectively to encourage thoughtful responses from the pupils. Where it is weaker, few artefacts are used to bring the stories alive. For example, Diwali and the story of Rama and Sita lacked a range of artefacts and pictures to show the pupils how Hindus represented the figures in the story. As a result, the pupils became restless and some lost interest. The quality of learning in a better lesson was good as the pupils began to develop a deeper understanding of the importance of prayer to Muslims.
110. The pupils have visited the local church and visitors to the school include the local vicar, Baptist minister, a Hindu Maharajah and parents who talk about their faiths and customs, such as Diwali, Ramadan and Eid. These help to enhance pupils' understanding of religion and its importance to others.
111. The subject is presently co-ordinated by the head teacher. The scheme of work, drawn up to complement the locally agreed syllabus is in place and is followed by all. There is a good range of artefacts for all world religions. These factors have resulted in better teaching and higher achievement.