

INSPECTION REPORT

ROMAN WAY FIRST SCHOOL

Royston

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117332

Headteacher: Mrs S Summerhayes

Reporting inspector: Mrs P Silcock
21261

Dates of inspection: 3rd - 6th February 2003

Inspection number:
247764

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Burns Road Royston Hertfordshire
Postcode:	SG8 5EQ
Telephone number:	(01763) 241535
Fax number:	(01763) 244876
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Lambert
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21261	Pauline Silcock	Registered inspector	English Art and Design Geography History English as an additional language Education inclusion	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9569	Janet Leaning	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22657	Mark Madeley	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Physical education Religious education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22113	Aileen King	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music Foundation Stage	

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Ltd
7 Hill Street
Bristol
BS1 5RW

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33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Roman Way First School caters for children aged three to nine years. One hundred and ninety seven pupils are on roll including 30 attending part-time in the Nursery. Children start in the Nursery and Reception classes in the September or January of the school year in which they will be four or five, respectively. Compared to other three-year-olds, most children are below average on entry to Nursery in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and aspects of physical development. There are gender imbalances in the Nursery and in Years 1, 2 and 3. Most pupils are white British with about four per cent of minority ethnic origin. Around the same proportion has English as an additional language. Almost all are proficient in English with a few (less than one per cent) at an early stage of acquiring English language skills. The main languages other than English are Cantonese, Bengali and Yoruba. Approximately 16 per cent of full-time pupils are eligible for free school meals (below the national average). Eighteen per cent of all pupils are on the Code of Practice register of special needs. This is also below average. Two per cent have statements of special need, broadly average. Needs identified vary from specific learning difficulties with reading and writing to communication problems and physical disabilities but a significant number of pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Thirteen per cent left school other than at the normal time in the period prior to inspection, a relatively high figure. A number representing 7.5 per cent joined. The school has experienced a high turnover of staff in the last two years but the situation is now more stable.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory education. It is an inclusive school where all pupils feel valued and cared for. Standards in English, especially, but also in mathematics, have risen steadily over recent years. A significant proportion of all teaching is good with strengths in Nursery and Reception classes, giving the youngest children a very good foundation for future learning. The recently appointed headteacher has very good leadership and management skills. She has already significantly improved the ethos of the school and its welcome to parents and visitors. Under the headteacher's leadership, all staff members and governors share common goals of raising standards. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is of good quality. It is consistently underpinned by good teaching. It provides activities that stimulate children to want to learn.
- The good progress made by pupils with special educational needs is owed to the help they receive from support staff. Real strengths are evident in provision for pupils with a statement of special need.
- The headteacher's very good leadership inspires staff, parents and governors to believe in the school's capacity to move forward.
- Partnership with parents is now a positive feature of school life. Parents speak warmly of the school's 'open door' policy whereby they feel welcomed and able to make a valued contribution.
- Provision for lunchtime and after school clubs is good. Staff and some parents give generously of their time to run many activities, popular with pupils, which extend learning in many ways.
- Good links with the community and with partner institutions also now benefit the school community.

What could be improved

- The quality of teaching, to bring it consistently in line with the best practice seen.
- Standards in writing.
- Behaviour, especially with regard to managing challenging pupils.
- The time allocated to some subjects of the curriculum and the role of subject co-ordinators.
- The use of assessment to make sure that planning takes proper account of different learning needs.
- Attendance and punctuality.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Progress in dealing with issues identified in the previous inspection (November 1997) has been satisfactory. Progress was hindered because of uncertainties that led to staff changes at all levels. Standards in English have risen although pupils' writing remains a concern. Provision for information and communication technology

is greatly improved and standards are better. Provision for pupils with identified learning needs on the Code of Practice register of special needs has also improved markedly. The school has developed good links with its local community and with partner schools. Governors play a more active role in the school's governance. Subject leaders have greater responsibility for their subject areas and plans for developing their roles further are in hand. While some improvements occurred prior to the headteacher's appointment, parents and governors are agreed that important changes are owed to her actions in seeking to raise standards. The local education authority has helped in this work and still gives support. The school's capacity to move forward is judged good and improving.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

very high A*

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The table gives the average points scores for each test (when pupils' results for each test are added together and averaged). It does not show that *all* pupils reached Level 2 in mathematics - very high compared to results in all and similar schools. Results for mathematics suffer because not enough pupils reached Level 3 and too many remain in the lower range of Level 2. Too many also appear in this lower range (or below) for reading and writing and not enough at Level 3 (although pupils did relatively well at this level in reading). Teachers assessed pupils as broadly in line with national expectations for science. Speaking and listening skills were assessed as below these expectations. Standards in reading and writing, especially and in mathematics, have risen over time. Targets set for tests were met last year. In light of assessment information, targets for the current cohort of Year 2 pupils have been lowered to respect differences between cohorts. Inspection findings echo the latest statutory test and assessment results. They reveal pupils in Year 2 generally meet expectations in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Few are judged likely to achieve at higher levels. Pupils across Years 1 to 4 are competent at mathematics but more able older pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. In science, where standards are also generally satisfactory across year groups, too few opportunities occur for investigative and experimental work, giving pupils 'hands on' experiences. While standards in English are satisfactory for literacy learning, pupils' writing remains a concern. They have insufficient opportunities to apply skills learned to other subjects (that is, in their own words), or to write at length (including for imaginative purposes). Pupils' work is also generally untidy. Good handwriting in practice books is not used consistently elsewhere, although there are exceptions to this rule in a Year 3 class. Pupils of all ages are confident at speaking and listening. Standards in art and design are generally below expectations relative to pupils' ages and abilities. They have limited opportunities to build on skills, knowledge and understanding successively. Pupils in Year 2 achieved well in music because of a teacher's expertise. Standards in information and communication technology are now as expected for Years 2 and 4 pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of support. Pupils with English as an additional language also make generally good progress and often do at least as well as their peers. Children in Nursery and Reception classes make good progress in all areas. They should achieve the early learning goals in most of these by their transfer to Year 1. However, a lower than average starting point on entry to Nursery in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development means many are unlikely to reach all the goals. Underachievement seen in Year 3 and, especially, in Year 4 is stated by staff, parents and governors to be owed directly to turbulence in staffing, affecting continuity in learning in subjects across the curriculum adversely.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory overall. Children in Nursery and Reception classes are enthusiastic about school and pupils in Years 1 and 2 also generally have positive attitudes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory overall. It is very good in Nursery and Reception classes. In other years, pupils respond positively when adults set clear parameters for behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory overall. Pupils develop good independent skills in Nursery and Reception. Older pupils often need adult help to sustain interest in tasks.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. A few pupils are regularly late.

Strengths are found in Nursery and Reception classes. Pupils in other year groups have positive attitudes leading to good behaviour when adults are consistently clear in their expectations about work and behaviour. Good relationships are often found across classes. However, a significant minority of pupils in all classes, but most notably in Years 3 and 4, do not readily listen to adults and persists with low-level irritating behaviour in spite of teachers' best efforts. Playground behaviour, too, gives rise to concerns. It is very boisterous and noisy. Pupils often rush around, with little apparent regard for others although they may mean no harm. On one occasion, racist comments made during lunchtime play were reported to a teacher at the start of afternoon lessons. This was dealt with promptly. Other pupils listening knew it would not be tolerated.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery & Reception	Years 1 - 2	Years 3 - 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Satisfactory

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

Over half of all teaching is good with a small number of lessons judged less than satisfactory. Teaching is not less than good in Nursery and Reception classes and is most often good in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' art and design work in Years 1 to 4 however, shows teachers are generally hampered by some lack of subject understanding. This is seen, for instance, in pupils' close observational drawings, which are not sufficiently well developed. Where teaching is less than satisfactory, it is because teachers do not always manage inappropriate behaviour firmly so lessons lose pace and planned content is not covered. At times, pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are hard to manage and cause considerable disruption. This happened in a Year 1 and a Year 3/4 class. Literacy and numeracy are taught satisfactorily, although a very good literacy lesson was taught to a class of average and above average pupils in Years 3 and 4 when a teacher's expertise was to the fore. It is evident that pupils of this age can be difficult to motivate in many lessons, affecting a lesson's pace and the quality of learning adversely. Teachers' lesson planning is generally sound but is not explicit enough about how pupils' needs will be met in light of assessments made of prior learning. Nevertheless, pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets because support staff understand their needs well. Support staff are deployed well, especially in classes that receive consistent support.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good in the Foundation Stage. Satisfactory in Years 1 to 4. All statutory requirements are met, including for the act of collective worship.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall. Support for pupils is effective. Strengths are in provision for pupils with a statement of special need.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory overall. Very good provision in the Nursery for children with very little English is owed to assessment picking out all pupils' learning needs in a way allowing provision to be well matched to these.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Satisfactory overall. Religious education lessons provide good opportunities to extend pupils' learning about differences and similarities between faiths and cultural practices. They also promote pupils' spiritual development effectively by helping them reflect on important matters.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactorily overall. Good procedures are in place for child protection, monitoring pupils' welfare and promoting good behaviour.

Since the headteacher took up her post, good relationships have been established with parents. They speak warmly of the dynamic way she has re-invigorated school life and given it a positive ethos. Curricular provision in Years 1 to 4 lacks balance. Too much time is given to literacy and numeracy and not enough to subjects such as design and technology. Nor is it always clear how planning is matched to learning needs. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school has improved because of work this school year on behaviour management. The school sees the need for further improvement, especially in relation to managing the challenging behaviour of some pupils and improving playground behaviour.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher has very good leadership and management skills having already re-invigorated school life and fostered a shared commitment to raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactorily. Governors now have confidence in their roles and responsibilities. They are keen to undertake all aspects of these.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Priorities are given via a range of monitoring activities. Planned improvements occur through well judged, practical actions.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory overall and improving. Specific grants are allocated for their designated purposes, supporting teaching and learning well.

There is no deputy head at present as the previous post holder was promoted at the start of term. There has been a low response to advertisements. Teaching staff are sufficient in number. There is good expertise in Nursery and Reception teachers and in the work of a skilled nursery nurse. Subject leaders bring good expertise to their management responsibilities although they do not all yet monitor teaching and learning in classrooms. There are good levels of support staff, especially in Years 1 and 2. Accommodation is adequate although some classrooms are very cramped and the two de-mountable classrooms are far from ideal. Resources are sufficient to meet the demands of the curriculum and are improving. The principles of best value are applied satisfactorily. The headteacher has challenged aspects of provision for information and communication technology and better value is now in place.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children like school. They make good progress.• Teaching is good.• They feel relaxed about expressing their concerns. The headteacher is always ready to listen.• The school now welcomes parents' support.• There is a good range of activities outside lessons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behaviour.• Information about children's progress.• Partnership with parents.• Work matched better to children's abilities.

Inspectors agree mainly with parents' positive comments. Improving teaching so it more consistently reflects the best seen remains a concern. However, they do not agree with comments about the school's partnership with its parents, which is judged good and improving. They do agree children's behaviour should improve, as discussed above. Although parents get good information about children's progress, inspectors find annual reports generally bland and not easily understood. At times, work is not matched well to children's learning needs (as parents say) because teachers are not clear how they plan to build on previous learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Although children come into the Nursery with a range of abilities, their skills in communication, language and literacy, mathematical understanding and physical development are, in the main, below expected levels. Nevertheless, they make good progress in all areas. In addition to those mentioned, these include personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. Children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language keep pace with their peers because of good support. By the time children transfer to Year 1, most should have reached the early learning goals in most areas, although many are thought unlikely to reach all goals in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. In some cases, aspects of physical development linked to hand control remain poor; but strengths are found in personal, social and emotional development.
2. In Nursery and Reception classes, children often work together and with adults, learning to co-operate and play sociably in many beneficial ways. Most also develop good speaking and listening skills. The more able in Reception show a good awareness of how to handle books, realising that print carries meaning. They read simple texts well. They know that different letters have different sounds and that the first letter in a word usually gives a clue about what it is. They write for different purposes and are beginning to incorporate recognisable letters into their writing. The less able need support during such activities, while those of average ability are still, at times, hampered by poor hand control when writing. The less able and average also benefit from support when reading aloud. Generally, they are less likely to achieve goals set by the end of Reception Year. The impact of a relatively poor base for mathematical learning continues to affect the less able and average learners, still influencing their achievement relative to early learning goals by their transfer to Year 1. A good range of activities helps children practise skills to gain control and co-ordination in all aspects of their physical development. For example, children learn to control their hands for drawing, writing and mark-making and to control larger body movements when riding around on wheeled toys or running and jumping to a teacher's instructions. Most are set to achieve early learning goals in this area, especially with regard to skills linked to larger body movements.
3. Statutory test results for seven-year-olds in 2002 show pupils reached average standards in reading and writing compared to pupils in all schools when average points scores are calculated (that is, when aggregated scores for each test are averaged). In mathematics, pupils scored below the national average. When judged against similar schools, pupils were below average in reading and mathematics and in line with peers' results in writing, for average points score purposes. But the picture is more complex than such comparisons suggest, especially in mathematics where *all* pupils reached the expected Level 2 or above. This result is very high when set against results in all and similar schools, putting the school in the top five per cent at this level. However, results in mathematics are adversely affected by too many pupils achieving in the lower range of Level 2 and, most particularly, by not enough succeeding at Level 3. The same is broadly true of results in reading and, especially, in writing. In reading, pupils are broadly in line with their peers nationally at Level 3. Teachers assessed pupils as below the national average in speaking and listening at Level 2 but broadly in line with expectations at Level 3. These assessments also reveal pupils as average in science with strengths in learning about life and living processes. Standards at the higher level in science were assessed as below average. Although targets are not statutory for this age, the school's targets in reading, writing and mathematics were met. Over time, results in reading, writing and mathematics have risen, particularly in the past three years and most especially in reading and writing.
4. Inspection evidence shows standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are broadly as expected at this point in the school year. Relatively few pupils are thought likely to succeed at Level 3. This prediction echoes results in the most recent statutory test and assessment findings for English, mathematics and science. It also reflects assessments of pupils' work in English and mathematics made since the headteacher arrived in September and linked to strategies for raising standards. Targets in reading, writing and mathematics have been adjusted in light of assessment information and are set realistically somewhat lower than last year's, thereby taking appropriate account of differences between cohorts. Pupils in Year 2 are good at speaking and listening. For example, in a music lesson they

listen carefully to a teacher's instructions, following these when learning a new song. They have a lot to say about the song but do listen to one another and take turns making their own points. More able pupils read fluently and can explain the meaning of words correctly, using a story's context. They predict what might happen next. These pupils and those of average ability retell familiar stories well and are beginning to sequence words logically when writing, although pieces are usually short. Less able pupils manipulate numbers within 1-20 for addition and subtraction sums on paper. More able peers calculate with such numbers mentally and have a good grasp of number patterns in a 100 square. All are learning fair test principles through their science work.

5. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets. These targets involve learning basic skills in English and mathematics, improving attention span or behaving in a better way towards others. Progress is owed to the good support pupils receive from classroom assistants deployed in lessons and with specific responsibilities outside the classroom. Pupils learning English as an additional language in Years 1 to 4 are proficient speakers of English and make good progress. They participate fully in lessons. They achieve at least in line with their peers and sometimes do better. No significant differences were found in the performance of boys and girls across the school.
6. In all subjects, pupils in Years 1 to 4 have good speaking and listening skills on occasion. In a Year 4 literacy lesson, for example, they listened intently to class members reading two poems aloud, offering ideas about the meanings of words and phrases a teacher picked out for further exploration. By Year 4, standards in reading are as expected in the main. Above average pupils read well, if without expression at times. Below average pupils have a number of strategies for tackling unknown words and manage creditably at a suitable level. They do not really, though, seem personally involved with what they read. Although standards in writing linked to literacy learning are satisfactory across classes (sometimes more able pupils rise above the satisfactory) pupils' writing skills are generally underdeveloped. In part, this is because they have too few opportunities to write at length or in a personal way (including imaginative story writing). In lessons such as religious education and science, Year 4 pupils copy writing from the board and worksheets are prevalent in many classes. These make limited demands on writing skills, often being confined to filling in spaces with one-word answers. Pupils do not apply skills learned in literacy (such as handwriting) to other subjects as a matter of course. Work is often untidy and presented without pride. Satisfactory standards in mathematics are reached by Year 4 although work for more able pupils is not always sufficiently demanding and matched to pupils' abilities. For example, these pupils find times tables work (counting in twos, threes, fives and tens for instance) straightforward. As well as pupils of average ability, they have calculated the perimeters and areas of rectangular shapes successfully. Year 4 pupils know fair test principles in science investigations, as when they test the absorption properties of paper and achieve satisfactory standards overall. Across classes, pupils are acquiring good computer keyboard and mouse skills and use these appropriately in lessons. For instance, in Years 1 and 2 pupils entered information from their traffic surveys onto computer charts so that graphs could be printed out.
7. Good standards in studies about the locality are reached in geography lessons in all Year 1 and 2 classes when pupils talk about their work and interview a visitor. A limited amount of recording for history suggests pupils reach at least expected standards by Year 2. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 show a secure knowledge and understanding of history topics when talking about these. They discuss where different periods fit on a time-line with good understanding. Written work does not generally reflect such knowledge. A lack of recorded evidence for geography means no judgements are made about standards reached by Year 4. No geography lessons were seen because of timetabling constraints. Standards are also difficult to judge in design and technology because of insufficient evidence (owed partly, again, to timetabling). Standards in art and design are generally below those expected. Pupils have too few opportunities to develop necessary skills, knowledge and understanding in ways that help them build on these and apply them more widely to tasks. For example, very good links are made with science through close observational drawing and painting of plant forms in Years 1 and 2 but pupils' work shows skills are not well established, even at this age. In a Year 2 lesson, standards in music were judged satisfactory. No lessons were seen in Year 4, so a general judgement about standards at this age is not made. Pupils in a whole-school assembly sang quite tunelessly and tried hard to keep time to the taped music, but the choice of songs was not helpful. Pupils found the music hard to follow and did not reach standards they might have achieved. Standards in physical education are broadly in line with those expected for pupils in Years 2 in the strands of the subject seen (for example, dance and games). Because of changes to timetabling, no lessons were seen in Year 4 and so a judgement about standards is not given. Standards in religious education lessons also broadly match those in the locally agreed

syllabus for pupils in Years 2 and 4, although this judgement is based on lesson discussions rather than on pupils' writing.

8. The picture presented above is similar to that in the previous inspection report for mathematics and science. There has been some improvement in English where, for example, standards in reading and writing have risen. It is varied for other subjects. For example, standards in information and communication technology have improved but they seem to have fallen in art and design, physical education and music. Progress made by pupils with special educational needs has also improved significantly since it is now judged good whereas previously it was found unsatisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. This aspect of the school's provision is satisfactory overall. In fact, judgements are similar to those of the previous report although pupils' behaviour and personal development are now 'satisfactory' rather than 'good'. Substantial changes in the school since the last inspection make it difficult to compare such aspects directly.
10. Pupils' attitudes to school, to learning and to their relationships with one another and with adults are satisfactory, though in the Nursery they are never less than very good. The youngest children are always enthusiastic about activities organised for them. They eagerly choose what they will do at the start of sessions and concentrate for lengthy periods of time. They make very good relationships with each other and with the adults working with them, based on trust. In other classes, most pupils also have positive attitudes to classroom activities and are suitably responsive to adults. This was seen in a Year 2 religious education lesson where pupils viewed the prospect of making hassocks like ones from a local church with some excitement. A positive learning climate was underpinned by strong relationships at all levels. Years 3 and 4 pupils thoroughly enjoyed the way a visitor enacted life as a Greek citizen in connection with their history studies. They asked many questions in a session lasting most of an afternoon. However, in all classes from Years 1 to 4 (but especially in Years 3 and 4), a significant minority finds it hard to settle and get on with tasks without close adult supervision. A much smaller number have severe emotional and behavioural difficulties, reacting quite unpredictably to classroom events, disrupting learning for everyone. This was seen in a Year 1 class, when normal class work could only be resumed after a pupil left for support away from the classroom.
11. Behaviour is satisfactory overall although in the Nursery it is very good and it is often good in Reception and Year 1 and 2 classes. Across classes, most pupils enjoy school and work hard. They want to please their teacher. Most pupils are polite, courteous and respectful to each other and to adults. They are anxious to answer questions in whole-class sessions and show an appropriate understanding of the need to take turns when speaking and to listen to the points others make. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 showed exemplary behaviour when a local policeman and his colleague visited their classrooms to talk about 'keeping safe' in connection with classroom work. They demonstrated high levels of involvement and listened carefully when their questions were answered, although many found it hard to manage such restraint since they had a lot they wanted to say! At times, however, a significant number of pupils in Years 3 and 4 are disruptive in ways that frequently appear deliberately aimed at causing a nuisance. For example, they call out in lessons and do not listen to their teacher or their classmates so that time is lost until they are quiet. Poor behaviour markedly affected the progress made by all pupils in a Year 3 and 4 mathematics class and this spilled over to the following art and design lesson. Eventually, though, pupils responded to a teacher's persistence and a very good learning ethos was finally established, with all except the instigator of the problem drawing and painting peacefully and making good progress in completing the task set. The exception had regained self-control and preferred to sit and observe.
12. Play in the playground at break times and during lunchtime is boisterous and often excessively noisy. It is sometimes also quite rough. Pupils commonly rush about very excitedly, making a potentially intimidating environment for some. The site is relatively large and open. It is also 'split' in ways making it difficult to monitor easily. So, during a lunchtime, some Year 2 boys felt able to go on to the adjacent grassed area (which they knew was forbidden because of the muddy conditions) in the knowledge they were unlikely to be immediately seen. Similarly, older boys throw or kick balls into places they know are 'out of bounds'. When pupils have access to small games equipment, many enjoy using this productively (though when everyone is on the hard surface, space is at a premium). They skip together and throw quoits. Most pupils play together well and no one is left out. Some enjoy playing football, usually keeping to a rule about using the specified area on a rota basis. Quite a number (girls

especially) like walking around the playground with midday supervisors, who listen attentively. However, this does distract the supervisors from keeping a more general eye on events and anticipating where problems might arise. There is a sociable atmosphere in the dining hall but, again, noise levels are high.

13. Pupils understand school rules and most know right from wrong. In conversation, they say that without rules it would be "horrible". "Everybody would be naughty; people would get hurt" and "you wouldn't learn anything". They are appreciative of stickers received from teachers and of being rewarded for things they have done in assemblies. For example, all sit up straight and watch intently during assembly as the local vicar chooses a boy and a girl to receive a sticker for the way they have listened and taken part. Pupils say they enjoy Friday afternoon 'Golden Time' when they can choose an activity as a reward for points gained in lessons. All know that those who misbehave will have points deducted with a consequent loss of such time. During the inspection, quite a number of pupils in Year 4 proudly received a certificate from the town mayor for their work on a homework task during the previous term. The audience of peers, from Reception to Year 4, applauded with genuine delight.
14. Although no bullying or oppressive behaviour was seen during the inspection the playground remains a cause for concern. Pupils know that racist and sexist behaviour are unacceptable. When an older boy reported to his teacher racist comments directed at him during lunchtime play, all the class understood well the seriousness of what was said. Pupils told an inspector "It is not allowed!" expecting procedures to be followed making all aware of the school's serious attitude to such matters.
15. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. They enjoy taking registers to the school office and putting out equipment for lessons. They apply to become 'Eagles' with special responsibilities to help others, especially in the playground. An older boy took great care to make sure a younger one got help from an adult when he fell over during lunchtime play. Pupils raise funds for those less fortunate, both locally and nationally, accepting that "you should help those who have less than you. Children in the Nursery develop very good independent learning skills because of the learning opportunities adults structure for them. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 lack self-confidence about such matters. They need adults to tell them what to do and even to help them start tasks and maintain concentration.
16. Attendance is unsatisfactory. At the last inspection it was good. It has improved recently but remains below the national average with unauthorised absence above this average. Most pupils arrive punctually although a minority is persistently late. There were three incidents of fixed-term exclusions in the relevant period prior to inspection.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. Almost all teaching is satisfactory or better (91 per cent) with nine per cent found less than satisfactory. Overall, 52 per cent of all teaching is judged good and a further three per cent very good. Teaching is consistently good in the Nursery and Reception classes. In Years 1 and 2, almost two thirds of teaching is also good and none is less than satisfactory. This general picture is similar to that presented by the previous report although there are differences of detail (for example, teaching in Years 1 and 2 has improved). It has to be remembered that there have been substantial changes in staffing during the intervening period with a complete turnover of teaching staff, many of whom are new or relatively new to their posts. Comparisons are therefore not altogether helpful.
18. Strengths in the Foundation Stage are associated with shared planning across Nursery and Reception classes. All staff members know precisely what decisions inform teaching and learning goals. Teachers and a nursery nurse bring very good knowledge and understanding of young children's learning needs to their work. They focus each child's particular needs while working in classrooms and outside (including pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language). Teachers work co-operatively together and with classroom support staff. They are good role models for learners and structure daily routines very well. For example, Nursery children's decisions about what they will do each day are guided by 'job' cards they place against their photographs at the start of each session. They can find where to work on their 'jobs' because pictures around the classroom match pictures on the cards they choose. They put their cards back in the correct place at the end of sessions after sharing their learning experiences with the class.
19. The mainly good teaching in Years 1 and 2 is supported by shared planning as well as by a secure knowledge and understanding of an age-range. Teachers in Years 3 and 4 also plan well together to

make content taught consistent across classes, but teaching overall is affected by the inexperience of some teachers. Lessons can be slow in pace when teachers are unclear about acceptable parameters for behaviour. Where teaching is good or better in Years 1 to 4, teachers have good pupil-management skills and consistently make their expectations clear. They persist in waiting until quiet listening is achieved. They explain a lesson's content clearly and match pace to activities, so that all elements of a lesson are covered. This was seen, for example, in a Year 2 information and communication technology lesson when good gains in learning keyboard and mouse skills followed from good management. Also, as with other good teaching, a teacher's secure subject knowledge pushed learning forward. In such lessons, support staff help pupils effectively.

20. Where teaching is less than satisfactory, teachers do not sufficiently insist that *all* pupils listen. Pupils reprimanded believe they are unjustly treated while others engage in inappropriate behaviour, albeit quietly. Sometimes, teachers show reasonable behaviour-management skills but struggle hard to contain really challenging behaviour, so a lesson's progress suffers and all learners are affected. This happened in a Year 3/4 mathematics lesson with further repercussions in the following art and design lesson. Nevertheless, a teacher persisted admirably with the latter and, against all odds, did get a quiet lesson where pupils could get on with their tasks. Learning difficulties of a significant number of pupils in Years 3 and 4 result directly from staff changes experienced throughout their schooling. This situation is acknowledged by parents, senior managers and teachers and shows in pupils' attitudes during many lessons. Pupils are often hard to motivate, taxing the skills of even the most experienced teachers. Teachers have to work hard to keep pupils on task, especially when they are required to work independently after a whole-class session. This was seen, for example, in a history lesson in Year 3.
21. Where teaching is only satisfactory, teachers' insecure knowledge of subjects is sometimes at fault. This was seen in a Year 2 physical education lesson, when a teacher's uncertainty about dribbling techniques hampered progress. A planned game, where pupils could have applied skills learnt, was not played. In a Year 1/2 dance lesson, teaching was too directive, suggesting a teacher's lack of confidence in matching lesson content to pupils' abilities. Pupils could have devised their own dance steps. The over-direction led to a lack of pace and restless, inattentive behaviour.
22. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well by the learning support assistant who works towards targets, in the light of known needs, patiently and sensitively, both in and out of lessons. Teachers make good use of practical apparatus such as flat shapes for mathematics, so pupils learn necessary concepts and a vocabulary linked to handling objects. They know their pupils well and cater appropriately for them when organising group activities. For example, pupils are grouped according to their abilities, as seen to advantage in a Year 1/2 mathematics lesson. However, it is unclear how teachers plan tasks in light of targets in individual education plans for pupils identified with learning needs or how progress towards targets is assessed. It is also unclear how lesson planning meets pupils' learning needs across the ability range (for example, how teachers plan specifically for more able pupils in mathematics).
23. Pupils with English as an additional language are taught satisfactorily. Generally, they make progress at least in line with their peers.
24. The teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory. However, as already noted, standards in writing and the presentation of work remain a concern. There is limited evidence that skills are transferred to other subjects. Part of the reason for this is that pupils are not challenged to use their own words in subjects such as religious education and science, but often copy from the board. Computer skills for information and communication technology are satisfactorily taught, as are skills in science. Here, though, insufficient attention is paid to investigative and experimental science in ways ensuring pupils are involved directly in experiments. No teaching was seen in design and technology or in art and design. There are insufficient samples of pupils' work to judge the teaching of the former subject but work in art and design suggests teachers lack subject confidence when teaching close observational drawing and colour mixing. Likewise, there is insufficient evidence to judge the teaching of music overall, though some good teaching was seen in a Year 2 lesson where a teacher's expertise sustained pupils' learning noticeably. Good learning outcomes were also seen in geography in Years 1 and 2 and, at times, in history in Years 3 and 4, as a result of teachers' secure subject knowledge and good teaching skills. An overall judgement about teaching in these subjects cannot be made since lessons were not observed across the age-range. The teaching of physical education and religious education is generally satisfactory. Some good teaching of the latter was seen in Year 2.

25. Teachers' marking is varied. Often, it is bland and uninformative, giving pupils little if any idea of where they have succeeded and how they might improve. Marking is not generally linked to a lesson's content but more usually congratulates effort, whether or not this seems justified. Some exceptions were seen to this, most especially in Year 3 where a teacher's marking of literacy work is exemplary. Other homework in this class was also marked in a supportive way.
26. Teachers across the school set homework in line with school policy. There is a suitable emphasis on reading with the youngest children with more tasks added as they move through the school. At times, older pupils have tasks well matched to classroom learning. Some teachers make sure homework is marked, as noted above. Where they do, pupils across the ability range work really hard to please their teachers and improvements are seen over time. For example, pupils strive hard to use good handwriting skills in their homework.

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

27. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school is satisfactory overall. They are good for children in Nursery and Reception classes. A good breadth and balance in planning is achieved for these youngest pupils, in ways taking account of all areas of learning. Currently, the outdoor space is underdeveloped but plans show how it is to be utilised to gain maximum benefit for children's learning across all aspects of the curriculum. The Foundation Stage curriculum conforms to government guidelines. The breadth of curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 4, too, is satisfactory, but time allocated to subjects is unbalanced. The school meets National Curriculum statutory requirements and those for the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and act of collective worship. This picture represents an improvement since the previous inspection where it was reported that statutory requirements in relation to information and communication technology were not met.
28. In Years 1 to 4, substantial time is given to English and mathematics at the expense of some other subjects, leading to the curricular imbalances noted. Time is given to reading, the teaching of handwriting skills and spelling activities as well as to the full literacy 'hour' each day. Yet other subjects such as art and design, design and technology and music have too little time. In some classes, time-tabling shows lessons in such subjects are 'split' between two sessions, further exacerbating the problem. Consequently, pupils do not build successively on important skills, knowledge and understanding in these subjects as they move through the school. Assemblies frequently overrun so that mid-morning break is delayed and subsequent lessons are cut short. This also affects planned activities markedly.
29. The quality of curricular planning is sound in Years 1 to 4 although the way provision is tailored to meet pupils' different learning needs, including those of more able pupils, is insufficiently stressed. The school's own schemes of work are not completely in place for all subjects and many published schemes, including government guidance, are used. This approach can work well, as seen, for instance, in planned activities over the current term for geography in Years 1 and 2 and history in Years 3 and 4. At times, though, commercially produced plans from the Internet are relied on too much. These are not adjusted to meet curricular goals in light of pupils' actual abilities (as seen in a Year 4 mathematics lesson for example). The school is well aware of this and a closer monitoring of all stages of curricular planning has begun. This will be an important part of subject leaders' responsibilities as well as featuring strongly in the headteacher's overview.
30. The school is a diverse society. Provision giving equal access to the full curriculum for all pupils is satisfactory. So, too, is overall provision for pupils on the Code of Practice register of special needs. Such provision is judged good for children in the Foundation Stage. Any children observed to be experiencing difficulties, from the start of schooling in the Nursery, are soon identified. Consistent monitoring of their progress in all areas informs curricular planning in beneficial ways. Good liaison between class teachers, nursery nurses and classroom assistants means all adults know what pupil needs are identified and how they are being met. The quality of individual education plans for pupils across the school is good. Targets well matched to recognised needs are reviewed regularly. This marks an improvement since the previous inspection. Specialist support is also good. Support assistants work patiently with pupils, giving focused help away from the classroom in order to meet set targets. This is especially true for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. In lessons, assistants support individuals and small groups well, especially at practical tasks. Pupils with sensory and physical

disabilities get substantial help. However, in Years 1 to 4, it is unclear how planning meets learning needs set out in individual education plans, since individuals and groups of pupils are not identified by teachers in their planning.

31. The National Literacy Strategy is in place and basic skills are taught satisfactorily. Planning benefits from a common format across the school. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented with reasonable success. Teachers are adequately skilled in teaching numeracy. It is not, though, clear, what benefits are gained by setting pupils in some Year 3 and 4 classes by ability for literacy and numeracy purposes. In addition, some teachers in these classes do not properly structure their planning to meet objectives in mathematics, guided by the strategy, during a school year. The school realises it has to support such teachers to overcome this difficulty. For example, all teaching staff will take further training in the National Numeracy Strategy during the spring term. Good progress has been made recently in information and communication technology. All classes from Reception to Year 4 are time-tabled for this each week in the computer suite, although only limited use was seen during the inspection. Pupils are developing competent computer skills. Planning in some subjects includes good ways for pupils to apply such skills, as when pupils in Years 1 and 2 recorded their findings of a traffic survey on the computer, so information could be generated graphically. Pupils and staff often use the Internet for research.
32. Dedicated staff and some parents provide a good variety of after-school activities. Clubs are integral to school life. A good range of sports, like soccer, rounders and swimming, is offered. Other clubs, such as recorders, drama, art and design and sewing help pupils develop interests and talents. The school is beginning to arrange stimulating visits to places of interest linked to classroom work. For instance, a church visit in Years 1 and 2 connects with religious education studies. Visitors to school enhance curricular provision. During the inspection week, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were enthralled by a local police constable and colleague who visited classrooms in connection with geography. The school plays host to theatre groups and musicians as well as putting on its own shows for parents and the community.
33. A co-ordinator for personal, social, citizenship and health education has worked hard on a suitable programme since taking up her post, at the start of the autumn term. To date, provision is satisfactory and evidence shows it is improving. Lessons in personal, social and health education now feature in all classes and are valued by both teachers and pupils. They have a calming influence. Pupils' health education is firmly in place, being mainly taught through good science topics. Raising pupils' awareness about drugs misuse is soundly executed. The governing body ensures that sex education is in the curriculum, though the relevant policy pre-dates the current headteacher's appointment and is acknowledged to need updating.
34. The school has good and improving links with the community to the benefit of pupils' learning. For example, many Year 4 pupils earned public recognition for a considerable amount of homework undertaken in connection with citizenship. They were proud to receive certificates for their good efforts from the town mayor in assembly. The school makes good use of local resources. As well as visiting the local church, the vicar comes in to school regularly to take assembly. Links with faiths other than the Christian faith are not so evident. Links with commerce and industry are arranged and the school is committed to local community events, such as 'Youth Speaks' (a debating event).
35. Overall, relationships with local schools are good. Links exist with the different pre-school settings for children prior to their starting Nursery and are now established with schools that pupils transfer to, from Year 4. For example, subject leaders attend 'cluster meetings' with colleagues in the middle phase to try to avoid curricular duplication when pupils move on. Contacts with other schools also improve sporting provision. Basketball will be starting in the school soon.
36. The provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. This marks a decline in provision for spiritual development since the previous report when provision was deemed "very good".
37. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. In particular, the themes addressed during circle time are well planned. Most pupils can discuss other faiths because of some good religious education lessons. Pupils do not often discuss and reflect on their experiences in any depth, but the few opportunities they get for reflection help their spiritual awareness. The planning of assemblies is sound. Their centre-point is usually a moral story rather than an exploration of meaning, purpose and values.

Acts of collective worship are broadly Christian in nature, although prayers are hurried. The school is sensitive to differences here and invites pupils to think quietly about the theme discussed if they do not want to pray.

38. The school's provision for pupils' moral development is satisfactory. Most know right from wrong. The school works hard to promote values linked to 'respect for persons' and valuing self and others. It rewards pupils in many ways, seeking to make sure they understand the nature and purpose of rewards and sanctions. There has been a 'Golden Time' each Friday afternoon, for example, since the start of this school year. Pupils know they can lose minutes of such time if they transgress agreed rules. They are keen to earn minutes of time so they can choose what they will do at the end of the school week. Circle time is arranged for in all classes and pupils are encouraged to express their views and feelings and to listen with care to those of others.
39. Provision for pupils' social development is satisfactory. Adults are good role models in the way they relate to one another in classrooms and around the school, showing regard for others' welfare and co-operating in tasks. The headteacher and her staff work hard to build a community spirit and sense of belonging, so pupils grasp their personal responsibilities for community life. For example, the headteacher often refers to doing things "in the Roman Way School way". Generally sound relationships are reflected in the social order and climate of the school, which parents are adamant has improved dramatically since the headteacher was appointed. Older pupils are expected and encouraged to care for younger ones ('Eagles' help out in Reception class at lunchtime). When given the opportunity, pupils have a good initiative, but few instances of this were seen during the inspection.
40. Provision for developing pupils' cultural understanding is satisfactory. Pupils are taught about their British cultural heritage through history, for example and also learn about other cultural traditions and their influence, as when studying ancient Greece. The school broadens learning further by inviting in musicians and theatre groups. Different cultural traditions and practices feed into planning for art and design, literacy and music, although no lessons implementing such planning were seen during the inspection in Years 1 to 4. It is plain that religious education lessons do provide a good vehicle for learning about major world faiths. For example, Sikhism is studied in Years 3 and 4. The diversity represented in the school community is overtly acknowledged in the school sign at the front door, which is written in most of the languages spoken in school other than English. Nursery children benefited from learning about the Chinese New Year in ways they found enjoyable and that had meaning for them. A girl (not of Chinese origin) spontaneously said "Happy New Year" in Cantonese after listening to a story connected with the festival.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The care and welfare of pupils are good with some very good features. As in the previous report, the school is a secure and caring environment where pupils are valued and respected and generally happy. Teachers and support staff know pupils and their families well. Shared information ensures that specific pupil needs are known and proper care arranged. Outside agencies, including the education welfare officer, school nurse and community policeman give good support to the school.
42. The health and safety policy is of good quality. It has been updated recently with comprehensive information, clearly laid out. Health and safety checks are routinely carried out and action promptly taken when problems arise. The site manager works closely with the headteacher. He has good skills. Also, a governor with responsibility for this part of the school's work monitors provision regularly to good effect. Outdoor areas are well kept, with no evidence of litter or graffiti. A number of staff members are qualified to administer first aid. Accidents are recorded in line with requirements and parents are notified appropriately. A child with a medical problem gets good care: designated carers give necessary medication punctiliously. Their job will be made easier when a welfare room is completed (projected to be before the end of the spring term). At present, the only supervised quiet places for pupils are the school office or entrance hall, which are clearly not ideal.
43. The child protection policy is also good. It has been updated in line with local education authority guidance. The headteacher is the designated officer. She liaises with other agencies as necessary. Members of staff are aware of procedures and arrangements and are kept updated about these.
44. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress and attainment are satisfactory. In fact, they have improved

recently but there is insufficient evidence to judge how much things have moved forward since the last inspection (systems, then, were reported to be inconsistent). All teachers now test pupils more regularly, especially in English, mathematics and science. The headteacher is overseeing the introduction of a computer 'tracking' program for recording formal test results and baseline assessment information, which will give useful pictures of pupils' progress over time, both at an individual and group or class level. Currently, changes to baseline assessment procedures nationally mean that teachers in Nursery and Reception classes are reviewing established practice in light of the new profiles to be used in the summer term for Reception children. At present, teachers in these classes collect good quality information through observing children closely and deciding on the 'next step in learning' in line with guidance about the 'stepping stones for learning' across all areas of the Foundation Stage.

45. In addition to statutory tests at seven, optional national tests in English, mathematics and science are used in Years 3 and 4 each summer term. As well as assessing reading very regularly, teachers also make their own assessments of pupils' abilities in these subjects at the end of units of work across the school year to help build profiles of progress over time. Year 1 pupils are assessed similarly. At times, such assessments lack clarity (seen for example in relation to pupils' learning outcomes regarding how their scientific knowledge can be applied to planned science activities). Although it is not a statutory requirement for this age, test information is used to set targets in reading, writing and mathematics for seven-year-olds. Target setting for each year group is being developed with a view to further refining practices so that targets are suitably matched to performance at an individual level. The school is also beginning to plan using assessments in all subjects, in line with units of work covered (for example, in geography). At present, teachers' assessments of what pupils know, understand and can do in subjects such as information and communication technology are informal. They are more secure in Years 1 and 2, it being less clear in Years 3 and 4 how information gathered informs planning. More generally, teachers' plans do not specify how learning needs will be met, which is an unsatisfactory state of affairs. The school has, however, started to consider how to identify and provide for its more able pupils including those seen as gifted and talented.
46. Procedures for assessing pupils with special educational needs are good and strengths are evident in the very good provision for those with statements of special need. These pupils' attainment and progress are thoroughly tracked and recorded to ensure they make expected progress throughout the school. Individual education plans are of good quality. Targets for these are shared among all relevant staff in ways benefiting pupils, although (as noted earlier) they do not inform teachers' planning. Support staff are skilled at helping pupils meet their targets both in lessons and when engaged outside classrooms for specific purposes. Those supporting pupils with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties reveal very good skills in managing their focus pupils. In part, problems seen in a class for older pupils were exacerbated because a support assistant, familiar to these pupils, is unavoidably absent from school.
47. The school carefully monitors the progress of a child in the Nursery whose first language is not English and who is at the very early stages of acquiring English language skills. It has sensibly requested support from the local education authority's specialist service in assessing learning needs. The close observation of children in the Nursery (outlined above) and high levels of care for individuals are helpful, here. Bilingual learners make good progress in extending and developing appropriate language skills through engaging in enjoyable practical activities with good adult support.
48. There are good procedures for monitoring pupils' behaviour and promoting their understanding of what constitutes good behaviour. These include procedures to counter bullying and harassment and to promote respect and tolerance towards others. Differences in faiths and cultural traditions are celebrated, similarities understood. There is a good consistency in approaches to behaviour and discipline throughout the school although these do break down at times when individual pupils with particular difficulties prove hard to manage. Supervision in the playground can be patchy, especially at lunchtime. For example, on one occasion pupils ran around energetically at the start of the lunchtime break for several minutes without adult supervision. As they move about the playground, adults on duty do not always position themselves in ways giving them a clear view of what is happening. Neither do they always help pupils to play together properly. For example, play equipment is not always put out and little interaction was seen between adults and pupils when it was in use. The school is aware of these problems and plans to train lunchtime supervisors in relevant skills are in hand. Incidents of bullying and harassment are recorded and the school meticulously keeps information up to date. All members of the school community understand the importance of this. It also does not leave matters unresolved. For example, serious racist incidents earlier in the school year led to staff talking to the parents of both the

perpetrator and the victim as well as to the pupils themselves, as set out in policy guidance. The school has a race equality policy spelling out expectations and procedures very clearly, appropriately linked to behaviour and equal opportunities policies. However, it was not entirely clear how an incident of racist name-calling was dealt with during the inspection.

49. The attendance policy is satisfactory, explaining matters clearly. Most parents understand the school's expectations, which are also outlined in the school prospectus. However, some registers contain inaccuracies (such as about what constitutes an unauthorised absence). The school is addressing some parents' casual attitudes to attendance (well exemplified by an incident in the school entrance one morning), making prompt telephone calls and sending regular follow-up letters as necessary. At present, monitoring is insufficiently rigorous. An educational welfare officer follows up persistent problems.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. The school's partnership with its parents is good. This marks an improvement since the last inspection when links with parents were good only in the Nursery. They were otherwise found to be satisfactory. This improvement is owed to the headteacher's unremitting attention to problems identified on taking up her post last September. Parents at the meeting prior to inspection, through questionnaire responses and in formal and informal discussions during the inspection, expressed almost universally positive views. They think children's attitudes and behaviour are now generally good and that their children get more adult supervision at lunchtimes. They say children love coming to school. Almost all believe their children make good progress and are well cared for and happy. Anyone needing help gets it because the school has an 'open door' policy. Inclusion is a very good feature with all pupils included in all aspects of school life. Parents understand the school's expectations of attendance and punctuality. Most in the meeting and met during the inspection were very satisfied with the school. They say it is much more dynamic since the arrival of the new headteacher and feel the improvement will continue. They think the school is more welcoming and has a better ethos.
51. The school works hard to make parents feel welcomed and valued. It involves them in their children's learning in classrooms and at home, promoting this work energetically. For example, it recently surveyed parents' views on what might be improved. Already, some issues raised by the survey are being addressed (such as by keeping parents updated about school life via a lively newsletter). Some parents give regular time to help in school. Teachers appreciate this help and plan effectively for it. For example, parents listen to children read and they keep individuals or small groups focused on writing or art and design tasks. Some accompany study visits linked to classroom work and, during the summer term, support swimming pool activities. Many support the very successful Friends' Association. Activities organised by parents raise substantial funds, contributing valuable 'extras' that might otherwise not be available. For example, fund-raising has helped purchase a 'play boat' for the Nursery and equipment for the swimming pool. Some funds underwrite 'ongoing' purposes such as replacing the outdated playground equipment. A sponsored marathon for parents and children raised funds for the school and leukaemia research.
52. Parents with children on the Code of Practice register of special needs are kept well informed of their child's progress in line with requirements. They are suitably involved when targets in individual education plans are reviewed.
53. A new school prospectus is of good quality, dealing with omissions identified prior to inspection. However, the most recent governors' annual report to parents does not meet statutory requirements. It lacks needed information. For example, there is no information on the make-up of the governing body or on the re-election of parent governors and not enough information is given about provision for special educational needs. Also, as the headteacher states, the existing home-school agreement has to be reviewed and reissued in light of consultations with parents, governors and staff. She is keen to make sure parents are regularly consulted (as they were in the survey she carried out).
54. Information given to parents about school life is satisfactory overall. There are two annual parent/teacher consultation meetings and parents get termly information on the topic themes their children will study. Parents say they no longer have problems talking informally to teachers, whenever they feel a need. They especially appreciate the headteacher's ready availability and the way she is around and about the playground at the start of each day. A notice board in the entrance hall updates parents on events and they like the regular newsletters. Parents of children in the Nursery have a separate board at their

entrance to school. Systems in the Nursery for helping parents to understand what their children do each day are very good. For example, parents see how their children place a 'job card' against their photographs to show they are present and what activities they want to join. Almost all parents agree that teachers set appropriate homework linked to children's ages. Many give good support at home to ensure these tasks are finished on time. Annual reports at the end of each year about children's progress are detailed, but parents think they are sometimes too general. For example, parents don't always know what children understand or can do and where children have difficulties. They like the helpful comments on their child's personal development and the targets set for improvement. Inspectors agree that the language of annual reports to parents is generally unhelpful. It often appears to be educational jargon, hard to comprehend. Reports meet statutory requirements.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. It is difficult to make comparisons with the previous report's findings because the intervening period has been one of considerable turbulence, owed to changes in leadership and management. The present headteacher took up her post at the start of this school year knowing that relationships with staff, parents, governors and the wider community needed repair. Pupils' self-esteem (especially in Years 3 and 4) required attention and school life had to be made more stable generally. In a short space of time, the headteacher has achieved remarkable progress in improving crucial areas of the school's work. Her main aims were to stem the flow of pupils from the school because of parental dissatisfaction, to establish an 'open door' policy for parents and carers, to tackle pressing matters of behaviour management and to build good relationship with staff based on mutual trust. To date, the trend of pupils transferring to other schools is being reversed, albeit slowly. Parents speak enthusiastically about feeling welcomed into school and part of its daily life. A new behaviour policy informs whole-school practice (although the headteacher accepts work remains to be done here). Inspired by her leadership, staff, parents and governors speak convincingly of wanting to contribute to improving all aspects of provision because they feel part of the school community and valued for what they have to offer. The headteacher's vision is founded especially on making sure the school is fully inclusive.
56. She has conducted a thorough audit of the school's work since September, gaining an overview of its strengths and where improvement is needed. In addressing pupil-management matters, she involved members of the school community at all levels. A group of parents formed a working party to help put together what has become the 'Positive Behaviour Policy'. A programme of in-service work for all staff during the autumn term was also linked to this. The new co-ordinator for personal, social, citizenship and health education was helped to initiate teaching and learning practices in these and related areas (such as 'golden time' each week). This latter development has proved a major step forward for the school, supporting work in behaviour management to very good effect.
57. The headteacher has monitored teaching and learning in all classrooms, giving priority to literacy lessons because literacy together with mathematics and information and communication technology is seen as critical to raising standards. The co-ordinator for English has also monitored classroom practices across the school and is aware of the need to ensure newly appointed teaching staff are now included in this process. An equally structured approach based on monitoring is to be applied to mathematics this term in relation to the National Numeracy Strategy to build on work begun in the autumn term. A substantial programme has also operated since September to improve teachers' computer skills and their understanding of how to plan for the teaching and learning of information and communication technology, helping raise standards. A positive spin-off of weekly in-service work for the headteacher is that staff members are beginning to engage in educational debate. The local education authority gives good support for such professional development and this is set to continue (for example, subject consultants supporting co-ordinators' work and having input to staff in-service sessions).
58. The management of the school overall is satisfactory, though the headteacher herself has very good interpersonal and management skills. She has delegated all aspects of subject-management to subject leaders who frequently show good levels of expertise. Making sure all co-ordinators monitor classroom practice in their subject has, rightly, become a key strategy in school improvement planning for raising standards, although they do not, yet, all undertake such work. The headteacher well understands the need to support them in developing their role fully since a significant number of co-ordinators are new to their responsibilities. Almost all are new (or relatively new) to the school. Performance management is securely in place for teaching staff and professional interviews have also proved really useful for some support staff (for example, the school secretary and nursery nurse). The headteacher is disappointed

that all support staff have not yet benefited from such interviews, but is determined this will happen during the next cycle. The professional development of all staff members is believed fundamental to raising standards and ensuring consistency of practice across the age-range. For example, a programme of training for midday supervisors is being planned in order to help them understand, better, how to engage with pupils in the playground and monitor behaviour proactively.

59. Weaknesses in management have to do with the lack of a senior management team, particularly a deputy head. The previous post-holder was promoted at the start of the spring term and advertisements to fill the vacancy provoked a very low response. The school rightly wishes a person best suited to its needs to be appointed. It would appoint senior managers from within its staff but, realistically, this is not easy because so many of these are new to the school. In the meantime, the headteacher continues to shoulder heavy responsibility. At times, she is distracted from her duties by having to give back-up to teachers when pupils with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties prove hard to manage. This showed quite starkly during the inspection when she spent a considerable part of a day keeping a Year 1 pupil calm. Similar support needed for an older pupil would have been equally beneficial but was impractical in the circumstances. There are a number of pupils with such needs in all classes and, while these pupils are helped by skilled classroom assistants, support is clearly inadequate on occasion. Ways of giving the headteacher practical support are being sought (for example, by appointing an acting deputy headteacher).
60. On taking up her post, the headteacher reviewed available policies, giving priority to immediate concerns (such as behaviour and discipline matters). She realises that many policies still need reviewing in order that these match practices seen or being developed in classrooms. Few available prior to inspection reveal whether governors have agreed and ratified them. Neither is it clear how involved staff members and governors have been in the writing of most policies.
61. The management of the school's special educational needs provision is good. There has been a seamless handover from the previous special needs co-ordinator (who was also deputy head). Currently, though, this is yet another area supported by the headteacher while the new co-ordinator 'finds her feet'. The individual education plan 'write and review' cycle is well in place and staff, local education authority, parents and pupils are involved and kept fully informed in line with requirements set out in the most recent Code of Practice guidance for pupils with special needs. The management has established good relationships with outside support agencies, which usually respond quickly when needed. Specific grants are used appropriately. Funding is mainly aimed at additional support staff needed to ensure progress is made at meeting pupil targets.
62. Governors fulfil their duties satisfactorily on the whole, although their annual report to parents does not comply fully with requirements. They claim that their commitment and enthusiasm are owed to the new headteacher and that they are still 'on a learning curve'. She helps them grasp their roles more fully and take an active part in school life. Governors state they are now kept well informed about school matters both through documents and regular, well structured, meetings. They willingly ask questions and, at times, challenge ideas put forward. They bring good levels of expertise to their work. The chair of governors visits school regularly and has a good knowledge of daily school life through meetings with the headteacher as well as through her contacts as a parent. This academic year, she has organised school-based training for governors as a matter of urgency. Importantly, training has prioritised governors' responsibilities with regard to monitoring all aspects of the school's work. For instance, the governor for literacy has watched the literacy co-ordinator teach a lesson and completed a follow-up report. The governor for information and communication technology helped significantly to establish a computer suite and continues to take an active interest in the subject's development. The school is delighted at such interest. It bodes well for the future.
63. A school development plan for 2001–2003 was inherited by the headteacher. It is comprehensive but opaque. It does not give information about what has actually been achieved in tackling issues raised in the last inspection or subsequently. Governors say they found it difficult to understand. Soon after her arrival, the headteacher formed a simple plan outlining actions to be taken to establish a positive school ethos and improve relationships with parents in line with priorities identified. This is a working document, noting progress to date and changes in light of events so it is possible to check out progress against evidence available (for example, gained by talking to parents about recent developments).
64. Financial management is satisfactory overall with some good features. The school buys in outside

expertise to help monitor spending each month and the headteacher is closely involved with this. Priorities set by the school since the headteacher took up her post are realistic, in light of circumstances, with costings matched well to them. Currently, there is a significant underspend in the school budget. However, a substantial amount (around £20,000) is to be paid back to the local education authority at the end of this financial year because of the 'claw back' of monies allocated to pupils whose parents withdrew them from school. The headteacher has sensibly investigated the impact of falling rolls over the next three years. Findings show the budget will continue to be affected over the projected period since increased pupil numbers have not, to date, materialised sufficiently to affect the allocation of funds. Also, prudence is needed because of problems with the school boiler. The school wishes to improve accommodation for pupils in Years 1 and 2 where spaces are cramped. Governors are keen about this and had begun exploring possibilities before the headteacher's appointment. De-mountable classrooms are not ideal learning environments. They are in need of attention because of their poor external condition.

65. Principles of best value are satisfactorily in place. Competitive costs are sought for proposed work and when purchasing resources. Good expertise on the governing body means practical advice is often available (for example in gaining value for money for building works) and spending is monitored consistently. In auditing the school and reviewing its practices, the headteacher challenged existing systems and identified ways of tightening up on expenditure linked to information and communication technology with a better service resulting from this when problems occur. In addition to talking to parents coming in and out of school, the headteacher consulted them through a questionnaire survey about the school's work in the autumn term. This identified areas for improvement that have been acted upon. The headteacher is keen to ensure that school systems and procedures enable it to compare its performance with that of others on the basis of evidence gathered. For example, she has overseen the introduction of a computer 'tracking' system for monitoring pupils' test results over time.
66. The school secretary, who has been in post for less than a year, makes a valued contribution to school life. Visitors are assured a warm welcome. Day-to-day school management is efficient and smooth. Information technology satisfactorily aids school management but staff members' skills are improving steadily. The secretary is to be trained soon in systems for improving the monitoring of attendance, for example.
67. There are sufficient teachers to meet curricular needs. One is temporary until a deputy head is appointed. Another qualified overseas and the school is promoting her efforts to gain qualified status. The headteacher well understands the support needed for both these staff members in light of their previous teaching experiences and unfamiliarity with current teaching and learning practices in primary classrooms. A nursery nurse makes a very valuable contribution to Nursery provision. There are a good number of classroom assistants who aid pupils' learning across the school effectively, especially where well-established partnership approaches exist between class teachers and assistants. Induction procedures are good and new staff members speak positively of support from colleagues at all levels. During the inspection, a student on placement from her nursery nurse training course got very good quality support in the Nursery. She successfully took part in classroom events.
68. Accommodation is satisfactory, although some parts of it are cramped and the two de-mountable classrooms are far from ideal. Heating is plainly problematic in these classrooms. On intensely cold days they take time to heat up, but when the winter sun shines brightly through a large expanse of glass, the temperature soars dramatically, making conditions stuffy. They do not have easy access to running water or sinks designed for use in lessons. Teachers 'make do' with toilet facilities nearby but it is obvious that this arrangement restricts lesson planning (for example, in art and design). The Nursery benefits from a recently developed, secure outdoor play space and has plan for its further development in ways enhancing children's learning.
69. There are sufficient resources to meet curricular demands in all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education and in all areas of learning for children in the Nursery and Reception classes. Outdoor equipment for use in the Nursery, though, is somewhat limited in range.
70. In view of the headteacher's success in achieving important goals relating to school ethos and relationships with parents, staff and governors, in a short space of time, the strength of shared commitment to improving provision and rising standards in reading, writing and mathematics, in statutory tests at seven, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

71. The headteacher, staff and governors should ensure that:

- I. The quality of teaching is improved, to bring it consistently in line with the best practice seen so that teachers:
 - improve their subject knowledge and understanding in areas where weaknesses are seen to affect learning;
 - make explicit how pupils' learning needs are met through planned activities;
 - assess pupils' work so that they see where they have succeeded and how they might improve;
 - use assessment information consistently to plan future learning;
 - help improve pupils' writing in all subjects, by developing their capacity to put ideas into their own words, including for imaginative purposes; and
 - make sure pupils consistently use literacy skills for the presentation of work across subjects.

(Paragraphs: 3, 4, 6, 7, 21, 22, 24, 25, 29, 30, 31, 45, 67, 83, 84, 85, 87, 89, 90, 91, 94, 95, 96, 97, 101, 107, 112, 119, 122, 124, 145, 128, 129, 131)

- II. Subject leaders develop their roles in line with school improvement planning so that curricular demands are met and standards raised in their subjects by:
 - monitoring classroom teaching and learning to gain informed views of where strengths lie and improvements can be made;
 - checking curricular planning so it meets pupils' learning needs; and
 - emphasising the proper development of skills, knowledge and understanding relevant to subjects such as design and technology, art and design and music.

(Paragraphs: 6, 7, 15, 21, 22, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 39, 40, 45, 58, 83, 84, 85, 87, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 104, 106, 107, 108, 113, 115, 117, 119, 120, 121, 122, 124, 126, 129, 131)

- III. Further work is undertaken in behaviour management in line with school improvement planning so that all staff members manage, better:
 - those pupils who have severe emotional and behavioural difficulties; and
 - the boisterous behaviour seen outside during playtimes.

(Paragraphs: 10, 11, 12, 14, 19, 20, 48, 58, 59)

- IV. Attendance and punctuality improve and registers are completed correctly.

(Paragraphs: 16, 49)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important issues should be considered for inclusion in an action plan.

- Improve the quality of annual reports to parents about their children's progress.
- Make sure all necessary information is included in the Governors' Annual Report to Parents.

(Paragraphs: 53, 54, 62)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

33

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

32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	1	17	12	2	1	0
Percentage	0	3	52	36	6	3	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 three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	15	167
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	26

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	35

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	26

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.6
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	24	14	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	22	24
	Girls	11	14	14
	Total	32	36	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (76)	95 (70)	100 (91)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	23	22
	Girls	12	13	13
	Total	33	36	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (79)	95 (94)	92 (82)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
155	3	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.87
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	20.6

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	508,283
Total expenditure	485,082
Expenditure per pupil	2,479
Balance brought forward from previous year	34,836
Balance carried forward to next year	58,038

Recruitment of teachers

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

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	197
Number of questionnaires returned	41

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	36	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	45	0	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	57	9	4	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	57	6	4	0
The teaching is good.	58	40	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	55	11	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	23	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	30	6	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	38	49	9	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	66	30	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	57	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	42	4	0	8

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Personal, social and emotional development

72. This is a strength. Consistently good teaching is seen in both Nursery and Reception classes. Children make good progress in acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding related to their personal, social and emotional development, especially in the Nursery. Children across the Foundation Stage are usually well behaved. They learn to share fairly, take turns and be independent. Independence is encouraged through daily routines and via incidental opportunities arising as adults interact with children. In the Reception class, children are still learning to negotiate and share toys and equipment. Several are still settling in, getting used to routines different from those in the Nursery left a few weeks ago. Children gain in confidence and self-esteem by, for example, responding individually when the register is called and talking about books they have taken home. Staff members in both classes teach socialising skills very well. They are very good role models, treating each other and the children with respect and understanding. Situations are dealt with sensitively and sympathetically. Thus, a child just beginning to learn English as an additional language is making good progress because (through close observation) adults ensure he is supported and included in activities suited to his needs. Children are consistently reminded about what might be the consequences of their actions and how other people might feel.
73. There are very good opportunities for them to study cultures, backgrounds and beliefs other than their own. For example, during the inspection, children's understanding of different cultural practices and of other areas of the curriculum benefited much from a study of the Chinese New Year. All children are fully engaged by a range of activities and staff make sure all take part in the full range offered. For example, in the Nursery, children's choice of 'jobs' is noted on a daily record sheet, so adults know what is chosen and can guide children gently towards new experiences, as necessary and appropriate. A good range and balance of child-initiated and teacher-directed activities in each class helps foster children's own interests effectively with consequent spin-offs for their self-esteem. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development gain from the range of experiences offered. Most should achieve the early learning goals in this area by the end of the Reception Year.

Communication, language and literacy

74. A good curriculum for this area is complemented by consistently good teaching. As a result, children make good progress in handling books correctly, in recognising the sounds of letters in words and in making marks and recognisable letters in their writing. Children in both classes take books home regularly. Although children in the Reception class are still sometimes unsure about how to use their knowledge of sounds and letters when reading, they make good progress in learning about sounds within words. Role-play is encouraged and, in both classes, attractive and interesting areas for children's imaginative play are well used. At times, adult support helps children develop role-play ideas advantageously. They learn to listen attentively, to take turns in speaking and to develop their ideas through talk and shared experiences. These experiences are structured so children can initiate work themselves. Children readily take part in interesting and well-presented activities such as water play, in handling wet and dry pasta and rice and in exploring stimulating writing, drawing and painting materials, where talk is an important aspect of what is done.
75. Children with special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language make good progress in speaking and listening due to good support and good interaction with adults. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered through similar strategies. Most children should achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Reception Year in speaking and listening. More able children read confidently and are also set to reach expected standards by their transfer to Year 1. Average and below average children are judged less likely to achieve goals in reading appropriate for their age. Similarly, children's writing skills are varied. A significant number seem to have difficulties holding and controlling writing tools although they are developing a sound grasp of the purposes writing serves.

Mathematical development

76. Teaching is good in this area. Well-organised lessons match the wide range of abilities in Nursery and Reception classes. Children make good progress, although some, especially in the Reception class, start from a relatively low base in their mathematical knowledge. For example, most Reception children are still learning to link mathematical ideas to the correct terms when comparing and noting differences between shapes. A few children who learn quickly recognise two and three-dimensional shapes and say what they are. There are good opportunities for children to count, recognise numbers and put these in correct order (for instance, when counting one-to-one and putting the correct number of coins in Chinese money wallets, or 'lai see'). Number songs and rhymes are used well by adults to illustrate how numbers increase and decrease by adding and taking away objects from a group. Children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make good progress in mathematics because practical activities are allied to the appropriate language. For example, simple problems are dealt with through handling objects. Because of their low starting point, many children are unlikely to achieve the early learning goals in mathematics by the end of the Reception Year although more able children (around 25 per cent of the cohort) should reach these.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

77. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world are developing well. Teaching is again consistently good. It is well aimed at nurturing children's curiosity about the world around them in ways guaranteed to stimulate interest. A good range of relevant activities enhances learning and secure fencing and an appropriate safety surface have improved outdoor areas. Children explore materials and substances using their senses, to discover how things change (for instance when added to water). In the Reception class, children were interested in how salt, sugar and dried milk react when mixed with water. They gained good experience performing this task independently and observing what happened. Children in both classes handle materials such as dried rice and pasta and compare different textures, sounds and aromas. There are good opportunities for them to make models from recycled materials and also to use information and communication technology in their learning. They learn about the computer keyboard and how to manipulate images on the screen with a 'mouse'. Children learn about significant events in their lives and those of others and are encouraged to share these experiences, as when they consider how they have changed since they were babies. They learn to find their way about their classrooms and around the school building and about the purpose of maps to help them. Most are well on the way to reaching the early learning goals by the end of the Reception Year.

Physical development

78. Children's physical development is progressing well. Teaching is good in both Nursery and Reception classes. A good range of activities helps children practise skills to gain control and co-ordination in all aspects of their physical development. For example, they learn to control their hands for drawing, writing and mark-making and to control larger body movements when riding around on wheeled toys or running and jumping to a teacher's instructions. In the Reception class, children use the school hall each week for physical education. They are developing confident climbing and balancing skills. They jump confidently on apparatus and are well on the way to achieving relevant early learning goals. Adults encourage children in imaginative movements, as when Nursery children perform a dragon or lion dance as part of the celebration of Chinese New Year. There is an appropriate range of bikes and other toys outdoors to develop children's co-ordination skills. They push/pull and propel themselves along, having due regard for obstacles and other children. Markings painted on the surface of the outdoor areas mean children can negotiate these when riding around, although they are slightly faded and their use is underdeveloped. Children's hand control when they first start in the Nursery is insecure, but a good range of activities are well aimed at strengthening children's small hand muscles so they can handle materials and equipment with control and flexibility. Children's efforts are valued and their achievements are demonstrated proudly. Most are set to achieve the relevant early learning goals by the time they transfer to Year 1, especially with regard to larger body movements on apparatus and with wheeled toys.

Creative development

79. Children are making good progress in this area of learning. Teaching is good and children's creativity valued. Teachers and support staff present children with good experiences for their creative role-play, dance and imaginative play. The areas for such play are well defined and attractively presented in both classrooms. The theme based on Chinese New Year effectively inspired children to use their

imaginations. It was well supported by good quality resources such as photographs, books and dressing-up clothes. Children have good opportunities to explore media using their senses. They learn the importance of touch and smell for instance. However, although they are encouraged to paint and draw independently, some activities are rather prescriptive with pre-drawn or pre-cut templates for children to colour (for example, depicting fish). These restrict personal creativity and limit pupils' opportunities to experiment. Nevertheless, children have good opportunities to explore sound, use musical instruments and make music. In the Nursery, background music linked to the Chinese New Year theme played quietly during a session, enhancing the working ethos. Children in both classes thoroughly enjoy storytelling sessions when asked to think about what it might be like to be an animal (for example, when taking part in a race in a story about the Chinese New Year). In the main, most children should achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Reception Year.

ENGLISH

80. Pupils in Year 2 reach standards broadly in line with expectations (Level 2) at this point in the school year but there is little evidence of achievement at a higher level. This picture reflects that shown by last year's national tests. Year 4 pupils also reach expected standards relative to their age. These findings represent an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were judged unsatisfactory in the main, especially in reading and writing. Inspection evidence shows pupils make satisfactory progress. Those with special educational needs, including pupils with statements of special need, make good progress because of frequently good quality support. Pupils with English as an additional language also make good progress and achieve in line with their peers.
81. All pupils develop good speaking and listening skills both in literacy lessons and in other subjects. In Year 2, pupils listen attentively as a teacher explains a dictionary task. They can recall yesterday's lesson and know they are to arrange words in a correct alphabetical order. They can explain this clearly. Year 4 pupils engage in a discussion about poems they are studying with some enthusiasm. A more able boy explains he thought "lustre glossed" had to do with something shiny because he knew another word for 'shiny' was 'glossy'. In a Year 3/4 lesson for pupils of average and above average ability, pupils discuss the wording of instructions for playing "Snap!" They listen to one another carefully and give their opinions politely when these differ from others. For example, a girl stated an instruction referred to "all the cards on the table" and a boy said "I think it's the table cards". The teacher encouraged a discussion about whether these two statements were different, which interested the pupils. Subsequently, they were even more pleased to have both suggestions included as possibilities in the list the teacher made on the white board.
82. In Year 2, pupils enjoy reading. They like sharing books with an adult and are learning good strategies for tackling unknown words. For example, a more able pupil reads fluently and can guess a word because of the sense of the story. She can also 'build up' a word correctly using her knowledge of letter sounds and how they blend together. A less able pupil also demonstrates knowledge of letter sounds and uses picture clues sensibly although reading is more hesitant and adult support is needed. In a lesson for Years 1 and 2 pupils, all enjoyed word games that helped them with spelling patterns. Less able pupils working with a classroom assistant substituted letters to make strings of words such as 'fan, can, pan' and then changed to 'fat, cat, pat'. Average and above average pupils worked hard to complete a cycle of words such as 'life, wife, wine, wipe' and were quick to see which letter changed, and predict what might come next. Year 4 pupils read a range of books with varying success. A more able pupil can read a Roald Dahl story with good fluency and explain difficult words really well, although reading is not expressive. An average reader chooses a humorous history book about Egypt and reads with only slight hesitations although reading is somewhat 'wooden' and lacking in intonation. In a literacy lesson, many Year 4 pupils are keen to read poems they study aloud to the class and all make good efforts with words such as "cautioned". Many are intrigued when a teacher introduces the word "onomatopoeia" and enjoy sounding it out, rolling it around their tongues and learning what it means.
83. Pupils in Year 2 are developing sound writing skills in connection with their literacy learning. This is particularly true of story writing when pupils sequence events logically for retelling a familiar story, although below average pupils struggle unless they receive adult support. These pupils' knowledge and understanding of spelling are also insecure. More able and average pupils spell simple words correctly and their spelling of more complex words reflects a good grasp of letter sounds even when incorrect. Pupils write their 'news' at the start of each week though evidence suggests that their interest in this wanes over time, with much repetition of content and little evident purpose. However, some less able

pupils work hard at communicating events of personal interest and persist admirably in writing at length in ways not seen in other work. Across the ability range, work is often untidy and carelessly presented although pupils can write neatly, as seen in handwriting books.

84. By Year 4, above average pupils are developing good writing skills for literacy work. They write for many purposes with understanding. They transfer gains made through reading effectively to writing. This is seen, for example, in their choice of vocabulary and the way sentences are structured, especially for retelling familiar stories. In the main, though, writing is linked to answering questions about a literacy text. There is little evidence of extended writing for pupils' own purposes or to develop their imaginative powers. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 use a pleasing, joined, script and most try hard to use this for literacy work. This is especially true in Year 3 where a teacher's high expectations of the presentation as well as content of work are well understood by pupils of all abilities. Across the age-range, writing for other subjects does not usually reflect skills learned through literacy lessons. Frequent use of worksheets hinders the transfer of important skills to other areas of the curriculum. Generally, such sheets require limited answers and do not demand pupils think things through for themselves. Their appearance is also not conducive to taking pride in how work is done.
85. Teaching is usually good. Very good teaching was seen in a Year 3 lesson where pupils were kept on task because their teacher focused sharply on the lesson's purpose. They made good gains in learning how to give and sequence instructions so they are easily followed. Teachers' planning follows the structure of the literacy hour appropriately and a good pace generally sets the tone of lessons. Where teaching is only satisfactory, however, pace falters because too much time is spent on whole-class discussion. This was seen in a Year 4 lesson that otherwise got off to a good start. Less able pupils and some of average ability began to fidget and lose interest by the time the follow-up writing task was explained. Problems were exacerbated when less able pupils found it hard to see what was involved in comparing two poems they had previously quite enjoyed talking about. In some lessons, adult support is deployed to very good effect. This was seen in the Year 1/2 lesson when a classroom assistant made sure below average pupils concentrated throughout the whole-class discussion about dictionary work, taking part in this and follow-up tasks. Here, a very good link was made to science by using key words from the science topic on growing things. Together, pupils read out the words, sequenced them alphabetically quite quickly and then searched for them in dictionaries matched to their abilities. Examples of word-processing on the computer are found in some classrooms although such work is not integral to literacy lessons. No use of computers for this purpose was seen during the inspection.
86. Management of the subject is good and set to improve. The co-ordinator took up her post last September. She brings management skills and experience to her work and has made good strides in getting to grips with her new context. She has a very good understanding of the role and responsibilities attached to subject management. She has conducted a thorough audit of resources and, in partnership with the headteacher, has observed teaching and learning in classrooms across the school. The local education authority gives substantial support for all this work and associated tasks (such as developing skills for monitoring pupils' literacy across the age and ability range). The co-ordinator is well informed about strengths and areas for development through these activities and accepts that classroom observations will continue as integral to raising standards (for example, by observing teachers new to the school). Improved standards in writing are rightly seen as vital to success. Resources are sufficient and improving.

MATHEMATICS

87. Standards are judged to be average in Year 2, reflecting results in statutory tests last year. Then, all pupils reached Level 2 and the school is likely to reach its target again this year. However, too few pupils reached Level 3 in the 2002 national tests and the same is likely to happen again. This happens because the school has not monitored pupils' progress well enough in order to assess where weaknesses lie and address identified difficulties through targeted teaching. Such monitoring will in future ensure pupils' progress is 'tracked' over time and give teachers more detailed information to inform planning. Planned in-service training for teachers will help push this process forward. Pupils make satisfactory progress generally. Those with special educational needs make good progress because of good quality support. Similarly, pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress and achieve in line with their peers. The picture is similar to findings by the previous inspection when standards were judged satisfactory overall.

88. In Year 2, most pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of numbers 'within' a 1-100 framework for whole class activity, although less able pupils work mainly within 1-20. They add and subtract numbers to 20 fairly easily on paper, showing a grasp of the processes involved and the value of digits within each number. More able pupils mentally add and subtract numbers within 20 with good accuracy. All pupils know the names of simple flat and solid shapes. More able pupils sort them using a correct vocabulary when talking about their properties, while less able pupils count the corners. Pupils use rulers to measure in centimetres.
89. Standards meet national expectations relative to pupils' ages in Year 4, though work for more able pupils is not sufficiently demanding and matched to pupils' abilities. Most work comfortably with thousands. Most also have reasonable understanding of patterns relating to times tables (counting in twos, threes, fives and tens for instance) and the more able find such work straightforward. Less able pupils, though, struggle to continue a pattern beyond the numbers given and average pupils find adult questioning helps them clarify their thinking and recall prior learning. Not everyone yet comprehends how such patterns help to solve problems. Perimeters and areas of rectangular shapes have been successfully calculated by all but the least able. Pupils have also extended their knowledge of solid shapes and use a correct vocabulary to describe them. They show a secure grasp of symmetry in the good butterflies they have created with paper and card to illustrate how patterns are reflected on the wings.
90. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some good teaching seen in Years 1 and 2. Experienced teachers have a good understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy. Others are less secure. A lack of consistency in planning affects how the strategy works across the school and consequently standards reached. The school is aware of this and a planned in-service training programme in the spring term will extend all teachers' understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy and sharpen relevant school procedures.
91. Teachers use the structure of the three-part lesson quite well although, on occasion, a lesson's pace is too slow so that not all planned work is covered. Snappy, mental warm-ups excite and challenge pupils. A good example of this was seen in a Year 2 class when pupils were delighted by a lively counting activity aimed at consolidating counting forwards and backwards in tens. Activities are generally appropriate and pupils of differing abilities get different work in most classes. At times, though, pupils' learning is hampered because they need adult support and a teacher's monitoring does not always pick this up. Resources are geared well to pupils' understanding. This was seen in a Year 1 'shape' lesson when pupils named and sorted solid shapes, with a better understanding than expected because of the practical nature of the task. Teachers' day-to-day assessment is effective in most classes in relation to planning the next stage in learning. In a few instances, such ongoing assessment is hampered by an over-reliance on published lesson plans. These are unsatisfactory because they require considerable modification to fit pupils' learning needs and this modification does not occur. Consequently, problems experienced by a significant number of pupils in Years 3 and 4 (who find it hard to be interested in any learning) are exacerbated. Appropriate opportunities are arranged for pupils to apply skills to other subjects and develop their mathematical understanding (as when they read temperature scales in science). Information and communication technology is also used to good effect. For example, some good computer graphs created by Year 2 pupils show their findings in a science project. Pupils' literacy skills are not, generally, used in their mathematics work. They do not take care with handwriting or spelling, even when copying. Pride in the presentation of work is not consistently encouraged.
92. The management of the subject is satisfactory since the co-ordinator has only been able relatively recently to develop her role. She uses her previous managerial experience to good effect. She gives advice to colleagues and funding is starting to be used well. Currently, teaching and learning are not sufficiently well monitored but this problem is being addressed through in-service help, which will train the co-ordinator in classroom observation. Indeed, an important part of school improvement planning is linked to raising standards in mathematics through observing classroom teaching and learning practices. Future plans are appropriate (for example, greater emphasis on using and applying mathematics in addition to training outlined above). The school has good resources, though some, like 'balance buckets', are well-worn and slightly damaged.

SCIENCE

93. Year 2 pupils reach average standards overall, in line with the expected Level 2. Few are expected to reach Level 3. This judgement reflects the picture given in last year's statutory teacher-assessments for

science. Year 4 pupils also perform as expected for their age by the time they transfer to the next phase of schooling. Inspection findings reveal that standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered appropriately through their work in the subject.

94. In Years 3 and 4, pupils are learning about materials and their properties. They are suitably involved in investigative work, testing the absorption properties of paper for example. They are learning fair test principles, as demonstrated in lessons across classes. Good links are made to numeracy when temperatures in different liquids are measured with thermometers and the elasticity of materials is measured. Good links are also made when pupils measure and time experiments while working with solids, liquids and gases. They build on their scientific understanding to good effect when, for example, liquids are poured into containers and they learn about viscosity and how this is measured. Some work shows how information and communication technology skills are applied to make graphs. However, there is a tendency in both year groups to use too many worksheets, hampering the development of pupils' recording skills when conducting experiments and reporting on their findings. Also, tasks are not always well matched to the range of abilities evident in classes.
95. In Years 1 and 2, pupils study 'food groups', how sound is produced and uses for electricity and electrical circuits. They observe living things. However, they frequently record findings on worksheets requiring one-word answers or the colouring in and cutting out of photocopied pictures. Such work is not generally matched well to pupils' abilities, so more able pupils, for example, are insufficiently challenged when recording their findings. In studying life processes, pupils have some good opportunities to study plants and seeds at first hand in their 'Garden Centre'. Good links are made in this work to art and design and pupils have drawn plants of various kinds from close observation.
96. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers are fairly secure in their knowledge and understanding of scientific topics, but are less skilled in teaching investigative and exploratory work meant to help pupils apply their scientific understanding. They use scientific terminology well and make sure pupils understand this. Basic skills are taught appropriately, lessons are organised satisfactorily and reasonable methods employed, although teachers tend to demonstrate experiments with pupils observing and answering questions. Insufficient stress is placed on collaborative and investigative work where pupils share ideas through 'hands on' experiences, learning to predict and hypothesise about the results they expect. The use of support staff in science is also not clear. For example, in a Year 3 class some pupils missed a substantial part of an interesting lesson because of support given outside the classroom unconnected with science.
97. Resources are adequate and appropriate, although more varied equipment (for example, stop watches, pipettes and small containers) would give greater scope to investigative work. Resources have not, yet, been audited, so the school does not know precisely what is available. Information and communication technology is used occasionally for science, but this is underdeveloped. There are satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, but ongoing information does not sufficiently inform teaching. This is seen in the mismatch of tasks to pupils' abilities. The leadership and management of science are satisfactory. They are at an early stage of development in part because the co-ordinator is new to the school and has only been in post a few weeks. She brings good management experience to her work. The development of the co-ordinator's role in line with school improvement planning will clearly help raise standards in science. It will enable her to observe teaching and learning across the school and assess at first hand where strengths lie and further development is needed.

ART AND DESIGN

98. No lessons were observed during the inspection although, at intervals during part of an afternoon, a class of Year 3/4 pupils was seen painting. An interview was held with the co-ordinator and planning was scrutinised. Judgements derive from these sources but are based mainly on a scrutiny of pupils' sketchbooks and work displayed in classrooms. Overall, standards are judged below those expected for pupils in Years 2 and in 4. Progress is unsatisfactory for all pupils, marking a decline since the previous inspection. Since then, as well as substantial changes to staffing, it would appear that the school's understandable wish to raise standards in English and mathematics has happened at the expense of non-core subjects such as art and design.

99. In Year 2, pupils have drawn small-scale, pencil portraits and coloured them in with pencil crayons. Many suitably place together features and facial details such as eyelashes and skin tone, although the medium used makes the latter difficult to match with reality. Work is somewhat immature and a significant number of pupils have used a 'jokey' cartoon style, showing a poor grasp of the nature of the task. Pupils across Years 1 and 2 have closely observed plant forms of various kinds for work linked to science. A range of media is used here, including pastel and water-based paints. At times, paint is used in a 'painterly' manner showing brush strokes and a confident use of colour. However, observational skills are underdeveloped so that much work has promising beginnings but does not become properly finished, even given pupils' ages. In a Year 1 classroom, pupils have painted animals and invented creatures to illustrate an amusing poem. The animals were then cut out. This work has a pleasing, spontaneous quality reflecting pupils' own ideas and matched more closely to what can be expected for their age. A "busy street" in another classroom is also attractively done with houses and shops and different vehicles drawn, coloured and cut out by pupils to make a large collage linked to geography studies.
100. Year 4 pupils have looked at patterns from different cultures and designed their own 'stamps' to display as a repeat pattern on a large sheet of paper. This demanded good measuring skills to 'square up' the paper. Pupils have also looked at colour combinations and considered contrasting and complementary colours. This autumn term work is promising but there is no evidence of development. The older pupils' pastel drawings of vases of flowers also have pleasing features (such as the choice of colour and techniques used) but because observational skills are underdeveloped all work is similar, with stereotypical images of flowers. Paintings in a Year 3/4 class showed that pupils had handled their medium well, painting within or around shapes adeptly to cover the paper and keeping colours clean. However, their drawing and observational skills were not equal to the demands of the task, linked to the theme of 'relationships' (connected with religious education), which entailed drawing a girl nursing a doll dressed as a baby. Across the age-range, sketchbooks are not really used in helpful ways (for example, by showing how pupils' observations have helped them develop ideas, or how they have experimented with various media to gain effect).
101. An overall judgement on the quality of teaching is not given since no complete lessons were observed. In the Year 3/4 class where some painting was seen, a teacher visited tables, talking to pupils and helping them. Pupils concentrated hard and many said how much they liked art and design lessons. They were enjoying what they were doing and tried hard, admirably, given that they found the task difficult. Generally, pupils' work shows teachers are hampered by some lack of subject understanding as well as by constraints imposed by inadequate time being allocated to the subject. Classes in the de-mountable classrooms suffer from poor facilities. Although pupils in the lesson observed managed relatively well by using sinks in nearby toilets, a scrutiny of work suggests lessons in these classrooms are mostly non-painting activities. In fact, this was true of much work across year groups. Planning insufficiently builds on pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding successively in art and design. If it did, they would eventually apply their skills productively to other subjects (as when studying plant forms for science). Opportunities for imaginative exploration of media also appear lacking. There was no evidence to show how information and communication technology is used for art and design.
102. Teachers are supported in their planning by a commercial scheme matched to the latest National Curriculum guidance. The subject is managed satisfactorily, though the co-ordinator has only recently taken up her post. She brings good knowledge and experience of subject management to her work as well as enthusiasm for art and design. In a short space of time, she has realised that good skills learned in the Nursery and Reception classes, with regard to colour mixing for example, are insufficiently built on. She has begun to address this issue, in part through the art club she runs for pupils in Years 3 and 4, judging their difficulties through the work they do. The club is popular and oversubscribed. The co-ordinator has a sound grasp of the various monitoring activities needed to raise standards (such as monitoring pupils' work as well as classroom practices). She has clear ideas about how to take the subject forward, including, for instance, disseminating information gained through in-service training sessions.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. Because of the way the school timetables lessons in design and technology, no lessons were observed. This was exacerbated by unavoidable changes made to timetabling for the inspection week. A small amount of pupils' work from Year 4 completed last year (solid shapes, money sacks and torches) was

seen and some designs for hats by current Year 2 pupils. Unfortunately, these were not a representative sample of pupils' work and the Year 4 pupils have, of course, since transferred to their next school. However, work reveals pupils have done some acceptable designing and making recently. Year 4 pupils' designs showed sound measuring skills and some logic in the way they chose the materials for their models. The solid shapes, triangular prisms, were mostly neatly cut out and tidily stuck together. Their torches showed that pupils had good ideas for switches and reflectors. Year 2 designs were clearly drawn but lacked detail and any written work to indicate what pupils had done or why. There was insufficient evidence to form a judgement about standards. Teachers' planning shows the subject is suitably covered during a two-year cycle which ensures that pupils in mixed-age classes do not repeat units of work. Planning is based on the latest government guidelines.

104. The management of the subject is satisfactory, though assessment is weak. It is not built in to lesson planning to show how pupils' prior learning is taken into account. The new co-ordinator got little information from the previous incumbent on taking up her responsibility a few months ago. She has since steadily built up information to support teachers' planning, which is collected into a file available to all. Photographic evidence of previous and current work is also being collected and will be a useful assessment tool for staff when, as planned, the school moderates pupils' work to illustrate different levels of ability across the age-range. The school knows its present policy is out of date and intends to update it as part of its current review of all school policies. Good use is made of school 'cluster' meetings attended by the co-ordinator. These provide a useful forum to learn from and share ideas with, other schools.

GEOGRAPHY

105. Because of the way the subject is organised throughout the year, lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2 only. In addition to not seeing lessons in Years 3 and 4, work was not available for scrutiny from these classes, and so no judgement is made about standards reached by Year 4. Similarly, judgements about progress over time cannot be made. Year 2 pupils reach good standards relative to their ability to talk about their learning. All make good progress building successfully on earlier learning. Pupils with special educational need benefit from support from classroom assistants who help them participate fully in lessons. With regard to pupils in Year 2, this picture represents an improvement on that of the previous inspection report.
106. Pupils in Year 2 can talk confidently about the locality immediately around the school. They use appropriate language to discuss features linked to their studies (such as 'mini-roundabouts', 'zebra crossings', 'pavements') and such terminology as "local environment". They name 'people who help us' and know what they do. For example, they talk about the 'lollypop lady' who helps them cross the road outside school safely and accurately describe her sign. They talk about other signs in their neighbourhood and explain where traffic lights are located. Such awareness is also found in lessons with Year 1 pupils. Pupils across year groups asked many pertinent questions of local police constables visiting their classrooms. They answered questions about 'keeping safe' when walking to the nearby town centre sensibly. Some more able pupils in a Year 1/2 class told a police constable what to draw next on his map (for instance, a roundabout) and named some of the streets in response to his questions. Although pupils' recording of work is limited, it reflects such good learning. It shows they have conducted traffic surveys outside the school gates and have entered information for graphical representation using a computer program. The large 'busy street' map on a classroom wall reveals well the way focused talk helps pupils build successfully on their learning.
107. In the lessons seen, teaching was consistently good. Planning is based on practical activities as much as possible and aimed, well, at reinforcing pupils' understanding in light of prior learning. This showed in sessions teachers organised for the visitors (police). So, pupils in a Year 1 class concentrated really well on writing their questions for the police constable and demonstrated a very good understanding of the kind of things they needed to know. During the visits, teachers in each classroom monitored pupils' responses, helping the less confident to speak up, making sure everyone listened. Other adults were deployed to very good effect so that learning was maximised for all pupils. However, while units of work include opportunities for assessing pupils' progress over time, it is uncertain how this assessment is done and how teachers use their ongoing assessments to plan future work.
108. The subject is managed satisfactorily, though the co-ordinator has only recently taken up responsibilities. She brings very good expertise to her role and is knowledgeable about what is taught

through the school. She has good ideas for future work, such as making sure appropriate subject vocabulary for the age-range is built up progressively. She has already conducted an audit of resources and canvassed colleagues about how 'gaps' in these can be filled. She checks planning to make sure it is in line with agreed units of work mapped out over a two-year cycle. Such monitoring also helps teachers incorporate information technology into lessons (such as by using data collection computer programs). Planning is based on the latest guidance. The co-ordinator recognises she has to scrutinise pupils' work as another means of checking what is taught as well as monitor standards. This recognition is built in to personal targets for developing the subject. She finds meetings with colleagues in other schools crucial to making sure skills are taught so as to lead to progressive improvements, including during the next phase of schooling. Meetings enhance school provision. Currently, teaching and learning in classrooms are not monitored but the co-ordinator well understands the need for arranging this. A well-organised file gives a good overview of her work.

HISTORY

109. Because of the way the subject is organised across the school year, no lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2 classes. One lesson was observed in Year 3. All pupils in Years 3 and 4 were also observed when a visitor talked about and enacted life as a foot soldier in ancient Greece. A scrutiny of work was undertaken across the year groups and a discussion was held with the acting co-ordinator and with a group of Year 4 pupils. On the basis of work seen in books, a firm judgement about standards reached in Year 2 is not possible although work covered suggests these at least meet expectations. In Year 4, too, pupils reach standards usual for their age. Pupils make satisfactory progress. This includes pupils identified as having special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. This finding is similar to that of the previous inspection.
110. Year 2 pupils have covered topics about famous people such as Guy Fawkes and Alexander Bell. They have compared old with new objects and developments (such as the design of telephones). Pupils of above average and average ability can explain their learning articulately, in their own words, although writing is limited to a few sentences. For example, a boy of average ability wrote about Alexander Bell, making a creditable attempt at sequencing his ideas logically. Simple time-lines in books across Years 1 and 2 show pupils suitably sequence events historically.
111. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils enjoy watching a video programme about the siege of Troy. They make good links to previous learning when they talk, for example, about whether the story of the wooden horse is simply a legend or based in fact. They appreciate the role of archaeologists in finding out about the past. Later, more able pupils can set events in ancient Greece in the context of other learning when questioned about the time-line for these. They know, for example, that some parts of the Roman period are associated with events surrounding Jesus and that these happened after the time of the ancient Greeks. They put the Egyptian and Viking periods in a correct chronological order. Pupils of all abilities talk about topics they have covered with understanding and in some detail. They know about primary and secondary sources of information, although they do not use these terms. All pupils across Years 3 and 4 showed genuine interest in the visitor who enacted life as a Greek foot soldier and questioned them about what he does. Their responses revealed a good knowledge of the work to date. They gasped as he entered the hall in costume, complete with a bronze helmet and carrying a spear.
112. On the basis of only one lesson, there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about teaching overall. Strengths are seen, however, in the depth of knowledge pupils have about work they have done. This was most clearly seen in the Year 3 lesson. Here, pupils (as across Years 3 and 4) are not easy to manage, affecting the lesson's pace as a teacher waited patiently to regain attention several times. Pupils fidgeted regularly and quickly sought distractions even though they were interested in the lesson and accepted their teacher's high expectations of work and behaviour. In the enactment session, too, some pupils had difficulty concentrating except when they were directly involved. The length of this session added to its problems. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have used a data-base to make block graphs on the computer showing the popularity of Greek gods and goddesses. Some pupils also talked about researching a topic at home on their computers.
113. The subject is managed satisfactorily on a temporary basis, until a permanent post-holder is appointed. The co-ordinator brings very good subject knowledge and expertise to its management. Planning is in line with the latest guidance. Teachers plan effectively together across Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 and 4. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4 because of this.

Relevant information to support topics being covered is disseminated to colleagues. The co-ordinator was instrumental in organising the visit connected with ancient Greece. It is unclear how assessments inform planning for pupils' learning over time or for individual lessons. Resources are sufficient and well used.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

114. Standards are average for Year 2 pupils and meet expectations for Year 4 pupils by the time they transfer to the middle school. All, including pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, achieve satisfactorily. This is an improvement on judgements made in the previous inspection report.
115. The school has made good progress in improving its provision for information and communication technology since the previous inspection, when standards were judged unsatisfactory. While resources especially have improved, the computer suite is not used often enough to maximise its full potential, even though it is timetabled weekly for each class. During the inspection, computers were not used as often as intended, because the usual support was not available, due to staff absence. They were also insufficiently used during lessons, although they were often switched on, ready for use. Nevertheless, much evidence shows pupils practise their skills with the keyboard and mouse and their confidence in using technology to support their learning is increasing. There has been considerable input from the local education authority to improve staff members' expertise in planning for and teaching information and communication technology. All aspects of the curriculum are covered as suggested by the most recent guidance. Support from the local education authority continues.
116. In Years 1 and 2 pupils are learning how to sort and classify sources of information, then store their results on a computer. In Year 2, pupils aid their numeracy work with a computer program allowing them to enter numerals correctly reflecting a hundred square grid. Folders of pupils' work show good learning about graphs, surveys and how to get information from different sources. There are good links to other subjects and aspects, such as learning about the mathematics involved in pattern making, developing pupils' social development and links to geography through map work. As the computer area was not used very often during the inspection, it is not possible properly to judge the quality of teaching of information and communication technology. In Year 2 lessons, however, sessions were well organised, resources were used effectively and pupils made gains in their learning in line with planned activities because of good teaching skills.
117. The school has opened a website. Pupils use the Internet for research purposes. Procedures for informing parents about this and gaining their permission for Internet access are securely in place. The school benefits greatly from the assistance of a member of the governing body with expertise in its information and communication technology work. He visits the school regularly to help and to monitor work done. Resources are now satisfactory, but the co-ordinator realises that the subject needs to improve further. Management of the subject is good. Developments to date have been well managed and a recently appointed co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable about school provision. Assessment procedures are being developed and the future assessment of pupils' basic skills will ensure teaching is based securely on what they already know and can do.

MUSIC

118. Because of timetabling, only two lessons were seen. Judgements are based on these, on listening to pupils from Reception to Year 4 singing in assemblies and on a discussion with the co-ordinator. In lessons in Years 2 and 3, pupils achieved broadly as expected relative to their age and content taught. No Year 4 lessons were observed so no judgement about standards with the oldest pupils is made. Similarly, a judgement about progress across the school is not possible. Year 2 pupils made good progress in their lesson and built on prior learning. In Year 3, pupils made satisfactory progress in consolidating previous work. These judgements include pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. Opportunities to foster pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, although appropriate, are sometimes missed (for example, by extending pupils' knowledge of the composer of music played in assemblies). Given the limited nature of the evidence available, standards in Year 2 appear the same as at the last inspection. Comparisons with standards previously reached by older pupils are not possible.

119. Some good subject expertise is evident among staff. So, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils explored the expressive use of sounds, developed their aural memories by listening carefully and could repeat rhythms accurately because of good teaching. Singing was modelled effectively by the teacher, which improved pupils' performance. They enjoyed learning "Oh dear! What can the matter be?" and did this quickly with the teacher's guidance, finding it fun to listen to the tape and copy the words and melody. The pace of the lesson was good, with good questioning and probing of pupils' responses to help them see how to improve. A Year 3 lesson was well planned and organised. Musical terms (such as ostinato and rhythm) were used appropriately to reinforce and extend learning. Pupils had sound knowledge of a familiar theme in 'Peter and the Wolf', realising it was a reference to grandpa in the story. The lesson was hampered at times, though, because of a teacher's insecure subject knowledge when discussing the beats to be clapped in a rhythm. Opportunities to reinforce points about this through, for example, the use of musical notation or a graphic score were missed.
120. In assemblies, pupils strive hard to sing in time to taped music. They make a reasonably tuneful sound and change dynamics to sing loudly or softly as required. The good practice of expecting pupils to stand in order to sing is well established. The songs chosen do not support learning particularly well, however, so pupils do not reach standards that might be expected. For example, tunes are not well known or appealing in a 'catchy' way and pupils find the taped accompaniment hard to follow. Not all join in and as words are difficult for some to read, their literacy skills impede their progress. Opportunities for pupils to sing and develop their voices in a whole-school context are lacking. There are no 'singing practice' sessions to build a repertoire of songs and hymns for assemblies and other events common to everyone, which would extend classroom learning as well as reinforcing it. But pupils do perform in concerts, at Christmas for instance. Opportunities to learn an instrument are limited although some pupils join recorder clubs and there are plans to broaden these into a music club. More generally, instrumental work is nurtured for performance purposes such as the Christmas concert but does not form a regular part of school life.
121. Resources overall are adequate. No recent audit has shown what is available or revealed the state of repair of instruments and whether these are stored properly, but the co-ordinator is very aware of the need for such an audit. Management of the subject is satisfactory at present. However, the co-ordinator brings good skills and subject expertise to her role and has good ideas for developing provision. Since taking up her responsibilities at the start of the school year, she has begun to raise the subject's profile. For example, in her own classroom, background music is played during parts of lessons, which has a calming effect. She would like to see this good practice extended. Music is also played as pupils enter the hall for assembly, creating a pleasant atmosphere, with pupils settling quietly while everyone gathers. At times, instead of listening to the music, pupils leave the hall singing quietly and this is also very pleasing. The school has adopted two schemes of work for Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 and 4 respectively. These cover necessary elements of the curriculum suitably, as set out in the latest guidance. They support teachers' planning effectively. The music policy is due for review, assessment procedures form part of the schemes of work and are linked to National Curriculum levels, but their use is neither formalised nor informs planning consistently across the school. The subject has not had much prominence for a considerable time since priority has been given to English and mathematics. The school is well placed to redress this imbalance although it is evident much work is needed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

122. Standards in Year 2 dance and games' skills are in line with national expectations. No judgement is made on gymnastics because no lessons were seen. It was also not possible, because of changes in the school timetable during the inspection week, to watch any Year 4 lessons and so no judgement is made about standards reached by that year group. The Year 2 judgement represents a decline in standards since the last inspection. This would appear to be due mostly to the fact that all previous staff have left and new teachers lack sufficient depth of subject knowledge to plan and teach necessary skills to best effect.
123. Year 2 pupils have good ball skills. They pass, dribble and shoot a basketball with reasonable success and improving skill. In dance, pupils remember a series of steps well and most of them perform them to music with good rhythm. All pupils make sound progress through Years 1 and 2. There is little difference between the performance of boys and girls though boys tend to dominate games situations whilst girls show far better control during dance. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress in these lessons because they are as able, physically, as their classmates. One pupil with a statement of

special need performed dance with great joy.

124. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and organised, with appropriate resources. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoyed dancing the 'Virginia Reel' in sets with creditable success, though some behaved in a rather silly way at times in one lesson. On this occasion, they did not co-operate and spoiled the dance for others. Nevertheless, they enjoyed a very thorough and creative 'warm down' at the end of the lesson that was set to music. In Year 2, a teacher offered sound coaching points when pupils were shooting a basketball. Pupils enjoyed the games lesson and co-operated better than during dance. In part, this was because the dance was very much geared to achieving a correct structure and pupils did not have any opportunity to fashion their own movements.
125. Although teachers make links with previous learning when planning lessons, planning is general in nature. It is not sufficiently well rooted in what pupils know and understand as a means of informing 'next steps' in learning. Teachers do not, for instance, assess and record pupils' progress in lessons and currently there is no means of assessing learning over time at the end of each unit of work.
126. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator was very recently appointed and got little information from the previous post-holder. A file of useful information (such as a policy and scheme of work) is being developed and links with other schools should aid teachers' understanding of the subject and ensure pupils develop relevant skills, knowledge and understanding successively.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

127. Standards are broadly as anticipated by the locally agreed syllabus for pupils in Year 2 and for those in Year 4. A similar judgement was made at the last inspection. Year 2 pupils name parts of a Christian church, such as 'font, alter, pew and aisle' and know what these things are for. They know some Christian and non-Christian festivals, such as Christmas, Hanukkah and Diwali and ceremonies associated with these. They recall basic facts about the life of Moses, Jesus and Buddha. All pupils make satisfactory progress through Years 1 and 2.
128. Year 4 pupils express their knowledge of Christianity and Sikhism orally. They do this articulately in response to a teacher's questions and through discussion. They know that religions 'instruct' their converts in how to live their lives. They speak knowledgeably of the "friendship wheel" and with a growing awareness of what is important to Sikhs, including their 'special book', though few can name it. However, little is written down and what is written is too often copied from teachers' notes rather than reflecting pupils' own understanding of content taught. All pupils make generally satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding, through Years 3 and 4.
129. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Good teaching was seen in a Year 2 lesson. Teachers use a range of methods, such as discussion, storytelling, role-play and drama, to help pupils understand the concepts and symbols of major world religions. However, written work is underused and in some classes too many worksheets are employed. This restricts pupils' writing; pupils of all abilities often get the same task which does not help the less able or ask more of those of higher ability. Resources, such as the lovely, handmade hassocks from a local church, bring alive the subject. Genuine interest was sparked in Year 2 pupils who were delighted at the chance of making their own hassocks. Teachers link religious education well to other subjects, like art and mathematics. In Years 1 and 2 they display pupils 'prayer mats' to raise pupils' self-esteem and use the local church well as a resource. Year 4 pupils are proud of their displayed work on symbols of Sikhism.
130. The subject makes a very positive contribution towards pupils' spiritual development. They learn what is common to many world religions, such as belief in a single deity or the events described in the early books of the Bible and what is different, like their different ceremonies. This learning helps them grasp others' viewpoints much better.
131. Assessment procedures do not either inform lesson planning or check ongoing learning at the end of each unit of work. This apart, the management of the subject is satisfactory. Currently, it does not involve monitoring teaching and learning in classrooms but the school is well aware of this weakness. The new policy is well written and a useful guide for all teachers. The local education authority's scheme of work is well known and used throughout the school. There is a rich supply of religious objects and posters to support pupils' learning, carefully boxed by topic. The local church is well used to enhance pupils'

understanding of Christianity and a local vicar visits school regularly. To date, there are no equivalent links meant to improve pupils' understanding of other faiths. For example, there are no visits to other religions' places of worship or representatives from the Sikh, Moslem and Jewish faiths invited into school to talk to pupils.