

INSPECTION REPORT

HEADLANDS LOWER SCHOOL

Northampton

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121913

Headteacher: Mrs Gill Roy

Reporting inspector: Mr Christopher Gray
21037

Dates of inspection: 3-6 December 2002

Inspection number: 248301

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bushland Road Northampton
Postcode:	NN3 2NS
Telephone number:	01604-407098
Fax number:	01604-416115
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C Jones
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Christopher Gray 21037	Registered inspector	Information technology	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
Jenny Mynett 9334	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) 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?
Ken Hobday 21372	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Physical education Design and technology	How well is the school led and managed?
David Langton 3855	Team inspector	English as an additional language English Geography History	
Sonia Bosworth 30573	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Religious education	
Christine Canniff 18703	Team inspector	Science Art and design Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Sue Leyden 2423	Team inspector	Educational inclusion	Designated Special Provision

The inspection contractor was:

TWA *Inspections* Ltd
102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL53 7JX

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	21
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	22
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	26
DESIGNATED SPECIAL PROVISION	27
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	28
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	33

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Headlands Lower School is situated in the suburbs of Northampton and is to become a primary school over the next two years. The school is currently for children aged three to nine and has 413 full-time pupils (213 boys and 200 girls). In addition, 84 children attend the Nursery in either the morning or the afternoon session. The school has a Designated Special Provision (DSP) which caters for children with severe and significant learning and communication difficulties, including autism. There are 24 full-time places and all are taken. In addition, there is a speech and language unit in the Nursery offering eight part-time places, all of which are filled. Children's attainment on entry to the school spans a wide range because of the high number of pupils with statements of special educational need. Overall, it is below average. There are 108 pupils on the special needs register; at approximately 24 per cent of the school's roll, this is above the national average. Thirty-eight pupils have statements of special educational need, and, in percentage terms (8.4 per cent), this is well above average.

Children come from a range of different backgrounds, but the majority come from families whose socio-economic circumstances are average. The proportion of pupils entitled to receive a free school meal is average. Twenty-two per cent of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds, which is higher than average. Thirty-nine pupils speak English as an additional language. This is nearly nine per cent of the school's pupils and is higher than found in most schools. Nineteen of these pupils are at the early stages of learning English.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Headlands Lower is a good school which is justifiably popular with parents. Pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes to their work. They make good progress during their time in the school. The standards the oldest pupils are likely to achieve by the end of Year 4 are similar to what is expected for their age in English, mathematics and science. The overall quality of teaching is good. The school is well managed by the headteacher, senior management and governors. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' attainment in information technology and physical education is above expectations throughout the school. Attainment in swimming exceeds expectations by Year 4
- Pupils make good progress during their time in the school
- The provision for pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils respond with very good behaviour and attitudes to their work
- Very good provision is made for pupils in the DSP and for pupils with special educational needs
- Teaching is good
- The headteacher provides very strong leadership and the management of the school by the headteacher, senior staff and governors is good.

What could be improved

- The amount of time spent on music, art and design and technology
- The arrangement of the school day, because some pupils miss certain aspects of the curriculum and assemblies from time to time

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997, when there were seven key issues. The first was to improve teaching that was unsatisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed in this inspection and teaching was considerably better than at the last inspection. Secondly, the school had to introduce schemes of work for all subjects. This has been done and the schemes are now used effectively in teachers' planning. The third issue concerned methods of assessment. The procedures are now very good, though their use in future planning is not consistent in all subjects. The next issue was about improving individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs. The provision for these pupils is now very good. The fifth issue was a broad one concerning senior and middle management and good improvement has been made on the areas identified. Sixthly, the school needed to give pupils more opportunities to develop independent learning, and good progress has been made on this. The last issue was about minor omissions in statutory publications, which have been rectified.

In addition, overall results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 are rising, though trends are difficult to identify because of the very wide spread of abilities in each year group. Training and monitoring of teaching has led to a significant improvement in its quality. The overall improvement since the last inspection has been good.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The picture these results give is not an accurate reflection of the school's work, because of the large numbers of pupils with special educational needs in every year group. For example, of the pupils who took the 2002 tests, 12 per cent had statements of special educational need, while 29 per cent were on the special educational needs register. These figures are much higher than is found nationally. The variation in these percentages from year to year also means that it is not easy to identify any trends. The school sets challenging targets for test results, which were met in 2002.

The inspection finds that current attainment is similar to the national average by the end of Year 2 in English, mathematics and science. The oldest pupils, currently in Year 4, also attain standards in line with what is expected for their age. This represents good achievement overall for these pupils. Pupils' attainment in information technology and physical education exceeds expectations across the school. By the time pupils reach Year 4, attainment in swimming is higher than is found nationally. In the other subjects of the curriculum, attainment is similar to what is expected by Years 2 and 4 in design and technology, geography, history and religious education. No judgements were possible on attainment in art and design and in music because of lack of evidence.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes and their learning are very good. Pupils are enthusiastic about coming to school and display very positive attitudes in lessons and during the after-school activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave well, both in their lessons and around school. Parents appreciate the very good behaviour of pupils and feel the high expectations of staff contribute to it.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships in the school are good, both between staff and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves. The school works hard to promote tolerance and kindness and does its best to see that pupils do not feel excluded.
Attendance	Satisfactory. It is in line with national averages, though better than many schools in the area. A small number of parents bring their children late to school on a regular basis.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The foundation of the good teaching in this school is teachers' high expectation of pupils' behaviour. This is applied fairly and equally to all children and is an important factor in the successful integration of DSP pupils into the classroom. Pupils learn well because they know what is expected of them. They learn well also because teachers make clear to them at the start of every lesson what they are going to study. In most lessons, teachers consolidate pupils' learning by getting them to look back at the end of the lesson to see how well they have done. Teachers sometimes do not leave enough time for this, however. The practice of pupils' writing down the objective of the lesson sometimes slows down their learning, especially for lower attaining pupils. Teachers' marking is good in some classes and in some subjects, but it is not consistent.

English and mathematics are taught well. There is a good focus on literacy and numeracy skills and pupils have frequent opportunities to practise them in other subjects. Information technology is well taught, especially in the well-equipped computer suite, but insufficient use is made of classroom computers. Teaching is good in physical education and history and satisfactory in religious education and design and technology in Years 3 and 4. No judgements were possible in design and technology in Years 1 and 2 and in art and design, geography and music in both key stages because of lack of evidence.

Pupils with special educational needs and those in the DSP receive very good support from all teachers and assistants and make good progress towards their targets. Teachers and assistants know how to respond to the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language and they do so effectively.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The school teaches all the subjects it is required to but does not give enough time to some creative subjects. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils in the DSP receive very good support and work well alongside their classmates. Other pupils with special educational needs are also given very good support. The school has a good number of well trained teachers and assistants to make this possible.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils make good progress in lessons through high quality provision from class teachers and support staff, and achieve well. All teachers show good awareness of these pupils' needs and help them to be fully involved in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good. The school has a very positive ethos where all children are equally important and where they learn to respect one another's feelings and values. Well-structured personal, social and health education provides good guidance to support pupils' personal development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a safe and secure environment, providing good care and welfare for its pupils. Their progress is carefully tracked in English and mathematics to help them fulfil their potential.

The school has a good partnership with parents. They have very positive views and warmly praise what the school achieves. Parents' involvement in the work of the school is good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher is a very good leader and she is well supported by a dedicated and hard-working senior management team. They and all the staff form a good team and work well together for the benefit of the pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors keep themselves abreast of how the school is doing and are effectively involved in determining its future development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a good understanding of its own strengths and weaknesses and sets itself appropriate priorities for development. Future planning is properly focused on these priorities.
The strategic use of resources	The school has a generous provision of teachers and assistants and they are well used. Resources for learning are plentiful and the accommodation is good and well looked after. The school understands the principles of best value and applies them well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The views of the 134 parents who returned their questionnaires and the 17 who attended the parents' evening were taken into account. A number of other parents were also spoken to during the inspection.

What pleases parents most	What a few parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school and make good progress• Behaviour in the school is good• The school is helping children to become mature and responsible• There is a good, caring ethos• The school is well led and managed• Teaching is good• Children are expected to work hard and achieve their best• The school works closely with parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of homework• Information on their children's progress

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. They looked carefully at homework and found that teachers make good use of it, that it ties in well with what pupils learn in class and that amounts are about right. The information given to parents about children's progress is good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

National curriculum test results, trends and targets

1. Pupils' results at the expected level (Level 2 and above) in the 2002 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 were below the national average in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics. At the higher level (Level 3), results were above average in reading, average in writing and well below average in mathematics. In science, teacher assessments show that pupils' attainment at the expected and higher levels was well below average.
2. Compared with similar schools, results in reading, writing and mathematics were well below average. At the higher level (Level 3), results were above average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. In science, teacher assessments at the expected and higher levels were well below average.
3. Looking at the average points score (where pupils' attainment at all levels is taken into account), results were below average in reading and writing and well below in mathematics, compared with all schools. Results compared with similar schools were below average in reading and well below average in writing and mathematics.
4. The trend in reading has been rising in a similar way to the national trend over the last five years. In mathematics, the trend is rising but not so fast as the national trend. In writing, there is little overall trend, though results are higher this year than last. Teacher assessments have been low in science, partly because teachers are cautious in their estimates, as they have no real yardstick by which to judge attainment and also because investigative science had, in the past, not started until Year 2. This has now been rectified. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls.
5. However, the picture these results give is not an accurate reflection of the school's work. The school is fortunate in having the Designated Special Provision (DSP), as this report frequently shows. Part of the way the school insists on these pupils' full integration is for all of them to be included in national testing at the age of seven. This is entirely consistent with the school's intentions for these pupils, but it is the inclusion of so many pupils with statements of special educational need which makes the test results unreliable as an indicator of how well pupils are doing overall.
6. A clear example is the cohort which took the 2002 tests. Of the 90 pupils involved, 12 per cent had statements of special educational need, while 29 per cent were on the special educational needs register. These figures are much higher than is found nationally, making national comparisons meaningless.
7. A clearer idea of attainment in the school can be given in two ways: first, by presenting the test results with an average percentage of pupils with special educational needs, and, secondly, by looking at the progress made by all pupils on an individual basis. The deputy headteacher, as assessment co-ordinator, has assembled a large amount of test data about all pupils, and it is stored effectively in a spreadsheet, so that it can be presented easily in various ways.
8. In the first method, the results of all pupils with special educational needs are removed, and those of a percentage of statemented pupils (who are not in the DSP) put back. This shows that overall results at Level 2 and above were a little above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. Secondly, records of testing for pupils in every year

group show that nearly all pupils are making at least satisfactory progress and that most make good progress.

The findings of the inspection

9. Children enter the school with skills which are below average overall. As well as children in the DSP, the nursery also has a speech and language unit. In all, 18 per cent of nursery children are on the special educational needs register, including six pupils (seven per cent) with statements. Children make good progress during their time in the Foundation Stage and, by the time they enter Year 1, their attainment looks set to be average in mathematical development, physical development and personal, social and emotional development. Though progress is good in communication, language and literacy and satisfactory in knowledge and understanding of the world, attainment is likely still to be below average by the time the children start Year 1. Progress in creative development is unsatisfactory because it is restricted in Reception by insufficient opportunities.
10. In English, pupils' attainment is average overall by Years 2 and 4. Speaking and listening skills have improved since the last inspection. For example, pupils in the Advent assembly spoke out with great clarity and expression. Pupils' library skills are well developed and Year 4 pupils of all abilities know how to locate a book and use the index. Pupils make good progress in reading and writing. Their spelling is satisfactory and handwriting and presentation are generally good.
11. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is similar to the national averages by Years 2 and 4. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are developing sound number skills and also have good opportunities to explore shape, space and measure. Those in Years 3 and 4 increase their confidence with number. They successfully use their knowledge of multiplication and division to solve and write their own two stage problems. They use a range of standard measures and handle data in information technology lessons.
12. In science, pupils in Years 1 and 2 now have suitable opportunities to build up experimental skills and are gaining a clear understanding of a fair test. Years 3 and 4 understand how to carry out an investigation and are willing to try various approaches in order to solve problems.
13. Pupils' attainment in information technology exceeds expectations by the ages of seven and nine. This is because the very good leadership in the subject has ensured that all teachers have good expertise. Good teaching and efficient use of the well equipped computer suite mean that pupils receive a good spread of experience in all aspects of the subject.
14. Attainment in physical education exceeds national expectations in Years 1 to 4 and attainment in swimming is higher than expected by Year 4. In the other subjects of the curriculum, attainment is similar to what is expected by Years 2 and 4 in design and technology, geography, history and religious education. No judgements were possible in art and design and in music because of lack of evidence.
15. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning. They benefit from high quality support and make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Traveller pupils are well integrated into their classes and make progress at similar rates to other pupils. The school currently has no pupils who are gifted or talented.
16. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress in lessons through high quality provision from class teachers and support staff, and achieve well. The school is in process of establishing the attainment levels of different ethnic groups, against National Curriculum levels. For example, work has been done recently in assessing the

progress in writing of Bengali-speaking boys and addressing their needs. . Currently, no pupil is at a low enough level to require special language support. If such were the case it would be provided.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. Pupils' attitudes to school and their learning are very good. Pupils are enthusiastic about coming to school and display very positive attitudes both in lessons and during the after-school activities. The effective management skills of teachers ensure a good working atmosphere is maintained in the classroom. Pupils settle quickly to the tasks set for them and their capacity for sustained concentration is generally very good. Pupils enjoy their lessons showing enthusiasm and interest in their work. They are attentive, listen well to instructions and to each other and are keen to respond to questions. Pupils have very positive views about their school and were eager to share these with the inspection team. They feel it is *'a good school'* with *'nice teachers'*. They talked about the *'good facilities... and opportunities to go places...'* and were very enthusiastic about the clubs and after school activities. The youngest children in the nursery and reception classes are beginning to show a confident and mature approach both to their work and in their relationships with each other. They listen attentively to the teachers and concentrate well on their different tasks and activities. The good facilities and sensitive staff interventions help the children work and play well together. They are developing good social skills as they happily share their toys and resources, learn different skills and acquire new knowledge.
18. Behaviour in the school is very good. Pupils behave well, both in their lessons and around school. Parents commented on the very good behaviour of pupils and felt the high expectations of staff contributed to this. The school's ethos and the effective provision for pupils' moral and social development result in pupils responding in a mature and sensible way. There were only two pupils excluded for short periods last year. Pupils feel that the golden rules and golden time encourage them to work hard and behave well. The school has an orderly atmosphere and pupils are well aware of the school and class rules, which they have helped devise. Pupils are very friendly and polite, happy to talk about what they are doing and very willing to show their work to visitors. During discussions with pupils they reported that the school was generally a safe and secure place with few incidents of oppressive behaviour or bullying. They feel this has improved over the last year.
19. Relationships in the school are good, both between staff and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves. The school works hard to promote tolerance and kindness and ensure pupils do not feel excluded. The older pupils are very caring and look after the younger ones, with the 'buddy system' being particularly successful in the playground at lunch and play times. Lunchtime is a very civilised occasion and works very effectively in helping to promote pupils' social development, particularly in the Foundation Stage. Pupils who speak English as an additional language, pupils with special educational needs and those in the DSP are very well integrated into the classroom and involved in school activities. Where the opportunities are offered, pupils generally work well together in pairs and small group activities. This harmonious atmosphere promotes a good working environment and makes a positive impact on learning. For instance, pupils were observed collaborating well during a history lesson as they rehearsed their enactments of Florence Nightingale's life before it was videoed.
20. The personal, social and health education programme and 'circle time' provides a safe and secure situation where pupils can discuss important issues. This promotes pupils' understanding of a good moral code, enabling them to share their views and feelings, values and beliefs. In one class observed, pupils shared their thoughts on what makes a good friend and how they could develop effective friendships. This identification and

acknowledgement of their friendships helped to raise their self-esteem and promoted value and respect for each other.

21. The last inspection identified the need to provide pupils with opportunities to make choices and take more responsibility for their own learning. Since then good progress has been made in extending pupils' independent learning skills. Pupils develop their investigative skills and evaluate their results, with pupils more involved in identifying their learning objectives. Pupils willingly undertake roles of responsibility around the school. They take turns to act as class monitors, whilst older pupils in Year 4 have wider responsibilities such as operating the music system and overhead projector in assembly, tidying the reading books and coats, selling refreshments at break times and acting as playground buddies. Although 'circle time' enables pupils to raise issues or make suggestions, there is currently no school council or opportunity to allow them to become involved in the decision-making processes of the school. This has been identified in the school development plan for when the school becomes a primary.
22. The level of attendance in the school has improved slightly since the last inspection. Although attendance figures are in line with the national average, attendance in the school is better than that locally. Punctuality in the morning is generally good. However, this is spoilt by a small number of parents who are bringing their children to school late in the mornings on a regular basis. The registration period provides an orderly and purposeful start to the day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. The quality of teaching in the school is good overall. Teaching was very good or better in about a third of lessons, good in just under half and satisfactory in about a quarter. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. This is a good improvement on the last inspection, when only ten per cent of teaching was very good or better and eight per cent was unsatisfactory.
24. One of the chief reasons for the success of teaching in this school is the consistent way in which the whole staff manage their pupils' behaviour. Teachers and assistants have high expectations of how pupils should behave and pupils generally respond well. An example of the effect of such relationships was seen in an excellent science lesson for Year 2 pupils. The class was learning about a balanced diet and, at the start of the lesson, the school cook came to the classroom door with carrier bags full of food. Could the children help her, she wondered, to work out if the food she'd bought for the week's menus represented a good balance of food types? The pupils considered the five menus, then opened the bags and sorted the contents into the six food groups. They did this with a minimum of fuss, because the teacher had made it very clear this was what she expected, and worked well in five groups to come to their conclusions. The ethos of enquiry and learning which the teacher had created encouraged higher attaining pupils to read the ingredients of some packets to make their sorting easier. Pupils made considerable progress in the lesson and their attainment was above what would be expected for their age.
25. The behaviour of some of the pupils in the DSP is sometimes very different from that of others in the class. All adults handle this extremely well, so that the DSP pupils are fully integrated into lessons. Other pupils react in a very mature and sensible way, with great benefit to their learning and social development.
26. Teachers' expectations in other areas are also high and contribute to the success of the teaching and pupils' good learning. For example, all teachers expect pupils to set their

work out carefully and neatly. The scrutiny of pupils' past work showed that pupils of all abilities take great pride in their work.

27. Teachers also make challenging demands on pupils of all abilities, matching work to pupils' level of learning in many lessons, though more use of this technique needs to be made in science. The school has good numbers of well-trained support staff, and teachers make effective use of them. An example of activities well matched to pupils' abilities and strong support from a number of adults was seen in a good mathematics lesson for Year 3 pupils, who were learning about telling the time. Higher attaining pupils were working with the class teacher, reading and writing times to the nearest five minutes. Average pupils were divided into two groups, one with the deputy head and another with a learning assistant. The former is a group of pupils who are receiving strong support to reach the level the school feels them capable of. They received very good teaching and were able to perform at the same level as the other average group. Lower attaining pupils were playing a card game with another assistant, a game designed to give them practice in reading *o'clock* times. A fifth group of DSP pupils received good support from a third assistant and were working on a similar task, but at a level more in tune with their needs. By the end of the lesson, pupils of all abilities had made good progress.
28. Teachers' planning is good and is facilitated by clear schemes of work in all subjects. This had been a key issue at the last inspection and good progress has been made on it. Activities are interesting and relevant, and it is clear what the teachers intend for different groups of pupils, including those from the DSP and pupils for whom English is an additional language. Many teachers show much imagination in the activities they plan, including strategies such as drama, role play or the use of puppets. Good use is made of lesson objectives - that is, what the teachers intend the pupils to have learnt by the end of the lesson. These objectives are explained to the pupils at the start of all lessons and this enables them to learn effectively. In most cases, teachers refer back to them at the end of the lesson, enhancing pupils' learning because they have the chance to see how well they have done, though some teachers occasionally do not leave enough time for this. The use of lesson objectives is sometimes not so beneficial, however, because the school has decided that all pupils must write the objective in their books before starting work. This takes some pupils too much time and the objectives are sometimes not expressed in language which they can readily understand. In Foundation Stage, learning objectives are pre-printed and stuck into children's workbooks.
29. Teachers' use of marking is not consistent in all subjects or between teachers. Some is of good quality, giving pupils clear indications of how they can improve. Other good marking tells the pupils what they have achieved and why. But some marking is not as thorough.
30. The teaching of English is good and literacy skills are well taught, with opportunities provided for pupils to use these skills in other subjects, such as history. Teachers promote speaking and listening skills in assemblies and circle time, as well as through drama and role play. Library skills are well taught and there is good promotion of reading at home. Marking is inconsistent and does not always sufficiently advise pupils on how to improve their work, or ensure that spelling corrections are completed.
31. Teaching is good in mathematics, with a good emphasis on numeracy skills, which pupils use in many subjects, such as information technology. The three parts of the lesson are generally well balanced, but some teachers do not aim enough challenging questions at higher attaining pupils.
32. Science teaching is good. A strength of the teaching is the emphasis on investigational work, which is helping to raise standards, especially in Years 1 and 2. Teachers do not make consistent use of matching methods of recording to the ability of lower attaining pupils and, sometimes, tasks are not sufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils.

33. The teaching of information technology is good. The co-ordinator has led the subject well in ensuring that all staff can use the equipment with ease. Good use is made of the computer suite and good cross-curricular links are made. However, more use needs to be made of classroom computers.
34. Teaching is good in physical education and enables pupils to attain above what is expected. History teaching is good. In this subject, pupils have a good understanding because lessons are interesting and imaginative. Their attainment is no higher than average, however, because their writing skills are not sufficiently developed. Teaching is satisfactory in religious education and design and technology in Years 3 and 4. No judgements were possible in design and technology in Years 1 and 2 and in art and design, geography and music in both key stages because of lack of evidence.
35. The school ensures that pupils with special educational needs are well supported. Teachers and support staff take very good account in their planning of the targets for pupils with special educational needs and mostly for pupils with higher prior attainment. Targets in individual education plans and individual behaviour plans are clear and achievable. Pupils have very skilled support from experienced and committed teachers and support staff. Sometimes, they receive individual support or work in small groups outside the class - for example, in the Nursery some children are withdrawn to extend their language and to practise full sentences. Mostly, pupils are integrated into the whole class and have additional care and attention.
36. Class teachers have overall responsibility for the provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language. All teachers show good awareness of these pupils' needs and ensure that they are fully involved in lessons by explaining specific vocabulary in introductions and other parts of the lesson. Support staff also assist in their understanding and have been trained to do so. Lesson plans show provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language, though the quality of this planning is inconsistent. Travellers' children are well integrated into their classes and receive appropriate support.

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

37. **The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that covers all subjects and is relevant to the ages and interests of the pupils. It fulfils statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and the local agreed syllabus for religious education. There is a clear curriculum framework, with good focus on literacy and numeracy and satisfactory emphasis on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding in most other subjects. However, there is insufficient emphasis on the creative subjects such as art and design, design and technology and music and this affects the balance of the curriculum. The school takes good care to ensure that the curriculum is relevant to the needs of the pupils. It places strong emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills because a significant proportion of pupils start school with attainment that is below average in these subjects. There are very good arrangements for the development of pupils' personal, social and health education, including appropriate teaching on sex and drugs education. Teachers promote these areas with a structured programme, which is an integral part of the work of the school.**
38. Teachers plan together in year groups and make good use of the national guidance for literacy and numeracy. This means that pupils in the same year group but in different classes do the same work and enables them to learn at similar rates. Literacy and numeracy strategies are working effectively. Both literacy and numeracy are promoted

well through work in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, in science, pupils are required to write accounts of their investigations in their own words and some teachers provide guidance on which aspects of grammar pupils need to remember. There is good emphasis on extending pupils' language skills, for instance, when they develop their technical language in science or use drama in history lessons.

39. At the last inspection, planning was criticised for not identifying what pupils should learn and what they should know at the end of each topic covered. These issues have been dealt with well. Teachers now use the national guidance to plan pupils' learning, to ensure progression in pupils' learning between each year. However, coverage in art and design, music and design and technology is too thin, because the length of time spent on English and mathematics takes up the whole morning. This produces a tight schedule and there is not enough time for these subjects. In addition, the organisation of the timetable results in some afternoon lesson being split or too short and pupils are not always able to complete the work to a sufficiently high standard. This problem is caused by the need to timetable the halls for physical education and the information technology suite for so many classes, all in the afternoon.
40. The school makes every effort in lessons and activities to ensure that the contributions of all pupils are celebrated and valued. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and pupils from the DSP are fully included and learn alongside others in lessons. Teachers are well aware of the language skills and needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language. They ensure that pupils understand what is said and explain meanings of words so that these pupils also have full access to the curriculum. However, a large number of pupils are withdrawn during curriculum and assembly time for additional support through initiatives, such as the additional literacy strategy, and also activities such as steel pans and choir practice. Consequently, some of those pupils attending do not receive some of their entitlement to the National Curriculum and assemblies. This affects the otherwise excellent provision the school makes for pupils to have equal access and equal opportunity to all aspects of school life.
41. The school benefits greatly from its involvement with the local community and pupils have many enriching experiences. They include singing and playing the steel pans to entertain the elderly at a residential home and taking part in the local music and drama festivals. Pupils also take part in the drama club. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their sporting skills with skilled teaching from the local community football, rugby and tennis club coaches and these make a good contribution to pupils' physical development. There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in sporting events, which encourage pupils to strive for high standards. The school makes good use of the expertise of visitors to school, such as the nurse, community policeman and firemen to contribute to pupils' personal development.
42. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities, which provide pupils with an interesting and exciting range of experiences. Pupils visit well-chosen places of interest, which enhance their learning in history, geography and religious education. They visit Abington Park and the Central Museum. There is a residential visit to Everdon Field Centre for Year 4 pupils, to extend their learning in science, geography and art and design.
43. The school has established good relationships with other schools and colleges and shares information relating to the curriculum and to pupils. There are good links with a local special school and pupils enjoy joint workshops with its pupils - for example, in music and drama. These opportunities contribute to pupils' academic and personal development and provide valuable opportunities for them to work with other pupils. The school is an effective provider of initial teacher training through its graduate teacher programme and has well-established links with University College, Northampton. It is host to a number of students for work experience.

44. The pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is very well promoted through the school's mission statement and an ethos of care and respect for others. The well-structured personal, social and health education programme provides good guidance to support pupils' personal development.
45. The provision for pupils' spiritual development has improved since the last inspection and is now good. This is particularly well promoted through religious education lessons and the daily acts of worship. Religious education lessons provide opportunities for pupils to reflect upon their own and other people's lives. The pupils develop a good knowledge of Christianity and other major world religions, such as Islam, Judaism and Hinduism. Attractive school displays indicate that pupils celebrate the festivals of different religions. During the inspection week, Advent hymns and the lighting of a candle in assembly helped pupils focus and reflect upon the meaning of Christmas. On other occasions the sensitive unwrapping of the Koran and pictures of the many Muslim pilgrims walking around the Ka'bah in Mecca provided a moment of awe and respect as pupils appreciated the festival of Eid. In other areas of the curriculum, pupils are encouraged to value relationships and human achievement and to explore feelings and the views of others. Pupils are given opportunities to question and reflect, such as in science when looking at 'taking care of ourselves' and 'keeping healthy' and ways of applying this knowledge to their lives.
46. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral development. Good standards of behaviour are expected in and around the school, together with a respect for others. Pupils help devise the class rules, which are prominently displayed in each classroom. These emphasise good behaviour and personal responsibility. Pupils spoke positively about the reward system and how this encourages them to work hard and behave well. They look forward to the weekly 'golden time' and know that poor behaviour will reduce their opportunity to participate in it. The school aims to develop the children's spirit of co-operation with positive reinforcement. This is very effectively achieved through the recognition and celebration of successes at the Friday award assembly. Pupils have a keen awareness of environmental issues promoted through geography lessons. They have considered issues to do with pollution and how world resources are being exploited. They care about the planet and feel very strongly about these issues identifying ways in which they can help - such as picking up litter and recycling. Regular fund-raising initiatives encourage pupils to have a better understanding of those less fortunate than themselves. Adults in the school provide good role models for pupils.
47. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. The school encourages pupils of different ages and abilities, including those with special educational needs and those in the DSP to mix and work together. This works particularly well where pupils in the DSP can invite their friends from other classes to their life skills session on a Friday. Older pupils look after the younger ones through the buddy system at break and lunchtimes. The Year 4 pupils' residential visit raises their self-esteem and confidence and challenges their adventurousness. The very good extra-curricular activities help to develop pupils' co-operation and team spirit as well as their skills and abilities. Pupils value these opportunities and speak enthusiastically about the range of clubs offered. The swimming and life saving competitions and awards and choir also provide wider opportunities for pupils to work and compete with others or become involved in local festivals. Pupils have participated in community events and have successfully organised fund-raising activities to raise money to support local and national charities.
48. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good and effectively promoted during lessons, and through various visits and visitors. These have included visiting musicians, authors and theatre groups. Trips to local museums are well used to stimulate pupils' interests and enrich the curriculum. Year 1 pupils looked at old toys at the toy museum as part of their history topic, whilst pupils studying ancient Greece had a chance to view

artefacts at the Central Museum. Some pupils have the chance to learn to play the violin, recorder and steel pans and the Year 4 choir is well known for its performances locally. In art and design, pupils study the paintings of artists such as Renoir, Rembrandt and Hockney and produce attractive work in the style of these artists.

49. There is good provision for promoting pupils' multi-cultural development. This is helped by the provision of a number of dual language books in the library and signs around the school. Teachers acknowledge the different cultures of pupils in the school by greeting their class in various languages during the morning registration period. Pupils of ethnic minority backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are very well integrated into the school. The India day celebrated by Year 4 pupils was a great success and introduced them to different aspects of the country. Dressing up and sampling Indian food helped pupils experience a different culture. However, the school misses an opportunity by not inviting the parents from different ethnic backgrounds to help share their knowledge and experience at these events. Attractive displays around the school acknowledge and celebrate other religious festivals and cultures such as Eid, Chinese New Year, Diwali and Hanukkah.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

50. The school's provision for pupils' health, welfare and guidance is good and makes a significant contribution to their personal and academic development. Parents spoke very highly of the school. They find the teachers very caring and supportive and feel that any problems or concerns get followed up quickly and sorted out. Teachers and support staff closely monitor pupils' personal development and work sensitively to challenge and support their specific needs. There are very good systems to support the academic and personal development needs of pupils with special educational needs as well as those in the DSP, and they make good progress. Provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language is good and they are well supported in lessons to ensure they also make good progress. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. Teachers know their pupils well and provide support where they see it to be needed.
51. Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are very effective and this is reflected in pupils' very good behaviour and the orderly atmosphere in the school. The comprehensive behaviour policy provides very clear guidelines and procedures for promoting good behaviour and dealing with any disruptive pupils. It clearly highlights the school's expectations and identifies the responsibilities of staff and pupils. The well-defined reward strategy is based around a 'credit card' system linked to golden time. Parents feel that this works well and encourages pupils to work hard and behave well. The small number of pupils who demonstrate more challenging behaviour are very well supported and contained through an effective behaviour management system. Procedures to monitor and eliminate oppressive behaviour or bullying are well developed and explored through the personal, social and health education programme and assemblies. Parents asked the inspection team to explore the school's procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying. The inspection team feels that this is generally well handled. There are appropriate procedures in place and the school records and investigates serious incidents of bullying, where this is reported. Pupils spoken to feel that the school does not have a serious problem with bullying and that incidents have reduced over the past year. They know what to do and who to go to if anything happens.
52. Procedures for monitoring attendance are very good. Most parents call in promptly to inform the school when their children are away ill; otherwise the school phones home to check on absences. Parents are informed about their responsibilities regarding the need to ensure that their children attend school regularly and promptly, both in the prospectus

and governors' annual report to parents, as well as through letters. The school encourages parents not to take their children on holiday during term time. The awarding of certificates for 100 per cent attendance and a weekly cup to the class with fewest absences act as effective incentives to promote good attendance and punctuality. There are good links with the educational welfare officer, who visits regularly to chase up absences or causes of concern.

53. Procedures for child protection are currently unsatisfactory. The school has an appropriate policy that identifies the correct procedures and guidelines for child protection. The headteacher and a Year 2 class teacher are the members of staff with designated responsibility for child protection issues. Whilst they are well aware of the processes involved and the changes to the legislation, neither of them or other members of staff have received recent, updated training. This is not the fault of the school but is because they have not so far been accepted on the relevant local courses. Staff are hoping to attend a course early next year and then report back the training to ensure all members of staff are fully aware of child protection procedures.
54. Procedures to ensure pupils' health, safety and welfare are good. There are well-established procedures for taking care of pupils who may fall ill during the day and effective measures to meet the medical needs of pupils. A sufficient number of staff are qualified to provide first-aid treatment. The school has good links with the various support agencies and these specialists attend as necessary.
55. There are a comprehensive health and safety policy and effective guidelines to address the issues of safety and security of pupils in and around the school, or when out on visits. The health and safety governor, the teacher with responsibility for this area and the site supervisor undertake regular health and safety checks and risk assessments, as well as reviewing the security arrangements around the school. The school has appropriate health and safety procedures relating to the swimming pool and teachers involved in swimming lessons are suitable qualified in life saving techniques. The governors take their responsibility for health and safety issues seriously.
56. The school has improved its procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress very well since the last inspection, when it was judged unsatisfactory. These procedures are now very good. In the Nursery and Reception classes pupils are assessed frequently against the new Early Learning Journey steps that lead to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding for achieving the Early Learning Goals. Those children who achieve these goals early are assessed appropriately against National Curriculum levels. As well as the statutory national tests for seven year olds, pupils in Years 3 and 4 take tests in English and mathematics, which are carefully assessed to take account of the finer interim stages that make up each National Curriculum level. Teacher assessment provides similar information in Years 1 and 2. This information is used well, particularly in English and mathematics, to group pupils by ability and to ensure that pupils are supported and challenged appropriately. The assessment co-ordinator very effectively tracks pupils' individual performance in reading, writing and mathematics over the years in school. Teachers are also beginning to make a bank of good assessment information about each pupil as they assess against the key objectives for each subject at the end of a unit of work. This takes account of national guidance.
57. Under the guidance of the assessment co-ordinator, co-ordinators of English, mathematics and science have improved their role in the analysis of test results and identify for future development areas of weakness in pupils' answers. There is some analysis of the performance of boys and girls but the school has not yet analysed test results to see if there are differences in the performance of different ethnic groups. This is planned for the near future.

58. The school analyses well the progress in language acquisition of pupils for whom English is an additional language, using the local education authority's 'Ages and Stages' document termly. The co-ordinator has monitored attainment by ethnicity and identified Bengali speaking boys for special support. The school is currently monitoring ethnicity against curriculum progress. This new data analysis uses information technology and is very effective.
59. The school now makes satisfactory use of assessment information to plan the curriculum. This is an improvement from the last inspection report. For example, group and individual targets are set for pupils in English and mathematics and parents are informed of these in consultations and in annual reports. A good system for modifying teachers' medium- and short-term lesson plans in the light of assessment is beginning to be established in mathematics and has started this term for literacy. However, not all teachers are consistently applying this system. Nevertheless, subject co-ordinators are aware of the need for consistency and are beginning to focus on this in their monitoring of teachers' lesson plans and in their attendance at year-group meetings.
60. The school has very good procedures for the identification of special educational needs. Each year there is an audit of all year groups and checklists for English, mathematics, behaviour and any physical or speech difficulties. Pupils are screened very well to identify their exact difficulties. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets on their education plans and in the development of their self-esteem and confidence. This is because of the very good support and teaching they receive and the suitability of their targets. Pupils who need additional support are identified as soon as possible.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

61. The effectiveness of the school's partnership with parents is good. The quality of information provided for parents is very comprehensive. Information regarding the school and its activities is detailed in the attractive school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents. Regular contact with parents is maintained through reading diaries or updating letters, informing them of forthcoming activities and events. Curriculum overview information is circulated to parents each half term, enabling them to see what their children will be learning during the course of the year. During the pre-inspection meeting parents reported that they were not always given sufficient notice about forthcoming events. They also said that they would like to receive a newsletter providing more information about what was going on and relating the school's successes and pupils' achievements. The school effectively consults with parents and runs occasional workshops to keep parents apprised of developments and activities, such as information regarding the national tests or sessions relating to how they can help their child to achieve. In addition, at the beginning of the school year, the school booklet contains a detailed list of events for the year.
62. Parents of pupils for whom English is an additional language are effectively involved in the school and receive good information. If required, arrangements can be made for an interpreter to accompany parents to discussion evenings. The school has purchased a selection of general letters in a variety of languages. Footnotes are included in other information sent out, offering translations if requested.
63. Parents expressed a high level of satisfaction about the work of the school in the pre-inspection questionnaire and at the meeting held for them before the inspection. Parents feel that the school is well led and managed, and very accessible. Parents reported that they are very comfortable approaching the school with questions, concerns or issues and feel these are dealt with sensitively and promptly. The good teaching in the school

particularly pleases the parents. They feel the teachers' high expectations encourage pupils to work hard and achieve their best and this helps their children to become mature and responsible. One parent stated that the school does a lot to enable pupils to be 'rounded individuals'.

64. The parents' questionnaires contained a few minor concerns. A small number of parents felt that they were not kept sufficiently well informed about the progress their children were making. The inspection shows that pupils are set individual learning targets and these are shared with parents during the consultation evenings. The annual reports to parents are good and have improved following the last inspection. They detail what has been covered and clearly identify the extent of their children's attainment. A small number of parents expressed concerns about the amount of homework given and the range of activities offered outside school. The inspection team considers the amount of homework given to be appropriate and the range of extra-curricular activities provided to be good. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept appropriately informed and involved in the review meetings.
65. Parents are making an effective contribution to their child's learning by supporting them at home, which has a positive impact on pupils' progress. Parents receive details regarding the homework policy and how they can support and help their children at home with such activities as learning spellings or their times-tables. Parents who are regularly listening to their children read are contributing to their high standards of reading. A small number of parents are helping with various activities around the school on a regular basis. Parents are well briefed for their tasks, such as listening to reading or helping out with small groups' activities.
66. The impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school is good. Parents are warmly invited to become involved in the life of the school and are encouraged to attend school events such as class assemblies and the weekly award celebrations. Parents spoke enthusiastically about these events. Sports days, school productions and parents' evenings are also well attended. As mentioned above, there is scope for more involvement of parents from ethnic minority families in celebrations of their traditions, and this is something the senior management team has already discussed. Parents run a flourishing parents and toddlers group, which introduces potential new children to the school. The Headlands School Association (HSA) is run by an enthusiastic group of parents and staff. They successfully organise and run a number of fund-raising and social events each year, which helps to generate extra funds for the school. This helps to sponsor the Christmas parties and provide a book for each pupil. In addition, the HSA provides valuable extra support to the school by running coffee mornings or offering refreshments at school events.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

67. The leadership provided by the experienced headteacher and her senior management team is very good. All the strengths noted in the last inspection report have been maintained. The headteacher, senior staff and governing body work well together to provide a very clear direction for the school's development. They share a strong determination to raise the standard of pupils' attainment, especially in English and mathematics, whilst maintaining a caring ethos in which the value and contribution of every member of the school is important. The way in which the school enables every member of staff to develop was recognised with the recent award of 'Investors in People' to the school. The headteacher is particularly adept at developing the talents of all those associated with the school. For example, she has encouraged parents to seek employment as support assistants and then to train as teachers. She has achieved

noteworthy success in seeking to include pupils with special educational needs fully in every school activity and to make the DSP an integral and important part of the school.

68. The management of the school is good. Since the last inspection, the school's management team has increased to six members and has been considerably strengthened by the appointment of two assistant heads to work alongside the deputy head. They form an effective team, adopting complementary roles and providing excellent support for the headteacher. In turn, the headteacher encourages them to develop new skills and so to take a full part in the management of the school. One significant task is to assess the quality of teaching and learning through regular observations in classrooms and the examination of pupils' work. In the last academic year, a high turnover of staff, mostly owing to promotion, led to the employment of ten newly qualified teachers. The management team provided effective support and training to ensure all successfully completed their initial year in teaching. They also analyse the results of national testing, identifying weaknesses in the school's provision and assessing the need for changes.
69. The school has taken successful action to address deficiencies noted at the previous inspection. Good systems have been introduced to ensure that subject leaders monitor the subjects for which they have responsibility. With rare and unavoidable exceptions, all have had the opportunity to watch their subject being taught. However, the Foundation Stage co-ordinator has not observed teaching in the reception classes. Because so many subject leaders are newly appointed, their impact on the quality of teaching and learning has yet to be fully realised.
70. The school development plan is comprehensive and well organised. It now includes a long-term perspective. It prioritises raising standards in English and mathematics, setting targets for Year 3 and Year 4 pupils in addition to the statutory ones at Year 2. There is a strong focus on continuing to develop skills in special educational needs and behaviour management for teachers and learning support assistants. Performance management systems are used effectively to improve the skills of all members of staff. The targets set for teachers often include raising the standards of attainment of particular groups of pupils.
71. The headteacher and governors are committed to ensuring that the school maintains its inclusive ethos and practice. Senior managers and staff have established a culture of equal opportunities which is evident in all the school's work. The school has been made more accessible for wheelchair users and further discussions are taking place regarding the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and any developments that may now be needed. The detailed multi-cultural development plan and the arrangements to research and monitor pupils' perceptions and experience of school provide a sound basis on which to plan any future work related to inclusion.
72. The governing body makes a very positive contribution in steering the school forward. There is a nominated governor for each curriculum area who liaises with the subject leader on a regular basis. When a subject policy is due for review and possible revision, this governor is involved in the process. Through their regular visits to the school, many governors are knowledgeable and perceptive about its strengths and weaknesses. Because this is so, they are able to make a full and valuable contribution to the school's long-term planning process. They discuss the school development plan with the headteacher, suggesting new elements to be included or revising existing targets. Through the year, they monitor the progress the school makes towards the targets it has set. The governors fulfil their statutory obligations in ensuring that the school teaches all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. However, they have not ensured that the requirement that all pupils attend each act of collective worship is fully met. This, together with the fact that some pupils do not have full access to parts of the curriculum - for example, in music - means that they do not meet their aim to give every child equal access to the whole of school life as fully as they meet all their other aims.

73. The school's finances are in very good order and very efficiently managed. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Governors now regularly monitor school spending to ensure it responds effectively to variations in planned income. They have a clear overview of the school's finances and receive updated financial reconciliation statements monthly. Governors in the resources group - the finance committee- take a keen interest in the school's finances and give very good personal support, for example, in the development of the new classrooms to be built shortly. Individual governors are attached to each curriculum subject and ensure effective provision of resources for them. Governors help monitor pupils' learning and progression. The school is rightly proud of its financial management which has enabled improvements such as the recent lift provision for the disabled, the indoor, heated swimming pool, the refurbished library and the information technology suite.
74. Over ten per cent of the budget was carried over last year and well used to fund an identified educational priority - the raising of standards - through additional staffing. This surplus was owing to a number of senior teachers leaving, to be replaced by younger and less costly ones. The additional expenditure, authorised to ensure the provision of two learning support staff in every classroom, has resulted in raising standards of attainment not only for pupils with special educational needs, and pupils for whom English is an additional language, but also pupils of below average attainment. Other surplus funds have been put to good use earning interest in readiness for further building as a result of the school's forthcoming expansion to becoming a full primary school - an indication of good forward planning. Funding for the new building has already been secured, and planning is at an advanced stage. The school is particularly good at raising additional funding through the letting of its facilities for after school care, swimming and other pursuits, and in securing donations for its projects. An appropriate contingency fund is maintained for unexpected expenditure.
75. The specific grants which the school receives for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are very well used to provide additional support staff for these pupils. Good provision is made for support and advice from the local education authority's finance officer. The experienced school bursar, who monitors the budget daily, gives very good support to teachers, governors and senior management and runs her department very efficiently. There are many good systems for managing internal day-to-day arrangements effectively and unobtrusively, such as attendance, lunches and petty cash. Very clear records of all curriculum spending are kept. The last audit report judged financial control systems to be of a good standard. The few, minor recommendations then made have all been met.
76. The school makes very good use of the latest information technology. In addition to effective computerised office systems, all library books are bar-coded, appropriate software is used for assessment across the school and also for the identification of weaknesses in the attainment of certain ethnic groups such as the performance of Bengali speaking boys, enabling further support to be directed to areas of most need. Teachers make good use of the new computer suite and a donated 'smartboard' system in one classroom, for their planning. The school conducts its business efficiently through the use of e-mails and the Internet, and is wired in readiness for broadband technology.
77. The school shows good awareness of the principles of best value. Comparisons are made with other local schools, on academic performance, staffing levels, and funding. Parents and teachers are consulted through questionnaires. Competitiveness is a priority when shopping around for the best deal - for example when purchasing paper. Overall, the school gives good value for money, and this is an improvement since the last inspection.

78. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are very good and take due account of teachers' personal needs and the objectives identified in the school's plan for improvement. Aspects for development are appropriately discussed during the performance management process. There are very good procedures for the training of graduate teachers and the induction of newly qualified staff. These teachers feel very well supported by their mentors.
79. The school is very well resourced with teaching staff, who are suitably qualified and experienced to meet the demands of the National Curriculum and the Foundation Stage. Although a large number of teachers are in their second year of teaching, they work well as a team and complement teachers who are more experienced. The school benefits from two extra members of staff. This provides cover for class teachers enabling them to have non-contact time, attend courses or undertake the necessary research in preparation for the expansion into a primary school. The learning support assistants are well qualified and provide a valuable support role both to teachers and in looking after the pupils in their care.
80. The accommodation in the school is good and provides an effective learning environment for pupils. The school benefits from good-sized classrooms, an indoor swimming pool and a new computer suite. Facilities for pupils with special educational needs are very good and include the very well resourced DSP base, areas in classrooms and the soft play area. The well-designed, covered areas outside the nursery and reception classes enable the Foundation Stage children to work and play outside in all weathers. The library areas provide space for small group work and research sessions. The school is fortunate in having two halls, which are well used for physical education lessons, assemblies, lunchtimes and the pre- and after-school clubs. There are clearly identified areas for the construction of the new classrooms to meet the needs of the future Years 5 and 6 pupils. The site supervisor and cleaners ensure the building is well maintained.
81. The range of resources in the school is good overall and meets well the needs of the curriculum. The library has good quality books and the information technology suite is well resourced with new computers and software packages.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

82. To improve further the standards of work and the quality of education provided, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

(1) improve the organisation of the school week in order to:

- provide more time for music, art and design and technology;
- give pupils equal access to all aspects of the school's curriculum, including assemblies, in accordance with the school's aims.

(Paragraphs 39-40, 72, 132-141, 157-162)

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

(2) † increase the provision for children's creative development in the Foundation Stage.

(Paragraphs 104-106)

(3) † arrange for relevant members of staff to receive up-to-date training in child protection issues.

(Paragraph 53)

† denotes an issue already highlighted as a priority in the school's development plan

(Numbers in brackets indicate a reference to the main paragraphs where the weaknesses are discussed.)

DESIGNATED SPECIAL PROVISION

83. The DSP is a strength of the school and an excellent example of successful integration.
84. The great majority of the pupils have learning and communication difficulties within the autistic spectrum, and some have additional special educational needs. The high level of skilled support from DSP staff and the wide range of learning opportunities ensure that all the pupils make very good progress overall throughout the school in relation to their prior attainment. Younger pupils, who are mainly taught in the DSP base, make good progress in developing their early literacy skills and mathematical understanding because lessons are very carefully structured and staff provide constant support and encouragement. As a result, pupils learn to follow the routines of the school day, to work alongside other pupils and to develop their language and communication skills steadily. From Year 1, DSP pupils spend the majority of their time in mainstream classes. They make good progress in all aspects of their learning because work is carefully matched to their individual needs and, with the high level of support provided by teachers and support assistants, they are able to participate fully in all the lesson activities.
85. The pupils' personal and social development is very good. The school's carefully planned and managed approach to integration ensures that pupils are gradually introduced to more demanding learning and social environments in and around the school. Pupils learn to understand what is expected of them and how to behave appropriately. They concentrate well in lessons and enjoy taking part in group and whole class activities. The additional programme of activities in the DSP base provides valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their personal and social skills and their understanding of relationships.
86. The quality of teaching and support, both in the DSP base and in mainstream classes, is very good. DSP staff have considerable experience and expertise in working with pupils with autism and communication disorders. Planning for each lesson is exemplary, based on detailed assessment of each pupil's learning needs. Fortnightly targets form the basis for planning so that work is always matched to pupils' individual needs. Sensitive and well-timed support from support assistants and teachers helps to reduce any potential frustration or confusion for pupils and keeps them on task throughout the lesson. Class teachers make sure that pupils are fully included in all discussions and class activities. As a result, pupils make good progress in their work.
87. The management of the DSP is excellent. Procedures for assessing pupils' needs and for monitoring of their daily and longer-term progress are both detailed and well documented. Effective arrangements for communicating with parents ensure that school and home work together to support the pupils' progress. Relationships with external agencies are very good. Their advice is incorporated appropriately into the plans for pupils' work in school.
88. Taking account of the level of staffing and support, the integration arrangements, the quality of the overall provision, the high standard of teaching and support and the very good progress of pupils in relation to their individual targets and their special educational needs, the DSP gives very good value for money.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

92*

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

38

* includes 4 lessons where teaching was ungraded because of brevity of observation

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	2	25	40	21	0	0	0
Percentage	2	28	45	24	0	0	0

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

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)	42	455
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	37

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6	32
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	15	93

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	39

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	39
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
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	51	39	90

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	37	40	38
	Girls	34	34	34
	Total	71	74	72
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (82)	82 (82)	81 (87)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	40	39	38
	Girls	35	35	36
	Total	75	74	74
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (81)	83 (81)	82 (74)
	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
322	4	0
0	0	0
5	0	0
9	0	0
2	0	0
3	0	0
8	0	0
7	0	0
10	0	0
12	0	0
3	0	0
17	0	0
5	0	0
1	0	0
4	0	0
5	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)	21
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.7
Average class size	30.3

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	30
Total aggregate hours worked per week	905

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	60
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
----------------	---------

	£
Total income	1,375,985
Total expenditure	1,367,284
Expenditure per pupil	3,049
Balance brought forward from previous year	13,910
Balance carried forward to next year	148,411

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	14

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 27%

Number of questionnaires sent out

497

Number of questionnaires returned

134

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	30	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	37	4	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	45	3	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	38	10	3	5
The teaching is good.	63	31	1	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	43	8	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	28	1	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	25	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	52	42	4	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	64	29	1	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	44	4	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	36	8	0	18

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

89. On admission to the nursery class, many children have limited social skills, particularly in their ability to share with other children. Levels of skill in communication, language and literacy and in aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world are below average. Children are at average levels in mathematical, physical and creative development. Nevertheless, the nursery contains the full range of ability and many children have much higher, and much lower, levels of attainment across most areas of learning. Provision is good overall, as at the last inspection.
90. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good in the nursery and reception classes and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. In the area of personal, social and emotional development it is very good. It is good in all the other areas of learning except the creative area, where it is satisfactory. Teachers plan appropriate activities that relate well to the six areas of learning and display consistently high standards of control, managing children sensitively yet firmly. All Foundation Stage teachers and other adults model new skills, particularly speaking skills, very clearly. They provide a secure environment in which children feel safe and happy.
91. Provision for children with special educational needs is very good. Those with speech and communication problems are encouraged to participate in all activities, but also receive extra help outside the classroom. Levels of support and the expertise of support assistants are both high. Pupils for whom English is an additional language and those from different ethnic backgrounds make similar progress to their classmates.
92. There are good arrangements for the assessment and recording of children's achievements. Staff make regular assessments in each area of learning and complete a record sheet covering the 'stepping stones' that lead towards each of the early learning goals. This provides a good picture of a child's skills, understanding and rate of progress. However, it is used insufficiently in the reception classes to provide programmes addressing children's weaker areas, except in language and numeracy.

Personal, social and emotional development

93. Many children entering the nursery have low levels of skill in this area. Few share toys or wait their turn to use equipment. They make good progress and, by the time they leave the reception class, have achieved average levels. In the nursery, there is a good mix of tasks initiated by the teacher and those that the children have chosen for themselves. This enables children to gain in independence, moving freely and confidently between activities. Some children tend to observe more passively and require adult intervention to encourage them to take part. All nursery staff provide good role models, treating children politely, persuading rather than ordering. For example, when gathering a group of children to undertake a specific activity, they ask them to 'come and help the teacher'. Children enter the nursery happily with their parents each day, confidently taking part in the initial activities provided.
94. Children continue to make good progress in the reception classes. At certain times, such as during literacy and numeracy lessons, they work with a good level of independence while the teacher works with other children. Reception children have very good relationships with their teachers. Because of this, they are eager to please and very well behaved. Good opportunities continue for them to choose their own activities, such as during sessions in the outside area. However, there is no system to encourage children to plan and record the activities they undertake. As a result, the opportunity is missed to

ensure that each child's programme is well balanced and to increase children's responsibility for their own learning.

Communication, language and literacy

95. As many pupils have very low levels of skills when they first arrive at school, the good teaching through nursery and reception classes is insufficient to raise standards to average levels. Significant numbers of pupils are unlikely to attain all the early learning goals for this area. However, lessons in literacy for reception children enhance their rate of progress through this part of the Foundation Stage.
96. In the nursery, there are many opportunities to listen. As children arrive and find new resources to explore, teachers discuss with them the things they see and handle. Children enjoy listening to stories in small, informal groups and as a whole class at the end of the session. There is scope to increase opportunities for speaking. For example, the daily snack time is little used for this purpose and children tend to eat and drink in silence. Opportunities to speak are more extensive in reception classes. In whole class activities, teachers ensure that all children make a contribution. For example, in an activity in which children were asked to name objects beginning with the letter 'f', the teacher provided lower ability pupils with a picture, ensuring they knew what it represented, so that every child could respond. Significant numbers of reception children lack the ability to speak in a sequence of sentences or to use more than the simplest of vocabulary.
97. Teachers in all classes capitalise on children's growing enjoyment of stories to help them to become interested in books. All children take books home regularly and it is evident from the children's reading diaries that an effective dialogue between home and school often ensues. Most nursery children know where to start reading a book but most are not securely aware of the difference between a letter and a word. Some predict what will happen on the next page. In reception classes, elements of the Literacy Strategy are used effectively to build children's phonic knowledge. Reception children mostly know the sounds of individual letters and are gaining in their ability to build up words using this knowledge though they tend not to recognise the most common words, such as 'the'. Nevertheless, most children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in reading by the end of the year.
98. Nursery children are introduced to writing via mark-making activities, both within the classroom and outside. In reception classes, teachers give carefully planned instruction on the writing process, ensuring that children adopt a correct pencil grip and understand the need for capital letters and full stops. As a result, many children write legibly and write their own name correctly. However, most are unlikely to reach the early learning goals in this area by the end of reception.

Mathematical development

99. There are good opportunities for children to count, sort and match objects and to compare quantities. Most nursery children count to five, and some beyond this. They recognise two spots on a die and identify which object of two is shorter or contains more sand. In the reception classes, pupils recognise written numerals up to five and understand one-to-one correspondence well. Teachers use an imaginative variety of methods to enhance children's sense of number. For example, a nursery teacher used chime bars, asking the children to play the instruments for a given number of beats. In the reception classes, children have a daily numeracy lesson of an appropriate length. They solve simple number problems related to real-life situations. There are opportunities for practical work in the outside area. For example, children are asked to place a set of socks in order of length. However, some of these activities are insufficiently monitored to ensure that all children take part and extend their understanding through them. As a result of the predominantly good teaching, most children are on course to meet, and sometimes to

exceed, the early learning goals. Higher attaining children count to ten and beyond and identify which number is two or three more than a number between five and nine.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

100. There is good provision for this area of learning in the nursery, although there is scope to provide more opportunities for children to investigate independently. Children arrive to find a selection of leaves on a table and the teacher helps a group of them to explore using magnifying glasses. There is good provision for children to construct using a variety of materials. Teachers and support staff give individual children good guidance on how to use computers. Children gain an understanding of other people's cultures - for example, through creating Rangoli patterns. Visitors are used to give children a wider perspective on the world around them. Simple homework tasks, such as listening to sounds around the home, add to this perspective.
101. Provision in the reception classes is not as good as this. Although there are some lessons in specific subjects such as religious education, other aspects rely excessively upon children's individual choices. There is no assurance that all receive a programme that covers all aspects adequately. However, teachers work hard to increase children's understanding, often setting further challenges to extend their learning. Children make satisfactory progress overall in this area of learning through the reception classes but most are unlikely to meet all the early learning goals.

Physical development

102. On entry to the nursery, children mostly have average attainment in this area of learning and are expected to meet the early learning goals for physical development by the time they enter Year 1. The nursery outside area is sufficiently spacious to meet the needs of these younger children as they develop skills of movement. As the area is covered it is used in all weathers. There are enough wheeled toys and apparatus on which to balance and climb. Ball skills are developed through football and basketball, complete with goals and nets respectively. Children also visit the soft play area in the DSP. Inside the classroom, children's awareness of health is promoted through attention to proper hygiene and healthy eating at snack time. There are good facilities in both nursery and reception classes for children to cut, trace and glue, to model using 'playdoh' and to build with construction sets.
103. The new outside reception area has enabled the school to make better provision for this age group. The hall is used for a twice-weekly physical education lesson, helping children to develop their co-ordination and sense of space. All Foundation Stage children have the opportunity to use the school's swimming pool. Children with communication difficulties are sensitively supported in these sessions.

Creative development

104. Provision for this area of learning is unsatisfactory overall, although it is better in the nursery than in the reception classes. Nursery children have good facilities for imaginative role-play in the 'optician's shop'. Staff participate in order to improve the quality of play as well as to develop vocabulary. Although an easel is available, there is insufficient encouragement for children to paint regularly or imaginatively. There is scope to use the outdoor area more imaginatively to promote activities in this area of learning.
105. In the reception classes, groups of children undertake creative activities, usually with a learning support assistant, after the whole-class part of literacy and numeracy lessons. This does not permit sufficient time for children to produce work of high quality. Children have insufficient experience of exploring colour, texture, shape and space. Facilities for role-play, particularly in the outside area, are poor. Singing games are used well in music lessons to enhance language and mathematical skills. However, there are not enough

opportunities for children to use musical instruments to explore sound independently or to listen to music.

106. As a result of this weaker provision and the generally low levels of attainment on entry into the nursery, children make unsatisfactory progress in many elements of this area of learning and are unlikely to achieve most of the early learning goals.

ENGLISH

107. By the end of Year 2, the pupils' overall standards of attainment are broadly in line with the national average. This is good improvement in speaking and listening skills. Pupils have benefited from more experienced teaching, better provision for lower attaining pupils, and concentrated targeting on groups of pupils, specifically to improve achievement levels. Higher attaining pupils achieve above the national average in reading and close to the national average in writing and this is an improvement.
108. By the end of Year 4, standards are also likely to be average, and similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. Standards of handwriting and presentation of work generally are above average. Higher attaining pupils perform above the national average, and the very good teaching seen in Years 3 and 4 is leading to above average attainment overall in a few lessons. The good and very good teaching, combined with very good attitudes from the pupils and the good quality support from learning support assistants, ensure that all pupils are achieving well across the school.
109. The school has effective strategies for teaching literacy. Pupils enter the school with below average language skills and achieve well during their time in the school. Teachers are aware of the need to seize opportunities to develop literacy skills. Some good examples were seen in history when pupils wrote empathetically about life as an evacuee, and selected appropriate adjectives to describe old and new toys. Literacy display boards feature prominently in all classrooms, assisting learning and reinforcing the work done.
110. The pupils' speaking and listening skills are low on entry but improve steadily as they move through the school. In the present Year 2, these skills are average and they continue to improve through Years 3 and 4. Teachers use effective, open-ended questions to stimulate well-considered answers in full sentences and make good use of drama and role play in lessons and assemblies. During the inspection, pupils performing in the Advent assembly spoke out clearly and consciously projected their voices to the back of the hall. Most pupils speak easily and confidently to one another, teachers and visitors. Plenary sessions in the literacy hour are well used to enable pupils to tell their classmates what they have done and what they have learned.
111. Attainment overall in reading is average. Pupils are making good progress with their reading, which is below average when they begin Year 1. The school uses a commercial course, carefully graded and extended to 16 different levels, through which pupils progress steadily. Reading homework is set for each night and is well supported by parents. The reading diary is an effective means of communication with parents and a detailed record of what pupils have read. Parents provide good support with reading at home. Pupils read regularly to teachers and other adults in literacy hours and guided reading sessions but no regular, daily reading opportunity is timetabled. Year 2 pupils use their knowledge of phonics to build words such as *heavily* or *walrus*. Above average readers read fluently with much expression, easily coping with words such as *quayside*. Pupils understand the terms *author* and *illustrator*, and know the difference between fiction and non-fiction. Year 4 pupils read play scripts expressively and fluently. They refer to *synopsis* as an alternative for *blurb*. Teachers keep good records of reading levels and give good guidance to support assistants on the hearing of reading. The school has identified

reading comprehension skills as an area of for improvement and is targeting groups to raise attainment levels in this area. There are reading areas in all classrooms but their quality is inconsistent.

112. Across the school, pupils' library skills are above average and the weekly class library lesson is a very useful provision. Pupils asked to find information confidently use the system of classification, employing their knowledge of alphabetical order to locate a topic quickly. Older pupils use the library for individual research work, sometimes with their teacher, sometimes with the full-time librarian employed by the school. This is good practice. The recently refurbished library, with its central location, very good organisation and generous stocks of books, is a strength of the school.
113. Standards of writing in Year 2 and Year 4 are average and most pupils are achieving at least satisfactorily. Year 2 pupils use organisational devices such as illustrations, bullet points and sub-headings - for example, when writing a booklet entitled 'Healthy or Not?'. Year 4 pupils writing a playscript made good use of adverbs for their stage directions. They make good use of similes - for example, 'Her face is like a smooth fresh lemon'. Pupils write for a variety of different purposes, which include poetry, plays, and stories, with due consideration of appropriate vocabulary. Pupils' levels of spelling are satisfactory. In Years 3 and 4 pupils are set for spelling. Spelling corrections are listed in books by teachers, but pupils are not encouraged to copy them out, which means they do not always learn from their mistakes. A joined-up hand is encouraged from an early age and standards of handwriting and general presentation are above average by Year 4. Pupils take pride in their written work, dating, heading and underlining work neatly as a matter of course. Older pupils write neatly in ink.
114. The teaching of English is good overall. It is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 and 4. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen across the school, and nothing less than good teaching was seen in Years 3 and 4. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers have good expertise in the subject and they use the literacy hour well, which enables them to give effective support and guidance to extend pupils' learning. Teachers use a variety of effective methods to maintain pupils' interest. They make very good use of learning support assistants and ensure through good planning that the needs of pupils of all differing ability groups are met and challenged. On their part, pupils bring very good learning attitudes to their lessons: they listen attentively, take pride in the presentation of their work and work well with one another. In all of the lessons seen, there was a positive and enduring working atmosphere. Teachers show good awareness of inclusion, in their planning, their questioning, and their use of plenary sessions when reinforcing learning objectives. Teachers' marking is inconsistent, and does not always sufficiently advise pupils on how to improve their work, or ensure that spelling corrections are completed.
115. The use of information technology to enhance pupils' learning in English is good in the lessons which use the computer suite, where an additional, weekly session is timetabled in alternate half-terms specifically for English in Year 4, and this is helping to raise the standards of these pupils. The use of a 'smartboard' in one Year 4 classroom is very effective. In the classroom, however, teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to use computers to modify and improve their work.
116. The subject is very well led. The current co-ordinator has a very good grasp of the subject's needs and is very clear on how to develop it successfully. Since the previous inspection, the literacy hour has been fully implemented and this is having a positive effect in raising standards. Further time is taken for the teaching of writing, spelling and reading. Resources for the subject are good. There is a generous stock of graded readers, easily accessible to pupils, in corridors, and good provision of sets of group readers and 'big books' for the literacy hour. Drama is well used to support the subject in lessons and

assemblies. The assessment of pupils' work is good, with opportunities taken regularly to check progress and record development. Good use is made of this information - for example to increase the number of higher attaining readers. The co-ordinator has monitored teachers' planning, but has yet to monitor the teaching of the subject.

MATHEMATICS

117. Standards of attainment by Years 2 and 4 are average and have been maintained since the last inspection report. However, since that time there have been significant changes in the school population. More pupils are identified as having special educational needs. About one-fifth of the pupils in the infant stage and a quarter of the junior pupils attain above average levels. A quarter of pupils have special educational needs and achieve well at their own levels. Over one-quarter of these pupils have statements of special educational need, with the highest numbers in Years 2 and 3. Standards have varied in the intervening years since the last inspection, but effective action has been taken to raise the performance of all pupils and therefore good progress has been made.
118. Pupils achieve well and boys and girls achieve equally well throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs work extremely hard and achieve well because of the high quality teaching and support they receive. Pupils for whom English is an additional language and those from different backgrounds make similar progress to their peers.
119. Pupils attain average standards in the infant years. Year 2 pupils identify odd and even numbers, add and subtract numbers to 20 without apparatus and count in twos. They estimate and measure in centimetres, identify a half and a quarter of shapes and tell the time to hours and half hours. All pupils have a practical mathematics book as well as a purely number book and they use this to record their practical activities and answers. These activities provide good opportunities for pupils to explore number, shape, space and measures.
120. Standards are average in the junior classes. Year 4 pupils correctly add three numbers by partitioning into hundreds, tens and units. They round whole numbers to the nearest ten or hundred and use the terms 'greater than' and 'less than' with accuracy. They accurately convert units of measurement - for example, centimetres to millimetres - and define and classify polygons. Pupils successfully use their knowledge of multiplication and division to solve and write their own two stage problems.
121. Pupils use their numeracy skills in other subjects, such as science and PSHE, where they created graphs of healthy foods. Good links occur with information technology as pupils enter data into a computer and interrogate it to produce appropriate bar graphs, histograms and pie charts.
122. The quality of teaching is good in infant and junior classes and often very good in junior classes. The school has successfully introduced the National Numeracy Strategy. The three-part lesson structure is well established and planning is very good. The identification of what is to be learnt in the lesson is clearly defined in the planning and shared well with pupils. The recent whole-school emphasis on the use of clear questions at the end of the lesson to assess what pupils have understood is now a good feature of most teaching. Teachers conduct the oral and mental sessions with enthusiasm and pupils respond well. The main teaching activities are mostly introduced well. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, the teacher used a variety of 'fun' scenarios about cooking dinner for guests, for pupils to work out a relatively easy time problem using hours and minutes, followed by more difficult ones. Teachers manage pupils, resources and additional adult classroom support efficiently and effectively. In some satisfactory lessons, the pace of the lesson is slower so that pupils become distracted or do not complete all they were intended to. A few teachers

do not challenge the most able in all areas of the lesson. Homework is planned effectively to support classroom learning.

123. On the basis of good assessment procedures, the school has introduced effective group and individual target setting, which is shared with pupils and also parents at consultation evenings and on reports. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school tracks the progress of individual pupils and cohorts throughout the school and takes positive action to direct resources appropriately to meeting the needs of those pupils who cause concern.
124. The co-ordinator for mathematics is knowledgeable and works hard to support colleagues. A new scheme of work has been developed and implemented since February 2002. The co-ordinator has monitored classroom practice in the spring term 2001. She will have further opportunities to monitor, evaluate and improve practice in the future.

SCIENCE

125. Standards of pupils' attainment in Years 2 and 4 are average. Pupils achieve well compared with their prior attainment and make good progress in all aspects of science, because teaching and learning are good overall. This is true of pupils of all backgrounds, abilities and fluency in English. Although standards are similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection, they have been well below average in teacher assessments for the past two years. However, teachers have changed the way they teach and now provide good opportunities for pupils to learn through investigation and practical activities.
126. Year 2 pupils are beginning to develop an understanding of when a test is fair. For instance, in an investigation to find out which vehicle travelled the furthest, they understood that the conditions - such as how the vehicle was set in motion - needed to be the same for each car in order to make comparisons. Pupils use their numeracy skills to take measurements when developing their understanding about forces and record the results of surveys about their favourite foods on simple block graphs. Pupils understand that food and water are essential for life and develop a sound understanding of the different food groups and what foods make up a healthy diet. The school makes good use of a visit from the school nurse to develop pupils' understanding of the role played by medicinal drugs and this topic links well with PSHE.
127. By Year 4, pupils are more confident in explaining what makes a test fair. In an investigation to show that some materials are conductors of electricity, they made the test fair by using the same circuit to test each of the different materials. They compared their findings to their predictions and explained reasons for the outcomes. From this activity they developed knowledge and understanding of electrical conductors and insulators. Pupils understand how to carry out an investigation and are willing to try various approaches in order to solve problems such as 'How can we help the caretaker improve the lighting in the cellar?' They investigated the effects of changing the number of light bulbs in a circuit in order to find a solution. On discovering that the more bulbs they added to the series circuit, the dimmer each became, many were keen to find an alternative way of connecting the circuit. This resulted in the discovery of parallel circuits.
128. Throughout the school, pupils build on their skills and knowledge, because teachers plan lessons well and ensure that the content builds effectively on pupils' earlier learning. Teachers give pupils plenty of encouragement to succeed and this, along with the interesting first hand experiences, enhances their learning.
129. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is very good in Year 2 and this is helping to raise standards. This is an improvement since the last inspection when there was some

evidence of unsatisfactory teaching, although it was sound overall. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and are clear about what pupils should learn, giving lessons focus and direction. They tell pupils what they are going to learn by the end of the lesson so that pupils are clear about what they are doing and why. Teachers use questions and discussion well to explore what pupils know and to make them think carefully about what they learn from the activities. Teachers organise very effective support for pupils from the DSP unit and for other pupils who have special educational needs, enabling them to take a full part in lessons. These pupils benefit from the support of learning support assistants, who have good relationships with the pupils. They are encouraging and understanding of pupils' difficulties.

130. There are some inconsistencies in teaching, which, at times, reduce its effectiveness. In most lessons teachers adapt the recording tasks or provide guidance on how to structure the writing up of investigations to meet the different levels of pupils' literacy skills. However, when this is not done, lower attaining pupils are not able to complete the most important section, which shows what they have learned in the lesson. In some lessons, all pupils carry out the same task and teachers do not plan enough challenging extension tasks for higher attaining pupils. The marking of pupils' work varies in quality.
131. The management of the subject is good. Teachers plan and organise the curriculum well. The subject co-ordinator uses information from the monitoring of teachers' planning and observation of teaching and learning effectively to bring about improvement. Assessment procedures are generally good, but there has been no discussion and comparison of judgements to check their accuracy. Pupils sometimes use information technology to record information and the results of investigations. For example, Year 3 pupils created a database of materials and their properties. However, teachers and pupils do not make enough use of this resource in science lessons in the classroom.

ART AND DESIGN

132. There was too little evidence on which to judge standards in Years 2 and 4, or to make comparisons with the findings of the last inspection. Similarly, no overall judgement can be made on the quality of teaching. Only three lessons were seen during the inspection and, though there were examples of artwork on display, there are no portfolios of past work.
133. Pupils in Year 1 work with paints, mixing to achieve particular colours such as skin colour for their self-portraits. In Year 2, pupils' past work shows that they have explored ways of framing images and recorded what they saw through a viewfinder. By Year 4, pupils pay greater attention to detail. For example, in their self-portraits, the shape of features are more clearly defined, although pupils have not grasped the idea of proportion with regard to the positioning of some features, particularly the eyes.
134. Teachers plan the art and design curriculum using the national guidance. This gives pupils opportunities to experience a range of media and the main art skills. However, teachers do not give pupils enough time to explore the different skills and techniques which they need to apply in their work. Coverage of the tasks within the planned projects is at a superficial level. For example, the patterns that Year 2 found around the school are only rough sketches that were not developed subsequently. Similarly, the task of designing a repeating pattern in the style of William Morris was under-developed because there was a lack of attention to shape, colour and the use of space. This is mainly because of the lack of time and the organisation of the timetable so that some afternoon sessions are not long enough for pupils to complete their work, a situation that arose in a Year 3 lesson.

135. Teaching in the lessons seen was satisfactory overall. Teachers explain tasks clearly and place strong focus on the development of pupils' observational skills. For instance, Year 1 pupils used mirrors so that they could observe their own features more closely. When the teacher demonstrated how to go about the task pupils made better progress, because this helped them to visualise their own ideas.
136. The art co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership. She is keen to raise the profile of the subject within the school. She reviews teachers' planning and pupils' work when it is displayed around the school and from this she has identified some areas for improvement. However, she has had no opportunity to visit classes to assess the quality of teaching and learning or to monitor standards, and this restricts the development of the subject. There is a good range of resources to support the planned curriculum.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

137. Standards in design and technology at the end of Year 2 are in line with those expected nationally. No lessons were observed in Years 1 or 2 classes but an analysis of pupils' work indicates that pupils achieve appropriate skills in the design element of the subject. There was insufficient evidence to assess pupils' skills in making. By the end of Year 4, pupils also achieve average standards although designing skills are better developed than making skills. This is because the objects they make do not require pupils to choose from a range of tools and materials or to measure precisely. Standards have been maintained at similar levels to those reported at the previous inspection. Because tasks are carefully chosen and pupils are given good support, pupils make satisfactory progress through the school, including those with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language.
138. Pupils in Year 2 have designed vehicles to enable mice to transport materials. They make clear, labelled drawings of their designs, list the materials they will need and suggest improvements in the light of their subsequent experiences. Higher attaining pupils indicate the reasons for their suggested improvements. Photographs of completed vehicles show a good match to the original designs, with some modifications. Lower attaining pupils complete the same task with help from learning support assistants. They find it difficult to evaluate their work or to suggest improvements independently.
139. Year 4 pupils plan and make a simple quiz game incorporating electrical components. They are aware of the purpose of the product and design with the intended user in mind. The quiz makes a good link with pupils' studies in science and religious education. The making skills required are at a low level: pupils are required to draw the front cover of their box and then to assemble it from pre-determined components. They have no opportunity to choose from a range of materials or to measure and cut accurately. For example, the teacher cuts their front cover to size using a guillotine. Pupils show co-operative attitudes as they work in groups of three, but have yet to develop collaborative working practices. As a result, members of groups are often left with little to do except watch and the task takes longer than it might otherwise.
140. There was insufficient evidence to judge the overall quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2, although it is evident that work is marked well. In Years 3 and 4 teaching is satisfactory or better, particularly in Year 3. Teachers have positive relationships with all the pupils in their classes and control them very well. As a result, there are few interruptions to the learning process and pupils are polite and well behaved. Lessons are logically structured to enable pupils to learn new skills and knowledge. In a very good Year 3 lesson, the teacher used time effectively to ensure pupils did not spend excessive time on tasks. Her teaching style was very clear and enabled pupils to understand the essentials of design criteria. She provided high quality resources and adapted the task appropriately for both

high and low ability pupils. Consequently, all pupils gained in knowledge and understanding. Weaker features of teaching relate mostly to the level of tasks provided and the tendency to direct work too closely, allowing pupils insufficient experience of choosing their own tools and materials. The school alternates the teaching of design and technology with art and design and the amount of time spent over the year is less than usual. This restricts the development of pupils' skills.

141. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. She is aware of the need for further training, both in her role as co-ordinator and to enable teachers to be more confident in teaching the subject to Years 5 and 6 pupils in the future. Monitoring arrangements have improved considerably since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator has formally observed teaching, accompanied by the governor allocated to the subject. She has examined pupils' work in all age groups. Her principal role as a teacher in the DSP has enabled her to monitor more informally as she accompanies pupils into mainstream classes. Assessment procedures have also improved, although all systems will not be fully in place until next term. An annual assessment of pupils' individual level in the subject is carried out. The co-ordinator has analysed changes from year to year, although the information has not been used to adjust the programme of study. There are appropriate links with several other subjects, although not with information technology. Design and technology is used well to enhance literacy skills through pupils' plans and written work. There are good resources for the subject, but these are insufficiently accessible to other members of staff.

GEOGRAPHY

142. At the end of Year 2 and Year 4 standards in geography are in line with expectations. Only one lesson was seen in geography because of timetable arrangements. Judgements are further based on scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and talking with teachers and pupils. The standards attained at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained, though there are more pupils with special educational needs in the school now - suggesting an improvement in provision and standards. Pupils show high standards of presentation and take pride in their work. However, the level of their writing skills means that only a minority of pupils attain above average standards.
143. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve well across the school. This is due to the good teaching seen, the good attitudes shown by the pupils, and the very good support provided by the two learning support assistants allocated to every class. In Years 1 and 2, pupils gain a satisfactory understanding of their immediate surroundings. Year 1 pupils identify local buildings, such as the fire station or a café, while on a geography walk, and discover the jobs that people do, such as a doctor, nurse and barmaid. Year 2 pupils, in work arising from their topic 'An Island Home', identify human and physical features and list their likes and dislikes of island life, making comparisons with an environment very different from their own. Their maps of the island of Struay are very detailed, making good use of colour, symbols and a key. They show good awareness of compass points and describe the journey from Northampton to Struay using the M1 and M6. There are strong cross-curricular links here with their literacy work arising from the story of Katie Morag.
144. Year 4 pupils, studying the contrasting location of the Indian village of Chembakolli and the advantages and disadvantages of life in India, make good use of information technology via their class 'smartboard' and secondary sources to list their likes and dislikes about the village way of life, before deciding that they prefer to stay in Northampton.
145. No overall judgement can be made about teaching or learning, but in the one lesson seen the teacher made very good use of the latest information technology to stimulate interest,

and of the experience of a pupil for whom English is a second language to explain the monsoon season. The good learning seen in this lesson came about because of good teaching, using a variety of methods and setting tasks appropriate for pupils of differing levels of attainment, who were well supported by two learning support staff.

146. The subject co-ordinator has been one year in the post and has plans to develop the subject. Since the last inspection, a new scheme of work has been introduced, and this is an improvement. Two weaknesses from the previous inspection remain however. In Years 1 and 4 there are long gaps - a whole term and a half between geography topics. This impairs the learning of skills, breaks continuity, and is inappropriate. The last inspection reported that no monitoring of teaching was taking place. This is still the case, although the co-ordinator has reviewed teachers' planning. Assessment for the subject is satisfactory, though the school has no portfolio of levelled work to assist teachers with their judgements. Resources for the subject are good in quantity and quality and well organised into topic boxes. Field study trips - locally for Year1, to Hunstanton in Year 2 to support their topic of the seaside, and a residential visit for Year 4 pupils - enhance the quality of the pupils' learning. There is good planning for the school's development to a full primary school. The need to develop the use of information technology has been very recently identified.

HISTORY

147. Standards in history are in line with national expectations in Years 2 and 4. Similar standards were identified by the previous inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is a second language, are achieving well, thanks to the improved teaching, the very good attitudes of the pupils, and the above average provision of two learning support assistants in every class. During the inspection no history was being taught in Year 4 owing to timetabling arrangements. Judgements for this year are based on scrutiny of earlier work, and from discussion with teachers.
148. Pupils in Year 2 study famous people, such as Florence Nightingale. Their good use of role play and drama contributes to above average levels of understanding of the problems and conditions in the hospital at Scutari, and the difficulties of getting there, as pupils act out different scenes from Florence's life. Written work overall, however, across the school, is average.
149. In Year 3 pupils identify the historical value of a primary source and distinguish such from a secondary source. They are made aware that an old gas mask from the Second World War is a primary source but that a photograph of the same object would be a secondary source. They pose good relevant questions to elderly visitors, one of whom was a former pupil of the school, to make comparisons between periods of time, as part of their study of their local area. For example, one child asked 'What subjects did you learn at school?' and another, 'What happened when you were naughty?' Year 4 pupils study ancient Greece. They write about different aspects of life and culture, making use of the Greek alphabet, after a visit to the Northampton museum. They use timelines well in another topic, the Second World War, writing empathetically as evacuees.
150. Across the school, the teaching of history is never less than good, and is sometimes very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers ask probing, open-ended questions and show good awareness of inclusion, ensuring that pupils of all abilities are featured in their planning, questioning and in feedback in the plenary sessions. Common strengths are the use of visits and visitors and the variety of imaginative and effective methods used. For example, one teacher dressed up as a Victorian teacher, to teach and discipline her class very effectively.

151. Leadership of the subject is good. Since the previous inspection, a new scheme of work has been introduced, and further resources purchased. The quality of displays is inconsistent, but those seen in Year 2 are of a high standard, making good use of materials and models, including a life size reconstruction of Florence Nightingale herself, and artefacts. They display a good balance between providing information and celebrating pupils' work. Resources for the subject are good, and are well organised in topic boxes. The use of information technology is an acknowledged weakness and assessment is still at a developmental stage. The co-ordinator has plans to complete a portfolio of levelled work to assist teachers in assessing attainment and progress. Since the last inspection the co-ordinator and subject governor have monitored teachers' planning and lessons. The use of visiting speakers and visits to places such as the Abington and Northampton museums further enhance the quality of the pupils' learning.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

152. Pupils' attainment exceeds national expectations by the ages of seven and nine. This represents good improvement since the last inspection, when standards were at expected levels. Pupils of different ability levels and from differing backgrounds and ethnic groups make similar, good progress because teaching is good and staff use the new computer suite effectively.
153. Pupils in Year 2 are familiar with the layout of the keyboard and with the file structure of the computer network. This means that they know how to find applications and copy them to their own work-space. Pupils use word processing to write in their own words in literacy lessons. They open a file created by the teacher and edit the text to make it more readable. Pupils show good mouse control when they make simple line drawings of houses and add their names in a text box. They use art software to produce pictures of aliens, adding shapes from a menu of stencils. In mathematics, they develop their understanding of sorting data by using a program about Venn diagrams.
154. By Year 4, pupils have a wide experience of information technology. They design questionnaires for a specific audience, adding borders and images. When they have collected responses from the questionnaires, they enter the information into a database and then interrogate it to find answers to questions about personal preferences. They also create graphs to display the information. Pupils learn about control with Logo and a screen robot. In a very good literacy lesson, pupils edited a play script in order to insert adverbs as stage directions.
155. Teaching is good overall at both key stages. Staff show good familiarity with the equipment and software they use. Lessons usually begin with a demonstration by the teacher, using the automatic tutor, where the pupils' machines copy whatever is done by the teacher. This is effective and gives pupils a clear understanding of what they have to do. Classes use the computer suite not only to develop pupils' information technology skills but also in connection with literacy and numeracy. The scheme of work also suggests cross-curricular links for all units and teachers make good use of this idea. For example, a very good lesson for Year 4 pupils was linked to work the pupils were doing in art about the French painter, Seurat. Pupils knew about his *pointillist* technique and were using art software to produce small areas of coloured dots. Using the *copy and paste* method, pupils then made a tile of these dots, with which they built up whole pictures, working with photographs, which the teacher asked them to reproduce after the manner of Seurat. The scrutiny of work shows many other good, cross-curricular links, such as with science, when pupils worked to improve their knowledge of electricity. Though teachers are good at planning work in the information technology suite connected with a range of

subjects, they do not give pupils many opportunities to use the machines in the classrooms.

156. The subject is very well managed by the co-ordinator. Teachers' good expertise is largely a result of the way in which he taught alongside his colleagues when the equipment was first introduced and the subsequent support he has given. He is now preparing to monitor their work. The scheme of work is based on national guidance, and is very effective in encouraging cross-curricular use of information technology because of the ideas and suggestions the co-ordinator has included. A good system of assessment is used to show how well pupils have learnt in each unit, and the co-ordinator plans to improve this by recording pupils' attainment in terms of National Curriculum levels. The information technology suite is very well equipped and there are plans to improve teachers' use of classroom computers by increasing the number of machines available. All classes are timetabled to use the computer suite, but, because most of these slots are in the afternoon (since literacy and numeracy lessons take up the whole morning), classes often have to break off in the middle of other, unconnected lessons, such as science, to go and have their information technology lesson, thus spoiling the continuity of the lesson which has to be split.

MUSIC

157. **It is not possible to judge pupils' attainment overall because only three lessons were observed and because no recordings of pupils' work in music are made. Pupils' singing was heard in one Year 4 lesson and in assemblies. The quality of singing in assembly was satisfactory when pupils were very familiar with the song. Pupils match their voices to the shape of the melody and keep in time with either a piano or a commercially recorded accompaniment. For the most part, they pronounce the words clearly.**
158. Pupils have regular opportunities to sing in assemblies and in the weekly whole-school singing session. The school counts the singing session as part of the time specifically allocated to teaching the music curriculum. However, this session does not meet the needs of a large proportion of pupils, because the expectations of the Foundation Stage and the curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2 are different. In addition, the repertoire does not embrace a sufficiently wide range of styles and is inappropriate for all year groups, because it does not take account of the different stages of pupils' vocal development and literacy skills.
159. Pupils enjoy music, because they have opportunities to learn through practical music making activities, including playing classroom percussion instruments. Teaching in the lessons seen was satisfactory overall. For the most part, the lessons had a clear focus and built on pupils' previous learning. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils practised matching their voices to two given pitches, before using this skill to create their own sung conversations. Teachers give clear explanations supported by demonstration to ensure that pupils understand the playing and composing tasks and what they are to learn. In two of the lessons, the development of pupils' listening and evaluating skills was well integrated. Teachers are less effective when teaching singing because their own subject knowledge is not always strong enough. Consequently, songs are sometimes pitched too low for children's voices and pupils do not receive enough guidance on how they can improve.
160. The school uses the national guidance to help them plan lessons. As yet, the school does not have sufficient supplementary material to help them broaden the range of activities. There is not enough time for music to enable pupils to develop their skills fully. The timetabling arrangements of choir practice and the steel pan club during lessons or

assembly results in some pupils not receiving the full entitlement to the curriculum, because other pupils are generally not involved in music making activities at these times.

161. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their musical skills beyond the classroom through the provision of a choir, steel pans club and recorder club. There is also the opportunity for pupils to learn the violin. Musicians regularly visit the school and these workshops broaden pupils' experiences and extend their knowledge of a range of musical styles.
162. The members of the music team oversee the subject and are new to the role and, as yet, do not have a complete overview of the subject. There are no examples of pupils' work to help them gain an informed insight into standards. The team is enthusiastic and committed to improving the provision. They have attended training to develop their own skills. This training supports their areas of responsibility - for example, the steel pans. Targets in the school development plan focus on extra-curricular activities and not the curriculum for all pupils. However, the team has drawn up its own action plan that focuses on developing areas of the curriculum which will impact directly on standards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

163. During the inspection, lessons were observed in gymnastics, dance and swimming. In those elements of the subject observed, standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are above those expected nationally, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs, including those from the DSP, are fully included in all activities, as are pupils whose first language is not English. They make progress at the same good rate as other pupils because appropriate support is provided for them.
164. Standards in gymnastics and swimming are, in general, higher than those in dance. This is because many teachers have greater skills in teaching gymnastics than dance. The school's own pool is used to provide continuous tuition in all age groups from the nursery upwards, with access to a larger pool for older, competent swimmers. The school actively seeks to improve teaching skills in this area, taking alternative action where necessary to ensure pupils are well taught. For example, faced with a large number of newly qualified teachers without formal qualifications to teach swimming, it employed qualified coaches as an interim measure.
165. Pupils in Year 1 know why it is necessary to warm up at the beginning of a lesson and are familiar with routines to do this. They have a good level of control and co-ordination and make improvements to their performance to match criteria set by the teacher. Pupils use space well, approaching apparatus from varying directions and making equally good use of the intervening floor spaces. They use apparatus confidently and with a good awareness of safety.
166. Only swimming was observed in Year 4, but the standard of gymnastics in Year 3 indicates that pupils continue to progress well in this aspect and are on course to achieve above average standards. The school is rightly proud of its successes in teaching pupils to swim well. By the end of Year 4, almost all pupils swim at least ten metres. In 2002, four pupils in every ten left the school able to swim 50 metres and the present Year 4 pupils are achieving similar standards.
167. The teaching is good throughout the school. Most teachers have good subject knowledge. Although skills in teaching pupils to warm up and cool down are not universally high, all teachers include these elements in each lesson. Lessons are planned very well, with careful attention to the needs of individual pupils, particularly in swimming. After briefly sharing the objectives of the lesson, teachers ensure that lessons proceed at a lively pace,

focusing on activity that renders pupils breathless at times. There is good attention to improving the quality of pupils' movements, mostly by demonstration or by drawing attention to the good work of particular pupils. In some lessons, there is insufficient attention to the evaluation of performance by teachers or pupils. Opportunities are missed for pupils who are not able to take part in physical activities to make a contribution in this way. In the best lessons, such as a dance lesson for Year 2 pupils, teachers use the correct technical vocabulary as they question pupils, make teaching points succinctly and give pupils clear criteria to enable them to improve.

168. The subject is managed by a co-ordinator with a good level of expertise, but there are aspects of subject leadership that require improvement. Although there were plans for her to monitor the quality of teaching, an unavoidable absence last summer prevented this happening. However, this monitoring is not planned to take place until next summer. The planning completed by teachers is not regularly examined by the co-ordinator. There are suitable schemes of work for all aspects of the subject. The school makes good use of the resources of the local community to enhance sport in the school. It employs visiting coaches, as well as its own staff, to provide a very good programme of extra-curricular activities, especially when the age of the pupils is taken into consideration. These are all open equally to girls and boys of all abilities in Years 3 and 4. The programme includes a sports club which enables pupils to sample a wide variety of sporting activities. The school benefits from good facilities and equipment, some of which is currently being updated. The two halls enable all classes to receive an adequate allocation of time for indoor activities. The grounds provide good facilities for games, with well-marked playgrounds and a good-sized area of grass.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

169. Pupils' attainment by Years 2 and 4 is firmly in line with the expectations of the local agreed syllabus. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Inspectors observed only three lessons, two infant and one junior. Further evidence was gathered from an analysis of pupils' work this term, school documentation and discussion with staff. Both infant and junior pupils achieve soundly. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the good support they receive.
170. Year 2 pupils have a clear understanding of ways in which they can help each other in the school community and how celebrations such as harvest are times to help other people. They know some stories from the Bible, such as the raising of Lazarus, which illustrate the concept of helping others. They write about and discuss a satisfactory range of famous people who helped others, such as Mary Seale. They learn how the blind are helped with Braille and examples of sign-language for the deaf are practised and suitably linked to the life of Helen Keller.
171. Year 4 pupils have a sound understanding of Islam, as they study one religion this term in greater depth. For example, they know the five main duties of Muslims and compare these with what they do in their own daily lives. They show a satisfactory understanding in their writing of the importance of prayer and fasting and the laws of the holy book. Assembly themes link well with the work that pupils do in class and the religious calendars of Christianity and other religions they study. During the inspection, pupils in Year 4 demonstrated well their knowledge of Advent through drama, narration and song.
172. With only three lessons seen, there is insufficient evidence to make a firm judgement on the quality of teaching across the school. In the lessons seen, it was satisfactory overall with a very good lesson in Year 4. Teachers plan work well for learning support assistants. These adults work effectively with small groups of pupils with special educational needs to ensure that they have an understanding of the topic covered.

Teachers plan a varied range of tasks to keep pupils' interest. For example, pupils discussed the pilgrimage of Muslims to Mecca and saw a poster of the crowds at the Ka'bah in the quadrangle of the Great Mosque. Pupils wrote very sensitively about what it must feel like to be in this crowd. Another group found information to share with the class from Internet sites. Some evidence of religious education making a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development was seen when a teacher provided a quiet moment for the Year 4 pupils to think about their personal feelings about the Hajj. In the lessons seen there was a good focus on discussion with open, questioning approaches. This allows pupils to express and share their own opinions. In the Year 1 lesson seen, pupils' train of thought was interrupted as the lesson split into two halves, with a swimming lesson in between.

173. The subject leader has provided a good framework for teachers in the scheme of work, which matches the requirements of the local agreed syllabus. Assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection and are now in line with the requirements of the agreed syllabus. The subject co-ordinator has identified the need for staff training to ensure that there is consistency in teachers' assessments across the whole school and this is planned for next term. The subject leader has had limited opportunity to monitor classroom practice over the last year as there was a large turnover of teaching staff. However, the school has plans for further monitoring of teaching and assessment after the staff training has been completed.