

INSPECTION REPORT

BAWNMORE INFANT SCHOOL

Rugby

LEA area: Warwickshire

Unique reference number: 125581

Headteacher: Mrs D Stoncel

Reporting inspector: Mr C Parker
11897

Dates of inspection: 14th – 16th October 2002

Inspection number: 248694

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bawnmore Road Rugby Warwickshire
Postcode:	CV22 6JS
Telephone number:	01788 810065
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Akerman
Date of previous inspection:	3 rd October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
C Parker	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Physical education Equal opportunities	The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
A B Anderson	Lay inspector		The 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?
J Elsley	Team inspector	Foundation Stage English Art and design Music Design and technology English as an additional language	
J Collins	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics History Geography Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bawnmore Infant School is smaller than average, having 175 pupils on roll aged between four and seven years. They are taught in six classes. The vast majority of the pupils speak English as their first language; at the present time one pupil is at the early stages of learning to speak English. Most of the pupils are of white British heritage with a small number of pupils of Asian, Caribbean and Chinese lineage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is very small and well below the national average. In 2001, nearly one third of the pupils were on the special educational needs register, which is well above the national average, but there are fewer this year. Currently, there are two pupils with statements of special educational need. The children's attainment on entry is average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school makes good provision for the pupils. They are well taught, make good progress and attain well above average standards in reading, speaking and listening, mathematics and science. The headteacher has given the school the direction it needed following a long period without settled leadership. The school provides good value for money and is now well placed to continue to improve further.

What the school does well

- Standards in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics and science are well above average.
- The teaching is good overall, and particularly strong in the reception classes. As a result, the pupils are achieving well and making good progress in most areas of the curriculum.
- The pupils have positive attitudes to learning and most behave very well.
- The school offers the pupils a good range of opportunities for personal development.
- The arrangements for monitoring and assessing the pupils' progress are good.
- The links with parents are very effective, and as a result they support the school well.
- The school development plan sets out a clear strategy for continuing improvement.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing are not high enough because the basic skills are not sufficiently reinforced.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Although the school has been through a very unsettled period since it was inspected in November 1997, the determination of the teaching staff and impetus provided by the current headteacher have brought about many good improvements. The long and medium term planning has improved, so that all pupils have full access to the curriculum. The subject co-ordinators are now more effective in managing and monitoring the subjects for which they are responsible. The provision for the pupils with special educational needs is now good. Standards in reading, mathematics and science have remained high since the last inspection, but have fallen in writing. The good teaching has also been maintained and in the reception classes it is now very good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1990	2000	2001	2001
reading	A	A	A	A
writing	B	A	B	C
mathematics	A	B	A	B

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

The children in the foundation stage are achieving well. Most are likely to reach, and many will exceed, the goals set for them. The results of the national tests for seven-year-olds, over recent years, show that standards in reading and mathematics are well above average. In 2001, approximately half of the pupils attained the higher level in both of these tests, but in writing fewer pupils than might be expected attained the higher levels. Overall, the results in writing were not as consistent, although they were in line with the results achieved by similar schools.

In 2002, the results dipped because there were more pupils with special educational needs than usual. However, a good proportion of the pupils attained the higher levels in reading and mathematics, but not in writing. An inspection of the pupils' completed work shows that standards in writing are not as high as they should be.

In 2002, the results of teacher assessments in science indicate that almost all pupils attained the expected level and a large proportion attained the higher levels. This maintains the well-above-average results of the previous year and similar standards are being maintained in current lessons.

The school set challenging targets in 2002, for both the expected and higher levels and came close to meeting them in reading and mathematics, but fell some way short in writing.

The pupils are achieving well in most areas of the curriculum and attaining the standards expected of them. Their work in design and technology and art and design is of a high standard.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning. Most of them listen carefully to their teachers, and are eager to answer questions and contribute to discussions.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is generally good, and in the reception classes it is consistently very good. A few pupils in year 1 find it difficult to settle down and concentrate on their work, and occasionally disrupt the learning.
Personal development and relationships	The relationships between the overwhelming majority of pupils are very good. They are pleased when they are praised, but also enjoy celebrating the successes of other pupils.
Attendance	The pupils arrive promptly at school and their levels of attendance are very high in comparison with other schools.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good	N/a

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.

Almost half of the lessons seen during the inspection were very good. The teaching in the reception classes is particularly strong. The effective use of structured play is enabling the pupils to achieve well and to make good progress. Very good use is made of the both the classrooms and the outdoor learning area. In years 1 and 2 the teaching is good overall. The lessons are very well planned, purposeful and most move along at a pace that motivates the pupils. The teaching of mathematics is effective in maintaining high standards. Although the teaching of English is mainly good, the basic skills of writing are not sufficiently reinforced. The pupils' writing is always marked, but rarely are the weaknesses identified and corrected to ensure the pupils' skills and knowledge develop rapidly.

The teachers include all of the pupils in the activities they plan. The pupils respond well in most lessons and are learning effectively through the good range of tasks provided by the teachers. Those who speak English as an additional language are well catered for and, as a result, they are achieving well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The pupils have full access to a well-planned curriculum that meets the requirements. The planning for the pupils in the reception classes now fully reflects the Foundation Stage curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed and parents are kept well informed of the child's progress. Their individual education plans have clear targets.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes good provision for the pupils who speak English as an additional language and consequently they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The pupils' personal development is good. The teachers provide them with a good range of opportunities to become more mature and independent.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The pupils' progress is now carefully assessed and recorded. The information is used to good effect.

The school works very well in partnership with parents; they are kept fully informed about their child's progress and receive informative weekly newsletters.

Much of the curriculum is very well planned, but too much of the science curriculum that is covered in year 1 is repeated in year 2.

The school has very good procedures to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the pupils. Child protection procedures are in place and although the teachers are well briefed some members of the non-teaching staff are not.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well managed. The headteacher has created a clear vision and direction for the school. The development plan provides a strong platform for continuing improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities and have embarked on a training programme to clarify their roles and responsibilities so that they can become more effective as critical friends of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher and co-ordinators are monitoring and evaluating the quality of the teaching and the standards the pupils attain very effectively.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of the available resources. The changes in the development planning allow funds to be used effectively to support the priorities for improvement.

There are sufficient teachers for the number of pupils on roll. In many cases, the classroom assistants provide very good support to the teachers and the pupils, but occasionally they are not used effectively. Overall, the school has a good range of resources to support the curriculum, and there have been good additions to those used in the Foundation Stage. The accommodation is spacious, used effectively and kept very clean.

The headteacher and chair of governors have, through a good working relationship, established a clear, forward looking approach to school improvement that is overcoming many of the difficulties that have resulted from a long and unsettled period in the leadership of the school. To ensure that this positive approach continues, the governors have established plans to make the appointment of a new headteacher as smooth as possible.

The school compares its performance with other schools both locally and nationally; it consults primarily with the local education authority; sets very challenging targets and ensures that it obtains value for money through competition when making acquisitions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The good progress made by the pupils; higher achievers are challenged. • The good teaching and good relationships between the children and staff. • The school's high expectations that the pupils will achieve their best. • The 'Open door policy' and the accessibility of the headteacher and staff. • Very good moral values are promoted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework. • The disruption to the leadership of the school.

The inspection team agree with the many positive comments made by the vast majority of parents. A few were not entirely happy with arrangements for homework, but the inspectors found that the current arrangements reflect the guidance given to schools and are entirely appropriate for children of this age.

The leadership of the school has been severely disrupted in the past by illness and absence. Some parents expressed concerns that the resignation of the current headteacher will result in similar disruption. The inspectors found that the governors have plans in place to make a new appointment as soon as possible.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

The children in the Foundation stage have settled quickly into school life and are making very good progress. Their attainment, six weeks into the academic year, is in line with that expected of pupils of this age and a significant minority are achieving beyond this, particularly in their personal, emotional and social, mathematical, musical and physical development.

The results of the national tests show that standards in reading and mathematics are well above average. In 2001, approximately half of the pupils attained the higher level in both tests. The results in writing fluctuate, but are either above or well above the national average and are in line with the results achieved by similar schools. In contrast with the results in reading and mathematics, fewer pupils than might be expected attained the higher levels. An inspection of the pupils' work shows that standards in writing are not as high as they should be.

The results in all subjects run well above the national average over the last five years although the difference between the school's results and the national average in writing is narrowing. The results attained by boys exceed the national averages by marginally more than the girls. However, this simply reflects variations in cohorts as the results attained by girls, in some years, are better than those attained by boys.

In 2002 the results dipped because there were more pupils with special educational needs than usual. However, a high proportion of the pupils still attained the higher level in reading and mathematics. The results of the teacher assessments in science indicate that almost all pupils attained the expected level and a high proportion attained the higher levels. This maintains the well above average results of the previous year.

The school set challenging targets for both the expected and higher levels in 2002; it and came close to meeting them in reading and mathematics, but fell some way short in writing.

The pupils are achieving well in most areas of the curriculum and attaining at least the standards expected of them. Their work in design and technology and art and design is of a high standard.

The pupils who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are well catered for and are achieving well. The individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs have clear targets for improvement. The more able pupils are achieving well in most areas of the curriculum and reaching the standards they should. However, although the content of their writing is of a good standard and often contains rich and varied language, they are not attaining the levels they should in this aspect of the work.

The school should take steps to raise standards in writing. **This is a key issue for action.**

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

The majority of pupils have positive attitudes to school and to their work. They arrive promptly each morning and are keen to start the day's activities. They quickly settle down in registrations, assemblies and in class. They are motivated, enthusiastic and eager to learn. They are attentive to their teachers,

willingly ask and answer questions, and freely offer their own ideas and opinions. The vast majority of parents agree that their children like school.

Overall, standards of behaviour are good. In the reception classes, the children's behaviour is consistently very good. The teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and most of the pupils themselves have high expectations of the standards of behaviour that are acceptable in the school. The pupils move around the school in a quiet and orderly manner and their behaviour in the classrooms, at breaks and at lunchtime is good, and sometimes very good. On occasions, however, a few boys in year 1 present challenging behaviour. This can lead to some disruption to teaching and learning in the classroom, and the class teacher has to spend a disproportionate amount of time managing these children. There were no signs of either bullying or isolation of individual pupils. In the previous academic year, there was only one fixed-term exclusion, which has been followed by an effective programme of re-integration. The majority of parents agree that behaviour in the school is good.

The relationships in the school are very good. The vast majority of pupils relate very well to their teachers, to other adults and also to one another. Children of all ages work very well together in the classrooms and play well together in the playgrounds. They collaborate well, share resources, take turns and listen to each other. The pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are fully integrated into all activities. Most children consistently show respect for their teachers, each other and the environment. During assemblies, the pupils are respectful of the occasion, willingly join in hymn singing and bow their heads reverently during prayers.

The pupils' personal development is good. They are learning a good range of social skills that is helping them to become well-rounded individuals. In the classrooms, the majority of pupils willingly take responsibility for their own work, and many were observed working independently. Outside lessons, the older pupils take on extra responsibilities, for example, taking registers to the office and playing music at the start of assemblies. The school supports local and national charities and the pupils are becoming aware of others less fortunate than themselves. The majority of parents agree that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.

The attendance rate at the school is very high in comparison with other schools. There is no unauthorised absence and a very low level of recorded lateness.

The pupil's good attitudes to learning, their good behaviour and the high level of attendance have very positive effects on the standards achieved.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

The teaching is generally good. Half of the lessons observed during the inspection were very good. Throughout the school the lessons are very thoroughly planned and well prepared so that no time is lost. They are usually purposeful and most move along at a pace that motivates the pupils. Resources are readily available and classrooms are well organised and managed to support the pupils' learning. The teachers include all of the pupils in the activities they plan and often modify the tasks they set to meet the needs of different ability groups. However, the needs of the pupils with special educational needs are not always highlighted in the teachers' lesson plans for subjects other than English and mathematics. The pupils who speak English as an additional language are well catered for and the small number of pupils who are at an early stage of acquiring English as an additional language are given good support and are achieving well. The pupils respond well in most lessons and are learning effectively through the good range of tasks provided by the teachers.

The teaching in the reception classes is particularly strong. The purposeful use of structured play is enabling the children to achieve well and make good progress. Very good use is made of the classrooms and the outdoor learning area. The teachers use probing questions to engage the pupils in the tasks that they have chosen, and the support assistants are now beginning to follow this lead and encourage greater independence in learning. The teachers have a good knowledge of the foundation stage curriculum. In one lesson, the pupils' creative development was considerably enhanced through listening to music and responding to its tempo by putting a toy to bed to a slow piece and marching to faster piece of music.

In key stage 1, the teaching is good overall although there are variations from class to class. For instance, in one class it was predominantly satisfactory, but in others it was often very good. In the very good lessons, there was much to motivate and interest the pupils, for example, when they were beginning to investigate magnetism in year 1 or exploring aboriginal art in year 2. Consequently, the pupils concentrated on their work and their learning moved along rapidly. In the satisfactory lessons, good planning, preparation and interesting introductions where the pupils were skilfully questioned did not develop as successfully as they should have because the pupils did not settle well and concentrate on the tasks set for them. Although the teacher used a range of strategies to encourage good learning, the pupils were not managed sufficiently strongly. Consequently, in these lessons steady rather than rapid progress was made.

The teaching of mathematics is effective in maintaining high standards. There is good, constant development of the basic skills, which underpins the high standards that are attained by the pupils. Although the teaching of English is generally good and the all elements of the national literacy strategy are comprehensively covered, the basic skills of writing are not sufficiently reinforced. In a challenging year 2 literacy lesson, the pupils were working to improve the content of sentence by using alliteration. Whilst this was the main purpose of the lesson, too little attention was given to, for example, capital letters, full stops and letter formation. The pupils' writing is always marked, but rarely are the weaknesses identified and corrected to ensure that the pupils' skills and knowledge develop rapidly. In all other respects, the teachers' assessment and recording of the pupils' progress are very good. In science, when the teachers are working with a group of children who are carrying out an investigation, they note the comments they make and transfer them to their records so they can assess the extent of the progress being made. Similarly, in physical education the teachers keep a record of the skills that the pupils are developing. This information is used very well to aid their subsequent planning.

Homework is used to good effect. Although the vast majority of parents agreed that the pupils have the right amount of work to do at home, some felt that it was insufficient. The inspectors found the current procedures to be well organised, in line with the guidance issued to schools and appropriate for pupils of this age.

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

The school provides a good curriculum that meets the needs of all its pupils. It fulfils the statutory requirements with an appropriate emphasis on the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy.

The planning of all subjects now successfully addresses all the requirements of the National Curriculum, but too much of the science curriculum covered in year 1 is repeated in year 2. Nevertheless, there have been many improvements since the last inspection. The planning for the Foundation Stage is much improved and providing the children under five with an increasing range of opportunities for structured play. Personal, social and health education and religious education are well planned and used to build relationships throughout the school. The national strategies for literacy and

numeracy have been successfully implemented and have contributed positively to the well above average standards in reading and mathematics. However, the literacy strategy has been less successful in securing high standards in writing because not enough attention has been paid to reinforcing the basic skills.

The teachers take good account of the needs of the different groups of pupils through the school's strong equal opportunities and racial equality policies. The needs of the more able pupils are well met and they make good progress overall. The planning for the pupils with special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language is good. These pupils have access to the complete curriculum. Their individual education plans are well devised to develop their learning in small steps, which enables these groups to make good progress. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

A good range of extra curricular activities enhance the planned curriculum, and are appreciated by parents and pupils alike. There are also a number of visits and visitors that support the pupils' learning and develop their awareness of the wider world. Grandparents come to school to talk about their experiences to support history work. Local services, such as the fire brigade and the school nurse, develop the pupils' sense of the wider community.

The school has satisfactory links with playgroups and the local junior school. The children visit the school before starting full time education and this helps them to settle quickly. Year 2 pupils visit the junior school before they move on to the next stage in their education.

The good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has been maintained since the last inspection. For instance, in assemblies the pupils have opportunities to explore a range of values and beliefs that influence their lives. On one occasion, the theme of light was used very well to lead the pupils to consider its use as a symbol of how some people think about God. Through the ways in which the teachers value their answers and contributions to lessons, all groups of pupils are able to develop a sense of respect for themselves and others. The pupils in year 1 explore feelings through expressive art based, for instance, on the Aboriginal 'Dream Time' beliefs. The children in the reception classes use the colours and patterns of Kandinsky to develop their own creative awareness. The school provides a clear moral code of behaviour that teaches right from wrong, and all the adults provide good role models. The pupils know and understand the school and class rules, and all the members of staff consistently reinforce them. The wall displays illustrate the values that the school imparts in regard to consideration for others, for example, by showing the funds raised for a local hospice. The pupils have also taken part in a recent recycling project that has developed their appreciation of and concern for their own immediate environment.

The pupils have good opportunities to develop their social skills. In all classes, they take responsibility by acting as register monitors and by helping around the classrooms. The year 2 pupils operate the music centre in assemblies and help the staff at lunchtimes. Small games in physical education help the pupils to acquire a team ethic, and paired activities in lessons develop co-operation and collaborative working. The assemblies offer positive communal experiences that enable the pupils to feel part of the school. This is particularly evident when their individual successes are recognised in the 'Celebration' assemblies. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own cultural background is enhanced through their work in geography, history, art and music. In recent weeks, themes based on Greek, Caribbean and Chinese cultures have also played an important part in this process. They have helped to enhance the pupils' sense of other cultures and their beliefs, and religious education lessons have broadened their knowledge of other faiths.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

The school provides effective care for its pupils. The headteacher places a high priority on pastoral care and provides good leadership in this aspect. All members of staff are caring, dedicated and totally committed to the welfare of the children in their charge. They are very approachable and supportive.

The procedures for child protection are securely in place and fully understood by all teaching staff. However, some members of the non-teaching staff, for example, the midday supervisors, have been neither trained nor briefed on this aspect. The governing body and the headteacher take their health and safety responsibilities very seriously and all the required health and safety inspections, including very detailed risk assessments, are systematically carried out and formally recorded. As a result there have been a number of recent improvements but the fencing around the year 2 playground is in poor repair and sections are missing. There is a portable classroom, not used by the school, on the grass adjacent to the playground, which does not have skirting to prevent small children from crawling underneath. The teachers and teaching assistants are alert and vigilant when supervising the pupils at breaks. Similarly, the experienced midday staff undertake the lunchtime supervision conscientiously, and their standard of care is very high.

The school has good procedures for promoting and monitoring discipline and good behaviour. For example, the behaviour policy is supplemented by “Golden Rules” and classroom rules, which have been discussed and agreed with the pupils. The teachers have high expectations of what constitutes acceptable behaviour, and discipline is administered conscientiously in most classrooms. This has a positive effect on the high standards of behaviour maintained throughout the school. The procedures for recording and monitoring absence are good. The registers are completed correctly, reasons for non-attendance are recorded consistently, and absences rigorously followed up.

The class teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils extremely well and have a very good understanding of their individual personal needs.

The school's procedures for assessing attainment and progress are good, and the resulting information is used well to plan the curriculum. These are improvements from the time of the last inspection. The teachers know their pupils well and therefore can identify their needs appropriately. The pupils' knowledge and skills are assessed on entry to full-time education and this is used to determine any additional support that may be necessary. Their progress in English and mathematics is monitored regularly.

The school shows high levels of commitment to ensuring that all pupils, whatever their abilities, gender and ethnic background, are fully included in all aspects of its provision. The school provides effectively for pupils with special educational needs and the few for who English is an additional language. These pupils are identified at an early stage through well-organised procedures. Records are kept of their achievements and used to plan their next stage of learning. In lessons, the pupils with special educational needs receive good support from well-trained teaching assistants, who make assessments of their responses and record their progress. The teachers and support staff know the pupils well, and the school regularly checks their progress against the targets set for them. There is appropriate help for the two pupils with statements of special need who also receive good support from outside services. There are regular reviews of these pupils' progress; their parents and carers are involved and aware of their children's targets.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

Relationships between the school and parents are very good. The school enjoys the active support of the majority of the parents and many regularly help in the classrooms, accompany the children on visits and help in many other ways around the school. For example, a group of parents help the children

change their reading books each week. Parent helpers are also used very effectively to support the learning in lessons, particularly during practical subjects such as art. Most parents are fully involved in their child's work in school and at home. They support homework and home reading, and consistently enter appropriate comments in the home-school reading books. There is a very active Parents Association that organises fund raising events for the school. A considerable amount of money has been raised for the school in this way.

The majority of parents expressed a high level of satisfaction with most aspects of the school. However, some expressed concerns about homework and the lack of school organised activities outside lessons. The inspection team judged the use of homework to be entirely appropriate and the provision for extra-curricular activities to be good for a school catering for this age group.

Communication between the school and home is very good. The school sends out weekly, informative newsletters that include topic and curriculum information, and regular individual letters about specific events and activities. It publishes an attractive, comprehensive and informative prospectus. The governors hold an annual meeting with the parents and publish a useful annual report. Some parents did not agree that they were kept well informed about how well their children were getting on. The inspection evidence does not support these parents' views. Parents are given an informative annual progress report that clearly indicates what the pupils can do, the progress they are making and their targets for further improvement, particularly in English and mathematics. They are offered the opportunity to attend consultation meetings to discuss their children's work and progress with their teachers. The parents of children with special educational needs are kept well informed and fully involved in their child's education. The headteacher and her staff are very welcoming and approachable. They make themselves readily available to parents at the start and end of each day. The parents appreciate the many opportunities that they have to speak informally to their children's class teachers.

Overall, the school has very effective links with parents. The high level of parental involvement has a positive influence on the children's academic achievement and personal development.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Since the last inspection, the leadership and management of the school have been severely disrupted by the ill health and absence of staff. Through this difficult period, many parents report that the professionalism and dedication of the teachers minimised the disruption of the provision, and consequently the pupils continued to attain above and well above average results in national tests. A new headteacher was appointed just over a year ago who has created a clear vision and direction for the school. She has been particularly influential in establishing a strong foundation stage curriculum, in engendering a more reflective approach amongst the teachers and empowering the subject co-ordinators in their roles. Consequently, the headteacher and key members of the staff are providing good leadership. The headteacher has recently resigned and is moving to another post at the start of next term. To ensure that these positive developments continue, the governors have put into place plans to cover the period that the school will be without a headteacher. They intend to appoint a new headteacher as soon as possible.

The school is well managed and the school development plan provides a strong platform for continuing improvement. The plan is sharply focussed and allows funds to be used effectively to support priorities for improvement. Performance management is well established and the headteacher monitors the quality of the teaching. The subject co-ordinators are involved in comprehensively monitoring the planning, teaching and the quality of the pupils' work, and are beginning to evaluate the effect of development activities on both the provision made for the pupils and the standards they attain.

Although there have been significant improvements in the activities of the subject co-ordinators since the last inspection, this aspect of their work should be taken further so that they make clear assessments of what works well and why. **This is an additional issue for action.**

The headteacher and chair of governors have a good working relationship. They have established a clear, forward-looking approach to school improvement that is overcoming many of the difficulties that have resulted from the long, unsettled period in the leadership of the school. The governors observe lessons and report their findings at meetings of the governing body. Each governor is linked to a member of the teaching staff so that they are able to find out for themselves about the work of the school. The governors fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily and have embarked on a training programme to clarify their roles so that they can become more effective as critical friends of the school. There have been a number of recent changes of personnel on the governing body. The new governors, along with longer serving colleagues and teachers, are participating in joint training and development activities. This is a very positive development which should be used to establish a better shared understanding and a unified commitment to continuing improvement. **This is an additional issue for action.**

The school compares its performance with other schools locally and nationally; it sets challenging and in some cases very ambitious targets. Through analysis of the results of the national tests, the headteacher was already well aware that standards in writing were not as high as they should be. The school consults primarily with the local education authority to bring about improvements. This is evident in the current training programme for governors. The governors ensure value for money through competitive tenders when making acquisitions. Overall, good use is made of the available resources, and the principles of "best value" are increasingly being applied in the management of the school.

There are sufficient teachers for the number of pupils on roll. In many cases, the classroom assistants provide very good support to the teachers and the pupils, but occasionally they are not used effectively. Overall, the school has a good range of resources to support the curriculum. Since the last inspection, there have been good additions to the resources to support the Foundation Stage curriculum and better use of information and communication technology across the curriculum. The accommodation is spacious, used effectively, kept very clean and enhanced by attractive displays celebrating the children's work. The classrooms are bright and airy, and have adequate storage for resources. There is a useful library and activity area between the years 1 and 2 classrooms. The hall is large enough for whole school gatherings and is well equipped for physical education lessons.

The school is situated in attractive grounds comprising two hard surface playgrounds and landscaped grass and wooded areas. The reception classes benefit from a very useful covered outdoor teaching area within a separate safe and secure play area for the children. Access for disabled pupils into and throughout the school is good, and there is appropriate toilet provision for them.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The headteacher and teachers should:

- (1) Raise standards in writing by ensuring that the basic skills are continually reinforced in lessons, through informative marking and by good, short-term target setting.

In addition, the governing body should, through training, continue to develop their role as critical friends of the school and working with the teachers build on the commitment to further improvement.

The co-ordinators should build on the significant improvements in their monitoring procedures, and begin to evaluate the effect of the development and training activities on the provision made for the pupils and the standards they attain.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	37
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	13

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	16	10	6			
Percentage	9	46	29	17			

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		175
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		27

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.4
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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	2001	26	32	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	26	25
	Girls	32	32	29
	Total	58	58	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (93)	100 (98)	93 (93)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	25	26
	Girls	32	30	32
	Total	58	55	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (96)	95 (96)	100 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	1
White	
Any other minority ethnic group	10

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.1
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	147

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.5
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.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	1	
Other minority ethnic groups		

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
	£
Total income	352 266
Total expenditure	344 223
Expenditure per pupil	1 945
Balance brought forward from previous year	17 361
Balance carried forward to next year	25 404

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	175
Number of questionnaires returned	67

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	26	1	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	39	48	1	0	12
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	39	3	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	45	14	6	12
The teaching is good.	42	45	3	0	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	22	48	13	3	14
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	36	1	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	35	0	0	7
The school works closely with parents.	32	49	10	1	7
The school is well led and managed.	39	38	13	0	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	41	0	0	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	42	14	4	17

A number of parents, of children in the reception class, felt it was too early for them to respond to some questions. Consequently, the proportions of 'don't knows' is higher than usual.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The school makes very good provision for the children in the Foundation Stage. The teaching is consistently very good and sometimes excellent. The children enter the school in the year they are five and most have had either nursery or playgroup experience. The children have quickly settled into school life and are making very good progress. Six weeks into the academic year, their attainment is in line with that expected of pupils of this age. A significant minority is achieving beyond this, particularly in their personal, emotional and social development, mathematical development, musical development and the physical areas of learning.

The school is providing an appropriate curriculum for young children with a strong and successful emphasis on the use of structured play in both the indoor and outdoor learning environments. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development.

The children have made a very good start to school life. Their attainment in this area of learning that exceeds the expectations for their age. This is because the adults' major focus has been to foster the children's skills. The carefully planned curriculum and daily routines are developing the children's ability to accept responsibility and become independent learners. For example, when entering school in the mornings they self-register and go straight to an activity of their own choice. As a result, the children have developed an awareness of, and sensitivity to, the needs and feelings of others and have begun to establish relationships very well. Most children listen well to adults, value each other's contributions, share equipment and take turns as they go about their work. Their behaviour is very good and they show respect for those about them. The sharing time at the end of sessions also reinforces socially acceptable behaviour. The adults work very well together and have established firm routines for both indoor and outdoor learning. This provides a good structure within which the children begin to learn to co-operate and play well together. As a result, their level of independence is high. Both boys and girls tidy away at the end of sessions. There are no significant differences in the responses due to the good support provided by the staff. The adults show a very caring and sensitive approach to the children and maintain very good relations with their parents.

Communication, language and literacy

A significant feature of the school's work is the very good teaching that the children receive to enhance their spoken English and listening skills. Most of the children start school with good levels of spoken English skill. The teachers rightly place a good deal of emphasis on discussion both in group times and with individuals. Most children speak clearly and confidently to each other and to adults. The adults' skilful and sensitive questioning and encouragement enable the children to respond in extended sentences and to pose their own questions. The staff make a very conscientious effort to ensure that visual materials and individual support are readily accessible for the small number of children who are at an early stage in the acquisition of English.

As a result of well-planned literacy sessions and a good variety of play experiences, most of the children are on course to achieve the early learning goals, and it is likely that some will exceed them. The introductions to new activities are plain and precise; the learning points are clearly highlighted enabling all of the children to extend their knowledge. The adults have stimulated the children's interest in books and stories as a source of pleasure, and, as a result, the children have a growing

understanding of the written word. They know that a story has a beginning, middle and an ending. They can confidently identify the main characters, sequence the events and recall them in the correct order. They are very keen to offer their opinions about the illustrations in the books.

The children's writing skills are in line with those of pupils of similar ages. Their early attempts at writing are good, and most children know that various marks, letters and words convey meaning. This is because they are given good access to writing materials during their play activities. For example, whilst engaged in the writing area, two children were seen making marks and letters on paper to produce an invitation to a party at 'Macdonalds'. They went to the board, copied their friend's name onto the invitation and then posted it in the recipient's named pocket. A few children have begun to write their own names using upper and lower case letters fairly accurately and can also make attempts at unfamiliar words. The adults encourage the children to share their work. They provide very good role models for the development of language and literacy skills, and the work is very carefully prepared to meet the needs of all children.

Mathematics

Most children's achievements are above the level expected of children of this age at this point in the school year. The children are making very good progress in their mathematical learning because very good teaching ensures that the practical activities are well organised and resourced appropriately. The sessions are challenging, well paced and involve all the children in counting numbers up to five and beyond. They have become familiar with number rhymes and show good recognition of numerals 1 to 5. When engaged in learning about positional vocabulary, such as front, behind, on top, underneath, and beside, they all join in the mathematical game with enthusiasm. They sustain interest and concentration as they repeat the terminology accurately, confidently and competently in an appropriate context.

Many of the mathematical activities are linked to other areas of learning, such as the cutting out shapes and the making of a 'robot' using squares, circles, rectangles and triangles. One child discovered that a diamond shape could be made with two triangles. At other times, they have good opportunities to understand the terms 'more' and 'less'. For example, during registration they had found out that 1 from 3 leaves 2 and, that 3 is more than 2, and two is less than 3.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

The teachers make good provision for this aspect of learning, and as a result the children are making very good progress. The foundations of scientific enquiry, exploration and discovery are being laid through the suitable use of sand and water play, and by walks around the school grounds. Consequently, the children are developing their observation skills and a good awareness of their own environment. In their historical activities, they are beginning to discover how they have changed since they were babies. Small construction equipment is used effectively in the classroom, and larger construction toys stimulate a great deal of imaginative play. For example, when a group of children had completed their building, one child suddenly came into their midst with his clip board and made notes because he was the 'structural engineer'.

In computer technology, the children have good opportunities to develop their keyboard skills and their control of the mouse. A music programme enables them to listen carefully to sounds. The children follow the instructions on the screen, and have begun to see how the computer can help them.

Physical development

The children's physical skills are being suitably developed and their achievements are well above those expected of pupils of similar age. They are using a good range of apparatus and other equipment with

increasing skill, thereby making very good progress in their control of both large and fine movements. They have good opportunities to work in either in the classroom or outdoors with the appropriate resources to match the demands of the planned activities. The teachers use the available space and resources well to increase the children's levels of enquiry, exploration and discovery. The children show a high level of concentration and decision-making during their physical activities. The adults sustain good levels of interaction and involvement in the play activities in order to support and extend the children's learning. This was clearly evident, for example, when the children were building an obstacle course or playing in the sand.

The children have developed a good awareness of space when moving around the hall and have been well taught about safety issues. They follow instructions well when they hop, skip, run, walk and jump, and they know that "Stop" really does mean "Stop". The children have a very good control over their movements and are developing self-confidence when balancing. The finer physical movements, such as handling tools and construction equipment or holding a pencil correctly, have been a major focus of the teachers' work and consequently the children are making considerable progress.

Creative development

The children's creative development is likely to exceed the expected levels by the end of the reception year because the teaching is very good. The teachers structure the activities well to help the children to extend their skills, knowledge and understanding of tools, equipment and materials through a good range of activities in art and role-play. Space is used imaginatively and creatively to allow the children to experience a wide range of activities to enrich their spoken English, to make friendships and to develop skills and techniques through investigation and discovery. These good learning experiences are developing the children's ability to express their thoughts, ideas and emotions very effectively.

Most of the children like to draw, paint and mix colours. For example, by mixing yellow and red issue paper in water they found that it turned the water orange, and by making circular movements on the paper they discovered how colour merges. By linking these activities to the work of Kandinsky, the children also learned something about a famous artist.

Role-play is used very well to extend the children's learning. The 'Baby Clinic' allowed them to negotiate their roles and responsibilities, for example, who was to be the receptionist, the doctor, the nurse and the parent with the 'baby'. They carried out their tasks purposefully and constructively, using equipment, such as the stethoscope before writing out a prescription. The receptionists were very busy making appointments on the telephone and then writing them down. This play links very closely to the development of their reading and writing skills, and in some cases the children can read words like 'reception' and 'doctor', and freely make marks, individual letters or letter strings. The adults participate sensitively in order to promote enquiry and keep the children purposefully engaged.

The children enjoy and benefit from their group musical experiences. They are developing an excellent foundation for their musical learning. The teacher uses her specialist knowledge very effectively to establish the basic skills of singing well. For instance, all of the children know to stand for singing with their feet apart and hands by their sides, and how to breathe from the diaphragm. As a result, they follow the melody contour and achieve fairly accurate pitch. They can also keep a steady pulse when performing action songs. Most have learnt to distinguish between fast and slow sounds and know how to listen quietly to a slow piece of music and to follow a robust piece of music with appropriate body action. This is excellent practice and as a result these children are likely to exceed the expected level by the end of the reception year.

ENGLISH

Taken overall, standards are above the national average. In spoken English, listening and reading standards are well above average, but in writing although standards are average they are not high enough. The weaknesses are in the pupils' use of punctuation, their spelling and their handwriting, rather than in the content of their work, which is often of a good standard. Overall, the teaching of English is good but action needs to be taken raise standards in writing to the levels attained in all other aspects of this subject.

By the end of year 2, the pupils speak confidently and competently and are able to sustain a lengthy dialogue with each other and their teachers. They make very good progress. A good example of this was when the children worked in pairs on improving the descriptive language in an existing sentence. Two children discussed what they were going to say and after sensitive intervention by the teacher they made significant improvements because they were able to express themselves and utilise their good vocabulary. Most of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, are confident when explaining their work to adults. The teachers are very skilled in questioning the pupils and allow them to discuss and debate their ideas, feelings, and emotions. The pupils often make imaginative and quite articulate responses. The teachers give a high priority to the use of descriptive vocabulary and subject specific terminology and, as a result, the pupils develop a broad understanding of language. Most of the pupils speak audibly and with clear diction. Generally, they listen courteously, respect each other's views and opinions and respond enthusiastically to questions.

The teaching of reading is a major focus of the school's work; as a result the pupils make very good progress over time and standards are high. Most of the children are confident and accurate in their recognition of sounds and can apply the consonant and vowel blends very well when reading unfamiliar words. The lower attaining pupils, for example, will stop at the end of a sentence if it has not made sense. They re-examine the word they think they have read wrongly, showing they have been taught to read text carefully for an understanding of its meaning. All the pupils respond enthusiastically to shared-reading activities where they read aloud from the 'Big Books' or when they adopt the part of a character in a play script. The teachers encourage expression and intonation in the pupils' reading with considerable success.

The school fosters reading for enjoyment very successfully. This is clear from the way in which the fiction library is frequently used. It is also well used to extend the pupils' knowledge and understanding through the use of non-fiction texts. Parents make a valuable contribution to this aspect of learning and frequently help the pupils to understand the function of a library and guide them in seeking information. Displays of books promote the pupils' cultural awareness by covering a variety of topics from history to world religions and also include artists from different parts of the world.

The pupils' attainment in writing is not of the standard that should be expected, given the high standards in all other aspects of English. The teachers have a very good understanding of the national literacy strategy and plan an appropriate range of activities. The lessons are thoroughly prepared and the objectives for learning are made very clear to the pupils. They ensure that the pupils have regular opportunities for writing and that they can write for a range of different purposes. In year 1 for example, the pupils progress from simple accounts of events in their lives to instructions on how to make cakes or construct puppets. By the time they reach the end of the year 2, many pupils write at length, often two three page stories or descriptions of visits. They also write information booklets and a range of poetry. A significant feature of the pupils' work is their ability to use rich and descriptive language, but even the more able are not attaining the higher levels. All pupils make good progress in their phonic knowledge, but the good approach to spelling, now established by the school, is not being effectively followed through into their written work. In some lessons, for example, the adults neither correct mistakes nor give the pupils the time to make corrections after their work is marked. This also

applies to the correction of basic punctuation errors, such as the use of full stops and capital letters. Observations of lessons and scrutiny of the pupils' books showed that these basic skills are not being sufficiently reinforced. A few pupils are successfully developing joined writing, but the level of fluency is not yet high enough. Too many pupils are inconsistent in the formation of letters. Although the teaching of writing, in lessons, is generally good, the marking and short-term target setting are weak and are not ensuring that these basic skills are secure.

The literacy co-ordinator has developed very clear, comprehensive policy documents, but recognises that there is also a need for a review of the handwriting policy. She has given a strong lead to the implementation of the literacy strategy, and has gained the commitment of the teachers and classroom assistants to continue to improve attainment. She recognises that although considerable headway has been made in writing, there is still some way to go if the pupils are to achieve the high standards they do in reading, spoken English and listening.

MATHEMATICS

Standards in mathematics are well above average for most groups of pupils. They have been maintained at this level since the last inspection, in spite of increased numbers of pupils with special educational needs. The current inspection evidence shows that the attainment of the more able and average-attaining groups of pupils is likely to be well above average by the end of year 2. All groups of pupils continue to make good progress. These judgements match the findings of the last report

The continued high standards and good progress are the result of the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. The teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the strategy and plan a range of well-matched and interesting activities that challenge and motivate all groups of pupils. The pupils are in year group sets, based on careful assessments of their abilities and this enables the teachers to plan work that is closely matched to their needs. Moreover, the teachers' then plan work that is matched to different groups within the sets so that all pupils are appropriately challenged.

The teaching of mathematics is good overall and often very good; it is effective in maintaining high standards. At the start of each lesson the teachers make clear to the pupils what they are going to learn. This was evident, for instance, in a year 2 lesson when the pupils were being taught how to use a 100 number square to find number patterns. Careful questioning enabled all groups to contribute to the discussion and the teacher checked on how well the pupils were learning before moving on to the next step. Discussions with the pupils and scrutiny of their previous work show that they are very secure in their understanding of number and can use a variety of methods in their calculations. The more able and average attaining pupils use the number bonds of 20 when calculating higher numbers, but the less able groups are not as secure in their understanding. For example, they can complete simple number patterns but have some difficulty with odd and even number patterns above 20. The better lessons are characterised by the good use of resources and support staff. When the activities are well prepared, the pupils are able to settle quickly to their tasks and this builds up a good pace of learning. In a year 1 lesson, the pupils were able to consolidate their previous knowledge of sequencing numbers up to 10 and 20 through the good support of the teacher and teaching assistant and the use of appropriate equipment. Similar good use of resources and support staff was seen in another lesson on recognising the properties of 2D and 3D shapes. This all leads to learning that shows a good acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding and very good progress by the more able and average-attaining groups of pupils.

Good use is made of the support staff in most lessons. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language and the pupils with special educational needs are well catered for and are achieving well. More able pupils are also achieving well in mathematics.

The overwhelming majority of pupils show positive attitudes to learning. They listen well, show interest and concentration, respond to questioning eagerly and take pride in their performance. A noticeable feature of their relationships is the way they are happy to celebrate not only their own achievements but also those of other pupils. When the pupils' behaviour is less good than expected, it is usually dealt with satisfactorily and does not inhibit the learning of others.

The current leadership and management of the subject are good. The procedures for assessing attainment and progress are also good, and are used in lessons by the teachers and support staff to make regular evaluations of the achievements of the different groups of pupils. As a result, the teachers have a clear view of the attainment of the different groups, and monitor closely the targets the pupils have been set. Good use is made of the resulting information for planning subsequent changes to the curriculum. The resources are now very good and their purposeful use has contributed well to the raising of standards.

SCIENCE

The results of the teacher assessment over the last couple of years show that standards in science are well above average. The present pupils' recorded work and their verbal contributions in lessons confirm that well above average standards are being maintained. In all of the lessons seen, the teachers placed a great deal of emphasis on probing questions. This challenged and motivated the pupils by teasing out explanations from them that enhanced their understanding. In a year 1 lesson, for instance, the pupils sat around a collection of objects that included magnets. Rather than telling the pupils what they were going to investigate, the teacher asked the pupils what they could find out from this collection of objects. The pupils confidently made sensible and reasoned suggestions; one pupil commented that the magnets could be 'metal detectors'. All of the pupils used their good vocabulary well and expressed themselves clearly. Through good discussion, which ranged from the possible use of magnets at home to whether or not larger magnets were more powerful, the pupils' learning was extended. This lesson was particularly effective because the pupils were also given an opportunity to examine games and toys that used magnets and to test which materials were magnetic and which were not.

In year 2, groups of pupils in both classes were investigating whether salt, sugar, flour and sand had any effect on the time it took an ice cube to melt. The pupils made sensible predictions, explained how they would make the test fair and recorded their observations in drawings. These investigations were all led by adults, who recorded each child's predictions, observations and conclusions. The teachers then used their notes to make assessments of the pupils' progress. This is an extremely effective way of monitoring and assessing the pupils' achievements in science. From the contributions made by the pupils it is likely that many will exceed the expected level by the end of year 2.

In both classes some of the pupils, who were not involved in the investigations were set a research task. They had to choose and find out about a material such as paper or plastic. In one class, these pupils were supported by a classroom assistant and were able to make good progress, whereas in the other class the pupils worked independently and some found the task too difficult, particularly those with special educational needs. Although the lessons, in both classes, were thoroughly planned, not enough consideration was given to the specific needs of pupils whose literacy skills were not sufficiently strong to tackle the task. However, the specific needs of a child with a statement were very well catered for by the deployment of a specialist support teacher.

The teaching is good overall, and in some lessons it is very good. Two notably strong features are the teachers' probing questioning and their assessment and recording of the pupils' progress. The school has a long-term plan for science. The co-ordinator's monitoring of the quality of the science curriculum has shown that there is some duplication of work in years 1 and 2. This was also evident in the inspection of the pupils' recorded work. The school should now make adjustments to the long-term science plan to remove this duplication and ensure that the work in year 2 always builds on, rather than repeats, what the pupils have already learnt. In spite of this weakness in the curriculum planning, the standards in science are well above average and have successfully been maintained at this level since the last inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

During the inspection, it was only possible to observe one class lesson. However, a wide range of displays and a collection of the pupil's past work were scrutinised. It shows that there has been an improvement in the breadth of the art curriculum since the last inspection, and that standards have improved. They are now well above the expected level. The teaching is very effective because there is an appropriate emphasis on the progression of basic skills when using, for example, pastels, paints, charcoal, pencils, textiles and clay.

The pupils have studied the ideas of pattern and design in the work of Antonio Gaudi and have been inspired to create their own in batik and fabric collage. The results are of a high standard. The pupils have also used the work of William Morris to explore the use of paints, pastels and pencil. The finished work on display demonstrates that the pupils are successfully using a variety of materials, tools and equipment. The displays are carefully labelled using subject-specific language to support and enrich each pupil's own vocabulary.

In a very successful art lesson seen in year 2, the teacher was well supported by a parent who is an artist. The teacher based the introductory session on Aboriginal art. She used her very good subject knowledge to tell the pupils about the 'Origins from Dreamtime' and explained how the earth colours derived from the sands and soil used. The pupils developed their understanding of pattern and line by using twigs and sticks to make marks and draw lines to represent birds, fire and feathers. They were well supported in this task, really enjoying the lesson and making very good progress in the use of natural materials. They sustained good levels of concentration and produced work of good quality. This was largely due to the very good focus on the improvement of their skills and their good interaction with the adults. The lesson greatly enhanced their understanding of art from another cultural.

In discussion, the pupils showed their enthusiasm for art and that they enjoy illustrating or sketching in other subjects. For example, when on a visit to the local church they had taken sketchbooks to record significant features as well as doing some rubbings of the patterns they saw. Photographs taken with a digital camera were transferred to the computer. They not only fostered talk about the visit, but also helped the pupils to look at their sketches and complete them in more detail.

The co-ordinator has taken a very active lead in emphasising the development of skills. Significant features of her work have been in supporting the teachers' planning, giving advice and producing a portfolio of samples of work. It would be helpful if comments were added to the art-work in the portfolio so that the teachers could see why each piece of work is considered to be a good example of the development of skills, techniques and creativity. This would further support and guide the teachers when they are making assessments of the pupil's work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

From the work on display around the school, examples of completed work and the one lesson seen it is clear that the provision and standards in design and technology have been sustained at a high level since the last inspection. At that time the standards were above average and the evidence shows that they are now well above average. This is because all the teachers are very secure in their own subject knowledge and expertise and they set challenging tasks. As a result, the pupils have very good experiences of designing and making, and good opportunities to evaluate their work. They make very good progress in all aspects of the curriculum.

The pupils' work shows that they are acquiring appropriate skills in designing and making. They are developing their understanding of food technology as well as their technical knowledge in the use of tools, equipment and a wide range of materials. The pupils' literacy skills are used well to write evaluations of their finished products. For example, when making a purse one child declared that the design was good, but the making of the purse was not as successful because of the sewing; too many gaps allowed the money to slip out! In year 1, the pupils practice cutting and joining materials in well-focussed tasks. In these activities, the teacher supports rather than directs, thereby building the pupils' confidence. When one pupil said, 'It's going to be difficult to cut out and sew,' another child's response was, 'I know, but I'm sure I can do it'. The behaviour and the pupils' enthusiasm are very good because their achievements are celebrated by both their peers and their teachers. The lessons are well planned, well organised, and resources are readily accessible. The teachers allow the pupils to work things out for themselves, encouraging and supporting the development of a wide range of skills.

The co-ordinator leads well and has worked hard to raise the profile of the subject across the school. The support and guidance given to staff is a significant feature of her work. It is evident from the finished products that the pupils make very good progress and take a pride in their work.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

These subjects are taught as part of a series of linked topics. Only one lesson in each subject was seen during the inspection. Other evidence was gathered from a scrutiny of previous work and discussions with the co-ordinators and pupils. Current standards in both subjects are in line with those expected for pupils at the end of year 2. The teaching in both subjects also remains satisfactory. This matches the findings of the previous inspection.

The pupils enjoy both subjects. They have learned about famous people and events of the past, such as Samuel Pepys and the Great Fire of London. When comparing holidays now and then, the pupils have completed a questionnaire with their grandparents about their holidays, and then compared it with their own experiences. In the lesson seen, the pupils looked carefully at a good range of everyday household objects from the past. They were led through a careful discussion to consider what each object might have been used for and how it has changed today. Discussion with the pupils shows that they have a satisfactory understanding of how differently the past can be represented in 'books, museums and things like these'. They have begun to develop a sense of times past and present.

In geography, the pupils have compared another locality with their own by studying the Isle of Struay. They have noted the differences in transport and how the appearance of the landscape varies from their own immediate environment. They know the main countries of the British Isles and can place Rugby with some degree of accuracy on a map of England. They know that places like London are far away, and that other places such as Australia are very far away. In the lesson seen, the pupils were following up a walk around the local neighbourhood of the school. They were able to draw a pictorial map of their route to school and identify some of the features they saw on their journey. This lesson

was well supported by the use of a computer program that enabled the pupils to construct their journey with prepared symbols and diagrams.

The current leadership and management of both subjects are good. The co-ordinators are able to monitor the teachers' planning and the pupils' resulting work, and there are plans later to monitor teaching in both subjects. Both coordinators have a secure understanding of what is required to move their subjects forward. The resources are good and used effectively to support the teaching and learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Standards in information and communication technology are above average. The pupils are benefiting from improved facilities and an increasing range of opportunities to use information technology across the curriculum. The development of their skills is now well planned. For example, the pupils have a weekly input to enhance their keyboard skills so that they know how to type upper and lower case letters and most have computers at home. Consequently, they are generally very confident in their use of computers and software. The good use of computers to assist and extend learning in other subjects, particularly in English and mathematics, is contributing to the good standards.

The teachers have undertaken an extensive training programme and are now much more confident and knowledgeable about how to make the best use of information technology to support the pupils' learning. They set useful tasks for the pupils. For example, in year 1, the pupils used a word processor to sequence words into a sentence; others have written sentences and added clip art. In numeracy lessons, they have used software to learn about shapes and to create graphs to show the most popular way to travel to school. In Year 2, the pupils continue to make good use of a word processor, but a broader range of opportunities is provided, for example to create a paper database, use a digital microscope to look at a dragonfly's wing and to give instructions to a programmable toy. One pupil wrote 'It is much easier to change things using a computer', illustrating how pupils are being asked to consider critically their use of information technology.

The information and communication technology lessons seen during the inspection were short, but well-taught periods in which the teacher demonstrated the skills that the pupils need to grasp. The quality of the teaching and support in other lessons where information and communication technology is used is good. As a result, the pupils are making good progress both in the acquisition of the skills they need and in their application. Discussions with pupils show that many are able to log on to the network, launch an application and, for example, change the size of the window in which they are working.

The co-ordinator has brought about significant improvements through her management of the training activities that are valued by other members of the teaching staff. In addition to the teachers' enhanced knowledge and skills, the school now has better resources and a development plan that sets out a programme of activities to bring about continuing improvement. There have been many good improvements since the last inspection.

MUSIC

It is not possible to make a judgement about standards in music because there was no opportunity during the inspection to see any lessons in year 2. The school's planning indicates that a broad music curriculum is offered through the use of a published scheme. In the two lessons seen in year 1, the pupils were working at the expected level.

The pupils are making satisfactory progress in singing. They are able to maintain a steady beat, discriminate and utilise variations in the sound patterning and keep broadly in-tune. The pupils enjoyed singing and responded well by using body action to demonstrate their understanding of specific rhythmic patterns, particularly when making the duck and dog sounds in the song. Their attainment was most evident when the pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding were suitably challenged by the teacher. For example, the pupils listened to a slow piece of music by Bach and a lively piece by Vivaldi. The previous week's lesson had included gamelan music from Indonesia, and in this way the children are beginning to understand about different instruments and the styles, texture, and the tempi of the music they can produce. As a result, they are also acquiring good knowledge and understanding of the character and mood of music written by a range of composers. However, in one lesson a small minority of boys disrupted the flow of the lesson and this impinged upon other children's enjoyment of the music. There were missed opportunities during assemblies to carry forward this good practice of listening and talking about the music.

Overall, the teaching is satisfactory and helps the pupils to make steady progress in most aspects of the curriculum. This is because they follow a published scheme that was introduced after the last inspection to support the teaching of music. It has increased the teachers' subject knowledge and raised their confidence. Music is used to support other areas of the curriculum. For example, during an 'Arts Week' in the summer term, the pupils have opportunities to hear 'live' music from other cultures, such as that played on the steel pans from the Caribbean.

The co-ordinator for music has only just been appointed. She is a music specialist and a very good role model for the teaching of the subject. Her own Foundation Stage lesson demonstrated high expectation and gave a very clear indication of what can be achieved. She has a very clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve standards in music. She recognises that the teachers need more training in order to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of the music curriculum further.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Standards in physical education were in line with expectations at the time of the previous inspection except for dance in which the pupils performed well. This remains the case, but the pupils now also perform well in games.

Almost all of the pupils in the reception classes are making good progress in their physical development. This is built on effectively in year 1, where most respond very well to the stimulus of music and poetry in dance. Many use their movements very effectively, for example, to push aside the long grass as they go on a bear hunt. The teacher models various movements and asks some pupils to demonstrate their sequences, which helps others to make good progress by improving their own performance. In year 2, the pupils continue to make good progress in the development of physical skills. Most of them show good hand and eye coordination for their age. When throwing, bouncing and catching a ball many achieve a level of success that is better than is often seen from children of this age. This is because they are well taught by specialist football coaches who provide a broad and interesting range of activities that develop their wider games skills very well.

Overall, the teaching is good. Good attention is paid to ensuring safe practice, to warming-up in preparation for exercise and to warming down afterwards. The teachers use questions effectively to promote the pupils' thinking in dance. The football coaches manage the pupils' enthusiasm and behaviour very effectively. As a result they work and respond very well. The coaches move the lessons along at speed so that the pupils develop their skills rapidly. This was evident, for instance, in the very well structured tasks that culminated in controlling a football on the thigh.

The teachers generally have a good understanding of the demands of the curriculum. They plan together to provide a structured programme of work, and as a result good standards in the subject are maintained. The facilities for physical education are good; the school has a large multipurpose hall, adequate space outside and a good range of apparatus.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The standards of the previous inspection have been maintained. Discussions with the co-ordinator and the pupils, along with a scrutiny of previous work, shows that attainment by the end of Year 2 is in line with the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The teachers' planning now meets all the requirements and the range of work in religious education is satisfactory. For example, better teaching and use of resources has enhanced the pupils' knowledge and understanding of other faiths and their beliefs. These are improvements since the last inspection.

The assemblies provide good opportunities for the spiritual development of all pupils. For example, in an assembly on the theme of 'Night', the pupils were carefully guided through the story of Galileo and how his discoveries were a source of wonder. On these occasions, the pupils explore the values and beliefs that influence their lives and are able to develop a sense of self-respect and a proper regard for others. In one excellent lesson, the pupils in Year 2 followed up their visit to the local church. A visitor, the churchwarden, was questioned very effectively by the pupils about the features they had looked at during their visit. They were interested, stimulated and motivated by his responses, which led to a very clear development in their knowledge and understanding of Christian symbols. A scrutiny of their previous work shows that they have an understanding of the beliefs of other faiths, such as Judaism, Sikhism and Islam. They are also aware of the main festivals of the Christian faith such as Easter and Christmas.

Overall, the teaching is satisfactory. The school has expanded its resources and these are now used satisfactorily to support the teaching and learning, particularly about the beliefs of other faiths. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The current leadership and management of the subject are good and there are good procedures for assessing attainment and progress.