

INSPECTION REPORT

MANOR OAK PRIMARY SCHOOL

St Mary Cray, Orpington

LEA area: Bromley

Unique reference number: 132063

Headteacher: Mrs Yvonne Marsh

Reporting inspector: Mr Peter Howlett
23744

Dates of inspection: 4th – 7th November 2002

Inspection number: 248889

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Sweep's Lane St Mary Cray Orpington Kent
Postcode:	BR5 3PE
Telephone number:	(01689) 828099
Fax number:	(01689) 825443
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Peter Newman

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23744	Peter Howlett	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9519	Sue Pritchard	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27426	Terry Aldridge	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Religious education Special educational needs	
3574	Kawaljit Singh	Team inspector	Foundation Stage History Geography Traveller children	
1506	Marianne Breedon	Team inspector	Science Music Physical education	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Ltd
7 Hill Street
Bristol
BS1 5RW

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Manor Oak opened in January 2000 under the government's initiative as the first Fresh Start Primary School in England with a new governing body and newly appointed headteacher and deputy headteacher. All the teaching staff were specially appointed to work in the school.

The school is situated in St Mary Cray, near Orpington, Kent. It is a smaller than average sized primary school with a nursery class, for boys and girls aged three to 11 years. Currently, there are 85 pupils attending full time from Reception to Year 6, and 10 children attending full time and 12 part time in the Nursery. Although there is some gender imbalance in some year groups, overall there is no significant difference in the numbers of boys and girls. There is also a specialist seven-place facility, that caters specifically for pupils aged between five and seven who are failing to thrive socially and emotionally in mainstream classes. Pupils are placed in the unit by the local education authority from within Manor Oak and other schools in the area. There are currently five pupils on roll, two of whom have statements of special educational need. The school serves one of the most disadvantaged areas in the country; nearly three quarters of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is very high in comparison to the national average. Pupils join the school with very low academic standards and a higher than average number of pupils has special educational needs for a variety of learning and behavioural difficulties. Most pupils attending the school are of white UK heritage. About 40 per cent of the pupils come from a Traveller background. Although most live in settled housing, many maintain the travelling tradition. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at other than the normal times of admission or transfer is high.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The headteacher, staff and governors have worked hard to make a success of the new school. Good teamwork under the very effective leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has helped the school progress well in these early years. The school has been successful in creating a harmonious community where pupils get along well and their behaviour is good. A strength of the school is its commitment to equal opportunities and to inclusion for all its pupils. It offers a sound education and good support to all pupils within a safe and secure learning environment. Although standards are low in comparison with the national picture, pupils of all abilities are making steady progress as a result of the good teaching. Standards are gradually rising, particularly in the Nursery, Reception and Years 1 and 2. Although pupils like school, the attendance of some pupils is poor. The school uses its budget prudently and gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The children in the Nursery and Reception get a very good start to their education because provision for them is very good, especially in the Nursery.
- The quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6 is good and sometimes very good which leads to purposeful learning in nearly all lessons.
- The very good leadership of the headteacher has a significant impact on the work of the school.
- The school supports the learning needs of all its pupils very well. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, pupils from a Travelling background are well supported and inclusion opportunities for pupils in the special educational needs unit are very good.
- The commitment and sense of purpose of all staff to the school's literacy programme, 'Success for All', is proving effective in raising pupils' achievements.
- The procedures for promoting good behaviour are strong and consistently applied, promoting pupils' good behaviour and relationships.
- The school fosters very positive views among parents so that they show increasing support for its work.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are improving but are still too low.
- Pupils are capable of achieving higher standards in information and communication technology.
- Teachers should plan more carefully what is taught in art and design, design and technology, religious education, geography and physical education, especially in Years 3 to 6.
- The poor attendance means that many pupils do not learn as much as they could.

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

STANDARDS

Results in the national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 are very low in comparison with both national and similar school averages. However, caution needs to be exercised in considering these results because the number of pupils in most year groups is quite small. National test results and inspection findings need also to be considered within the unique context of this school. The high proportion of pupils from a Traveller background has a significant impact on the school in terms of mobility, attendance and disruption to pupils' education. The attendance of a significant proportion of pupils is low and the evidence shows that those who attend school regularly make at least satisfactory progress.

Children achieve well in Reception and very well in the Nursery and most children reach the expected standards by the end of Reception in all areas of learning, except in their literacy skills. Standards are improving in Years 1 and 2 and pupils with good attendance achieve well. By the end of Year 2, pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are below average. Standards are broadly similar to those expected nationally in science, information and communication technology (ICT), history, geography, physical education, art and design and design and technology. Pupils make steady progress in Years 3 to 6 but standards are low. By the end of Year 6, pupils' literacy skills are very low, standards in numeracy, ICT and geography are well below average and standards in science, history, physical education, art and design and design and technology are below expected levels. In religious education, standards are below the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils with special educational needs and those from Traveller families are well supported by all staff and by additional specialised support. The organization of teaching groups by pupils' prior attainment in English and mathematics enables more able pupils to achieve well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are positive about school and have good attitudes to learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations and behave well in class. Behaviour is also good around the school and in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is satisfactory but they are ready to take on more responsibilities in school, including for their own learning. Relationships are very good. The school has been successful in creating a harmonious community where pupils irrespective of their cultural differences or attainment get along well.
Attendance	The attendance rate is very low in comparison with other primary schools. Some pupils' attendance is poor. Generally, pupils arrive promptly for school.

A significant number of pupils from all year groups are frequently absent and this is making it very hard for the school to raise standards.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very 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 school has been successful in creating a team of teachers and support staff that works well together and provides a positive and purposeful environment in which pupils' learning is well supported. Teachers have high expectations and manage pupils and activities very well so that their attitudes and behaviour are good. The teaching of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and science is good. Effective lesson planning ensures work is matched to pupils' learning needs and teachers' questioning checks pupils' understanding and extends their learning effectively. Teachers make good use of a range of resources to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. Time is used well and most lessons proceed at a brisk pace. The specialist staff for Travellers' children provide very good teaching. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is usually good, and sometimes very good, in English and mathematics. More able pupils are also well taught in these subjects and make good progress because the teachers' expectations are high and the work is challenging. Teachers' subject knowledge in ICT and design and technology could be improved and their expectations of how pupils' present their work are not high enough.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Provision is very good in the Nursery and Reception. In Years 1 to 6, strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are good. The curriculum for science is good. There are shortcomings in how the school plans in some subjects. Provision for extra-curricular activities, personal, social and health education and links with the local community are good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	These pupils receive well-planned support to meet their learning needs and this helps them to make good progress in English and mathematics.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	This aspect of the curriculum is good in terms of pupils' moral and social development and satisfactory for their spiritual development. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to understand and appreciate cultures and societies other than their own.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares well for its pupils and arrangements to ensure their welfare are good. Procedures that support pupils' personal development are very good as are procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and behaviour. Assessment information is used well in English and mathematics but less so in other subjects.

The school makes a concerted effort to involve parents in the life of the school and in their children's education. Increasingly, parents now come into the school as a result of initiatives such as the popular breakfast club and the range of courses organised by the school-based Parent Partnership Project.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff.	The headteacher provides very good leadership. She gives the school a clear sense of direction and her vision and high expectations are significant factors in promoting the positive ethos of the school. Teamwork is strong and the headteacher is well supported by her deputy and senior staff. The school is well managed and runs smoothly.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities.	The governing body plays a purposeful and effective role in shaping the direction of the school and fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. Governors are knowledgeable about the school and are fully involved in planning and in decision and policy-making.
The school's evaluation of its performance.	Monitoring of teaching is good. The school makes satisfactory use of results of tests to see where improvements can be made.
The strategic use of resources.	The school makes good use of its resources. Finances are managed well. The school ensures that its budget is spent prudently with clear links between planned expenditure and its educational priorities. The school takes sound measures to ensure it gets best value.

Staffing levels are very good. The school has been successful in recruiting good, experienced teachers. Learning support assistants make a useful contribution to pupils' learning, especially that of pupils with special educational needs. The school uses the specialist teaching support for pupils from a Travelling background provided by the local educational authority wisely and to the best advantage of its pupils. Accommodation and resources are good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like to come to school. • The behaviour of pupils in the school is good. • Teaching is good and children make good progress. • The school works closely with parents and staff are approachable. • The school expects their children to work hard, do their best and become mature and responsible. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school does not offer a sufficient range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection team agrees with the positive comments. It judges that the range of extra curricular activities offered is good for this sized primary school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Overall levels of attainment on entry to the Nursery class are well below those normally found nationally. The attainment of the majority of children on entry is well below average in most areas of learning. Children respond well to the well-structured programme of work and very good quality and range of opportunities for learning. They achieve very well and most children reach the expected standards by the end of Reception in all areas of learning, except in communication, language and literacy. Children with special educational needs receive well-planned support to meet their learning needs and this helps them to make very good progress. Children who come from Traveller families are very well supported by all staff and also receive additional specialised support. This enables them to develop the necessary language skills to gain access to the whole curriculum.
2. Caution needs to be exercised in considering the results in the national tests. The number of pupils in each year group is often quite small and the performance of a few pupils can have a significant bearing when results are compared with those of other schools. National test results and inspection findings need also to be considered within the unique context of this school. The school has a higher proportion of pupils from a Traveller background than any school in the country and this has a significant impact on the school in terms of mobility, attendance and disruption to pupils' education. Although most live in settled housing, many families maintain the travelling tradition and as a result pupil mobility is high with a large number of pupils moving in and out of the school other than at the normal times, some joining the school with no previous schooling. The attendance of a significant proportion of pupils is low. The evidence shows that those who attend school regularly make at least satisfactory progress. Many pupils come from deprived backgrounds and join the school with very low basic skills. Consequently, the school has a high percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs. These factors have a significant impact on overall standards. In addition, the school has had to address the legacy of past underachievement from before the Fresh Start initiative.
3. Results in the national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 are very low in comparison with both national and similar school averages. The percentage achieving the expected Level 4 in both 2000 and 2001 was very low and no pupil has achieved the higher Level 5 in any test in either year. The school failed to achieve its published targets in English and mathematics in 2001, but the cohort of pupils for whom the targets were set changed significantly as a result of high mobility. Results in the 2001 national tests in reading and mathematics at the end of Year 2¹ were higher than the previous year. However, they were still well below the national average, although in line with the average for similar schools. Results in writing were very low in comparison with both national and similar schools' averages. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 was very high in mathematics, well below average in reading and very low in writing. No pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in any test.
4. It is too early to establish trends over time as comparative results are available for only two years. However, standards are improving, particularly lower down the school, as a result of the measures taken to raise pupils' achievement. For example, all mainstream Year 2 pupils whose attendance was above 90 per cent achieved at least the expected Level 2 in all tests in 2002. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are low in Years 5 and 6. The schools' tracking systems shows that attainment by Year 6 is not likely to rise significantly until at least 2004 because pupils have not had a firm foundation in the past. In Years 1 and 2, the benefits from the very good nursery provision are evident and standards are relatively higher.

¹ The Year 2 results include those for Year 2 pupils in the special educational needs unit.

5. The achievement of pupils from a Traveller background is variable but it is often good as a result of the very good provision and teaching. Those children who join the school in the nursery and attend regularly make very good progress. Those pupils who join the school in Years 1 to 6, having little or no previous schooling, are well supported and often make good progress; their learning needs are assessed promptly and the additional provision is then targeted on those pupils with greatest need. Pupils are moved in and out of focus groups depending on their progress and results of ongoing assessments. However, those who do not attend the school regularly despite the very good additional support make less progress. One specialist support teacher targets children in the afternoon sessions whose attendance is poor. This helps some pupils to catch up with their work missed due to absence. However, the irregular attendance of others results in unsatisfactory progress. The school's good procedures clearly show the links between progress and attainment to attendance. Analysis of performance data indicates that the attainment of Travellers' children is lower than their peers. In turn, this has a significant impact on overall standards. For example, in the current Year 6 cohort of four pupils, three are from a Travelling background and their standards are well below national averages in most subjects.
6. The learning of pupils with special educational needs is good as they receive good support. Most make good and sometimes very good progress against their identified needs especially in English, mathematics and behaviour. The grouping of pupils into ability sets for English and mathematics enables both lower and higher attaining pupils to achieve well, although in science, there is insufficient planning at times to extend more able pupils. Analysis of performance in national tests by gender is not useful because of the small number of pupils involved. During the inspection, no significant differences in the relative performances of boys and girls were noted.
7. Provision for English is good and the school is working hard to address unsatisfactory achievement in the past through its structured and intensive literacy programme, 'Success for All' (SFA). However, it is recognized that it will take time for the impact of this programme on standards to become noticeable, particularly with the older pupils. Pupils are making faster progress in speaking and listening, reading comprehension and spelling than in writing. Opportunities for writing do not feature strongly in other subjects and ICT is not used effectively to support pupils' writing skills.
8. Pupils' literacy skills are below average at the end of Year 2 and very low at the end of Year 6. Standards in listening are close to those typically found nationally, but speaking skills are less well developed and are below average by Year 2 and well below by Year 6. Most pupils listen well to their teachers and others and are keen to contribute to the many opportunities for discussions, although many have a limited range of words to convey their thoughts. In reading, most pupils in Years 1 and 2 show interest and achieve well in lessons but standards are below average because starting points are low. Pupils' reading skills are low by Year 6. Although the school has introduced regular reading not all pupils read regularly enough, or remember to take books home. The school is aware of the need to develop the use of and improve the quality and quantity of books to enable pupils to develop their library and reference skills and independent research work. Standards in writing, spelling and grammar are well below average by the end of Year 2 and are very low by the end of Year 6. Handwriting and presentation skills are below expectations across the school. Most Year 2 pupils can only write simple sentences and instructions with support from their teachers. However, most infant pupils are achieving at least soundly from low standards on entry. Older pupils do not write at length and the quality of writing is hampered by a lack of vocabulary.
9. Standards in numeracy are below expected levels at the end of Year 2 and well below at the end of Year 6. There is a steady if gradual improvement in standards as pupils enter Year 1 with the benefit of the very good nursery provision. In the current Year 2, most pupils are likely to reach expected levels in their number work and some are in line to exceed these by the end of the year. Pupils' skills at mental recall are below those typically found nationally and they are not good at explaining the strategies they use. In Years 3 to 6, the proportions of pupils in each year group achieving below expected levels is larger than those typically found nationally and there is very little evidence of pupils achieving above expected levels. The higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieve standards in line with expected levels. However, many pupils struggle with basic

number operations. Standards in other aspects of mathematics are often well below expectations. For example, standards in data-handling and graphical representation are low.

10. Standards in science are broadly in line with expected levels at the end of Year 2 but are well below average at the end of Year 6. Standards are improving from a very low level. As yet, pupils at the end of both Years 2 and 6 are not reaching higher levels in science. Standards in ICT are well below expected levels in Year 2 and very low in comparison with those typically found nationally in Year 6. Standards are improving gradually but are not helped by pupils' limited access to computers outside school and some teachers' lack of subject knowledge.
11. Since the school's opening, the main emphasis has been on raising standards in literacy, numeracy and science. In the last year, ICT has become a major focus helped by the opening of a computer suite. First concerted efforts to raise pupils' achievement in other subjects have started with the appointment of a specialist music teacher. Pupils are making satisfactory progress and standards in music are at expected levels by Year 2 but below those expected by Year 6.
12. In most other subjects, more work needs to be done on planning to improve the quality and range of learning opportunities and to ensure that skills are taught in a way that gets progressively harder. Standards are generally higher in Years 1 and 2 than in Years 3 to 6. Standards are broadly similar to those expected nationally by Year 2 in history, geography, physical education, art and design and design and technology. Standards are below expectations in these subjects by Year 6, except in geography where they are well below. In religious education, standards are below the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus by the end of Years 2 and 6.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. The pupils are confident and outgoing. They are lively, bubbly individuals who respond positively to the calm and considerate atmosphere created in school. In so doing, they behave well and work hard. Their attitudes to learning sometimes vary according to the tasks they are given, but overall they are good. However, despite the concerted efforts of the school the attendance of some pupils is poor. In the year before the inspection, the overall rate was very low in comparison with other primary schools. A significant number of pupils from all year groups are frequently absent and this adversely affects their achievements.
14. Pupils' attitudes to work are good. They are well motivated by the good quality teaching and enjoy taking part in the well-planned and interesting lessons that challenge their capabilities. Pupils enter into friendly conversation spontaneously and find much about themselves and their school to be proud of. Most pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude to school and are usually interested and enthusiastic in their lessons. They are fully involved and included in the full range of activities that the school provides and their independence and self-esteem is developed well. Children in the nursery class quickly adjust to the daily routines and procedures in school and enter wholeheartedly into their lessons and the activities. The SFA signals teachers use to focus pupils' attention are consistently used in all subjects of the curriculum. This has a beneficial effect on pupils' attitudes to learning and the progress they make over time. The good attitudes and behaviour of these young children create a very effective start to their education.
15. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Their capacity for independence and initiative is encouraged through lesson and lunchtime activities and educational visits. Some pupils are able to develop their personal study skills by organising their free time to complete the homework activities they are set. All respond well to the efforts teachers make to hold their interest in discussions and to promote their thinking skills. Through the recent elections for the school council and their discussions held at it, pupils are developing a sound understanding of citizenship. These experiences result in pupils knowing the right thing to do and learning the correct way to resolve difficulties. Pupils are ready to take on more responsibilities in school, particularly in the area of personal research and study skills.

16. The standard of pupils' behaviour is good. Most arguments in school are short-lived, soon forgotten and sorted out between the pupils themselves. This is borne out by the fact that there was no evidence of bullying in school during the week of the inspection, neither was there evidence of any tension amongst different individuals or groups. Pupils are happy to help each other if they see someone injured or unwell. Although three pupils were excluded temporarily in the year before the inspection, the school has not found it necessary to resort to permanent exclusions. Pupils respond well to the expectation that they should act responsibly in school and be trustworthy. This is apparent in the way they hold open a door or offer a chair for a visitor. Pupils behave in a mature way for their age and contribute to making the school a friendly and welcoming place. The behaviour of pupils from a Travelling background is not significantly different from that of other pupils.
17. Pupils form very good relationships in school. There are frequent instances in lessons where supportive and constructive relationships allow pupils to work at their own level without fear of failure. Pupils feel secure and able to speak out, knowing that they will be listened to, treated seriously and not feel foolish if their answer is wrong. An example of this was seen in very well taught numeracy lesson where pupils in Years 4 and 5 with varying levels of ability were keen to share, clarify and test their knowledge of consecutive numbers with the teacher and their class. They co-operate well together. Their good attitudes and behaviour owes much to the very good relationships in school and the way teachers support and manage pupils, including those who are frequently absent.
18. The school has been successful in creating a harmonious community where pupils, irrespective of their cultural differences or attainment, get along well. These very good relationships do much to enhance the learning opportunities of all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are equally co-operative and work well in their class groups, where they receive good support. These pupils identified with behavioural problems are well supported and their behaviour is usually good. Teachers' positive acceptance of the diversity of Travellers' children's culture adds significantly to pupils' ease. They become willing participants in lessons and are keen to express their ideas. Travellers' children are very well integrated in the school life and are well cared for by the school. Mutual respect and tolerance of others' feelings, values and beliefs, underpin the good relationships within the school.
19. Pupils' attendance is poor with both the authorised and unauthorised absence rate being high. Too many families do not let the school know soon enough when their child is absent. Attendance procedures are strictly applied and the school works closely with the Parent Partnership Project to identify, support and persuade parents about the benefit of children attending school regularly and continuously. Parents know that the school promptly follows up non-attendance. Because they are keen to learn and to be in school, pupils aspire to receiving the certificates and rewards that recognise and celebrate long periods of regular attendance. Most pupils arrive promptly for school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching and learning is good with some very good features. As a Fresh Start school, all the teaching staff were specially appointed to work in the school. A priority for the school has been the recruitment and retention of experienced teachers capable of meeting the complex learning needs of the pupils. The school has been successful in creating a team of teachers and support staff that works well together and provides a structured and positive environment in which pupils' learning is well supported.
21. During the inspection, 56 lessons or parts of lessons were seen. Four out of every five lessons were at least good; over a quarter were very good and there was one excellent lesson. Although there were some shortcomings in some lessons, there was only one unsatisfactory lesson seen. The proportion of good and very good lessons is highest in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, where the proportion of good or better lessons rises to over nine-tenths. Teaching is also strong in the Year 5/6 class. Teaching of English, mathematics and science is good across the school.

There is some good teaching in history, geography and physical education. Music is taught well by a specialist teacher. Teaching of design and technology, religious education and information and communication technology is satisfactory. No art and design lessons were seen.

22. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is very good overall. In the Nursery, teaching is consistently very good and, as a result, the children make very good progress in all areas of learning. Teachers and their assistants plan very effectively using national guidance, and place appropriately strong emphasis on ways to improve the children's personal, social and emotional, communication, language and literacy and mathematical skills. They have a very good grasp of how children learn through play, and provide an imaginative range of activities, with clear intentions that match well the children's level of attainment and skill. All resources are used very effectively to promote learning. There is a good balance of staff-directed and self-chosen activities. Teachers' expectations of behaviour are high and this leads to all children being purposefully involved in a calm and quiet learning atmosphere. There is a very good understanding of the needs of children who come from Traveller families. Teachers use appropriate methods, such as visual materials, modelling language and asking children to repeat words and phrases. They use praise effectively to motivate the children.
23. All staff work conscientiously and well together. The strong features of teaching throughout Years 1 to 6 include the teaching of basic skills, particularly in English, mathematics and science, very good use of support staff and effective lesson planning that ensures work is well matched to pupils' learning needs, particularly in English and mathematics. Teachers have high expectations and manage pupils and activities very well so that behaviour is good and often very good. Other strengths in teaching are the positive, caring relationships and consideration shown to all pupils and inclusion. Most lessons proceed at a brisk pace that keeps pupils interested and motivated. Teachers question effectively, both to check pupils' understanding and to extend their learning. For example, in science lessons, questions are inclusive of all pupils and challenge them to think, discuss and test their predictions through their practical work. Teachers use very good praise and encouragement and quietly and discreetly correct pupils' answers and lead them to next steps in learning. Teachers give pupils good opportunities for discussion that promote their personal and social development well. They make good use of a range of resources to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example, in a good Year 1 geography lesson, the teacher's very effective use of a multi-media presentation on local geographical features held pupils' attention and stimulated their discussions.
24. The quality of teachers' marking is broadly satisfactory but often does not indicate to pupils how they might improve. Teachers' expectations on the presentation of work are not high enough. In some subjects, shortcomings in quality of learning generally relate to some lack of confidence and subject knowledge amongst staff. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of how to teach ICT skills need to improve and they make insufficient use of ICT to support pupils' learning in other subjects. In art and design, design and technology and religious education, lesson planning does not always clearly indicate what pupils are expected to do and learn. Where teaching in physical education is unsatisfactory, the teacher's lack of subject knowledge results in pupils not receiving sufficient guidance on how to improve the quality of their work.
25. Teaching of literacy skills is good across the school and pupils achieve well because of good teaching. Teachers and support assistants have a very good understanding of the SFA teaching programme which the school uses as an effective alternative to the National Literacy Strategy to teach basic literacy skills. Lessons are planned well to provide good quality focused teaching and teachers use the SFA materials very well. Good questioning is a key feature of the most successful lessons. In all literacy sessions, very good opportunities are provided for pupils to talk about what they are doing and learning and co-operate with others. Across the school, very good use is made of the materials and resources such as reading materials, phonic materials, word lists and white boards to stimulate learning. However, teachers do not sufficiently develop the use of literacy skills effectively across the whole curriculum.
26. The teaching and learning of numeracy skills is good. The structure of lessons follows the suggestions included in the numeracy strategy. Good organisation and management of activities

keep pupils on task throughout lessons. There is a good emphasis on the teaching of number skills. Teachers' clear explanations, instructions and demonstrations help most pupils to achieve well in developing their understanding of number and their competence with number computations. Support staff are well briefed before lessons and, in most lessons, are used well to support groups of pupils. However, in some lessons there is insufficient focus on the development of quick mental calculations and teachers do not sufficiently develop numeracy skills effectively in other subjects.

27. A strong feature of the teaching is how the school caters for the different learning needs of its pupils. The organization of teaching groups by pupils' prior attainment in English and mathematics is proving a successful approach. Teachers' positive acceptance of the diversity of Travellers' children's culture adds significantly to pupils' ease. They become willing participants in lessons and are keen to express their ideas. The specialist staff work closely with class teachers. They plan together and share taking lessons. This sharing provides good training for other staff. All staff work hard to make new arrivals feel welcome in the school. The specialist staff have provided in-service training for all staff and as a result, all adults are aware of their cultural sensitivities such as on sex education and the use of key vocabulary.
28. The specialist staff provide very good teaching and most class teachers provide good teaching for travellers' children. The support staff works closely with class teachers and help pupils within classes. They employ successful strategies such as the repetition of key vocabulary, modelling of correct answers and the presentation of strong visual content and clues to support pupils' learning. For example, in one English lesson the teacher drew a picture of a duck and gave very good clues as to how to remember the spellings of the words 'could', 'would' and 'should' by memorising o, u, l and d as 'o, you, lonely duck'. Most teachers check pupils' understanding of vocabulary before deciding which teaching points to reinforce and before pupils are asked to start their independent tasks. They have very good management of behaviour that leads pupils to concentrate and listen and complete tasks successfully. Ability grouping of pupils in English supports Travellers' children very well.
29. Teaching for pupils identified as having special educational needs is usually good and sometimes very good, in English and mathematics. However, in some subjects, pupils do not always receive teaching closely matched to their learning needs, usually undertaking the same tasks as others in the class. Support from learning support assistants is good and they are fully aware of pupils' needs and targets. Regular termly reviews and assessments take place so that pupils' needs are regularly updated. Targets are usually detailed, specific and manageable. Good attention is given to motivating, rewarding and praising pupils and building their self-esteem. As a result, pupils usually remain fully involved in lessons and try hard, despite their difficulties. Pupils are fully included and integrated into all school activities. However, insufficient use is made of ICT to support them in their learning.

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

30. The curriculum for children in Nursery and Reception is very good and this gives them a very good start in their education. The school follows the nationally recommended Foundation Stage curriculum. Teachers and support assistants plan very effectively using national guidance and place appropriately strong emphasis on ways to improve children's personal, social and emotional, communication, language and literacy and mathematical skills. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2 but there are some shortcomings in the quality and range of learning opportunities in Years 3 to 6. The curriculum is broad and all National Curriculum subjects and religious education are addressed, but not all yet in sufficient depth to raise standards across the curriculum.
31. The school has rightly prioritised curriculum development on improving standards in basic skills. It places justifiable emphasis upon improving literacy and numeracy skills to meet the needs of the many pupils who enter the school with a narrow range of experiences and limited skills. The

school has not adopted the National Literacy Strategy but instead has successfully introduced a literacy programme called 'Success For All' (SFA). This programme is a significant commitment by the school in terms of staffing, cost and time. Lessons last up to 90 minutes daily and pupils are grouped in nine small teaching ability sets across the school, based on carefully made assessments of pupils' reading comprehension skills. This very structured and intensive programme is fully implemented across the school and staff show commendable commitment to its success. SFA focuses on improving pupils' literacy skills, particularly in speaking and listening and reading. Improvements in standards are gradually being achieved through this programme and its rigorous assessment processes. Pupils' social skills are also being enhanced through paired and group work, which is an essential element of SFA. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities for writing in other subjects, for example, there is little evidence of extended pieces of writing in history, geography, science and religious education.

32. The development of numeracy skills is given high priority. Following the success of the arrangements for grouping pupils in literacy, the school has reorganised the teaching of numeracy in Years 3 to 6 into four teaching groups based on pupils' prior levels of attainment. This is proving effective in raising pupils' achievement. The National Numeracy Strategy has been effectively implemented.
33. The quality of provision in other subjects is variable. In science, pupils have good opportunities to develop their enquiry and investigative skills. The school has worked hard to improve provision for ICT. Although the school uses the national recommended guidance, it needs to provide guidance to teachers on planning lessons as ICT is not used sufficiently to support pupils' learning in other subjects. Pupils have limited experience of data handling, desktop publishing and control technology. The quality and range of learning experiences in art and design and design and technology are unsatisfactory; the time allowance for both subjects is well below that typically found nationally and is insufficient. Planning for all foundation subjects are based on national guidance and subject coordinators provide teachers with half-termly plans from which teachers plan lessons. However, planning guidance does not sufficiently inform teachers of what pupils should be learning next. More work needs to be done on planning to adapt national guidance to meet pupils' learning needs to ensure that skills are taught in a way that gets progressively harder. For example, standards in geography are poor at the end of Year 6 and the teaching of gymnastics does not sufficiently move pupils on.
34. A strength of the school is its approach to inclusion and its success in meeting the needs of its pupils. Overall, equality of access and opportunity in relation to the curriculum for all pupils is very good. Individual pupils' needs are considered carefully and strategies for meeting them are well developed. Pupils with special educational needs and those from Traveller backgrounds receive effective additional support, which is planned in partnership with class teachers. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good in literacy and numeracy lessons where they are taught in ability groups. The school complies with the recommended Code of Practice and devises good programmes of support to meet pupils' learning needs. The special educational needs policy has been successfully reviewed to incorporate the recommendations of the new code of practice. The provision that the school makes for Travellers' children is very good. Travellers' children receive a broad and balanced curriculum and most take part in all school activities. The school has a very supportive learning environment and ensures suitable opportunities for all pupils. Boys and girls participate equally in all areas of the curriculum and there are no significant differences in their standards of attainment. The school has not identified any gifted and talented pupils and there are no pupils who are learning English as an additional language.
35. Provision for personal, social and health education is good and is developed across the curriculum and in assemblies. Personal and social skills are furthered through pupils working collaboratively, in pairs and groups, through active listening and respect for others' points of view, particularly through SFA. The personal and social programme follows the national guidance and pupils have a regular weekly circle time². Skills of speaking and listening to others are promoted well in these

² Opportunities, when pupils sit in a circle, to discuss issues that concern them.

sessions. The school nurse supports work in science in Years 1 and 2 on safety with medicines and the 'Life Bus' visits the school to ensure pupils are aware of the problems for individuals and the community of the misuse of drugs. A clear decision by the governors not to teach sex education at present has been taken in deference to the views of the Traveller families.

36. The range of extra-curricular opportunities is good. There is a well-attended free breakfast club, which is encouraging punctuality and better attendance. Craft, cooking and sporting activities take place at lunchtimes and at specific times of the year there are preparations for productions. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in competitive sport both within school and against other schools, in the small schools competitions. These activities extend the pupils' learning and bring further interest to the curriculum and enjoyment of school.
37. Links with the local community are good. The school is part of the Crays Action Group. Through this, the school is involved in an environmental project, which draws both the Fire Service and the Police into the school. This is extending pupils' knowledge of how they can contribute to caring for their environment. There are strong links with the Small Schools Cluster group and this provides opportunities for pupils to meet a wider circle of peers and enjoy sports, music and field trips together. The Manor Oak Children's Project offers classes for parents in basic skills, ICT, the Internet, First Aid, parenting skills and help with letter writing. This is encouraging more and more parents to come into school and the main focus is to improve their literacy skills.
38. The provision made for pupils' moral and social development is good. Satisfactory provision is made for their spiritual development. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to understand and appreciate cultures and societies other than their own. This aspect of their development is unsatisfactory.
39. Spirituality is evident through the school's ethos in which all pupils are valued and encouraged to value each other. Religious education lessons contribute to the development of pupils' spiritual education through activities such as visits to the local church. Time is set aside in assemblies for prayer and for pupils to reflect on what is good about their lives and the communities they live in. Opportunities are created in class discussions for pupils to consider the special, joyful moments in their lives such as a birthday celebration or a special friendship. Although satisfactory provision is made for pupils to develop an expressive and creative aspect in their work, more could be done to enhance these tendencies, particularly through art and music.
40. The provision for the pupils' moral development is good. Assemblies contain a blend of moral and social themes and allow pupils a worthy insight into their personal existence and the duties they have towards others. Pupils abide by a clear code of conduct and teachers are very good role models. The approach to moral questions is very positive. If a pupil has done wrong, the emphasis is upon forgiveness and upon providing support so that she or he can do better in the future. Traditional family values form the anchor for the school's policy on personal, social and health education. Opportunities for pupils to take part in sporting activities support their understanding of the need for rules and fair play. All pupils show responsibility in the way in which they clear up spontaneously after lessons and behave when out representing the school.
41. The provision for pupils' social development is good. Adults value each child and work effectively in developing self-esteem and social awareness. The school's philosophy on working collaboratively with a partner helps pupils realise the benefit of listening and learning from each other. Pupils develop a sense of social justice by raising funds for those less fortunate than themselves. Good use is made of circle time and the school council to help pupils respond appropriately to the differing views within a group.
42. Specific pastoral strategies support pupils' own cultural heritage well by acknowledging their needs and actively promoting positive messages and a better understanding of the cultural traditions of the Traveller community. The school is successful in providing a curriculum that reflects a positive attitude towards their culture. The staff took part in the week of celebrating music, dance and storytelling from Travellers' traditions and display of photographs of the area that is historically a Travellers' site. However, there are little opportunities to develop pupils'

knowledge and understanding of the multicultural traditions of Britain through the curriculum. Visits to a pantomime and a church, participation in school concerts and harvest festivals offer pupils a mere glimpse into the cultural richness of the world in which they live. This is unsatisfactory. There is a whole range of opportunities yet to be explored, particularly through art, music and the use of information and communication technology, where pupils could learn more about life, history and culture in societies and communities other than their own.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. Overall, the school cares well for its pupils. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour in school and for supporting the pupils' personal development are very good. The school works very hard to promote good attendance and, although clearly there is still some way to go, the signs are that parents are becoming more aware of the need to have their children in school each day.
44. Procedures to ensure pupils' welfare are good. The school has good procedures for child protection. All staff, including the midday supervisors, are mindful of the need to listen carefully to what pupils say and to be alert to any indication of neglect or abuse. To this end, the school relies heavily on informal procedures, commonsense and the open and trusting relationships between staff, parents and pupils. What is not always made clear to staff is that they must always contact the designated teacher in the very first instance should they uncover concerns of a child protection nature. There are good procedures in place to eliminate potential risks to the safety and wellbeing of all who use the premises. The headteacher, governors and caretaker duly discuss and prioritise for action the work identified by their routine assessments of any health and safety risks. Teachers are careful to ensure safety in lessons. Procedures for administering first aid are good with two members of staff fully trained. Well-known and practised procedures alert the first aiders to any emergency that requires their expertise. Good links with the school nurse help staff meet the needs of pupils with specific medical conditions. Staff closely monitor sick and injured pupils for any signs of distress and make every effort to contact the parents should there be any concerns. Procedures to meet additional needs such as physical access are satisfactory.
45. The school is very successful in managing the crucial period of transition from home to school. All staff make it a priority to settle children well, beginning with the successful pre-school meetings between teachers and parents. Teachers place a strong emphasis on furthering children's personal and social skills and integrating them into the rigours and routines of school life. By the time, children leave the Reception class they are secure and confident in their approach to school. Parents confirm their children like school and cannot wait to get there. The successful breakfast club has the additional benefit of encouraging pupils to come into school before lessons start.
46. Procedures that support pupils' personal development are very good. Parents are very comfortable about discussing their children's development with teachers, which helps the school acquire an informed view of a family's personal circumstances. Teachers make appropriate use of the information gathered to enter into a supportive dialogue with the pupils themselves and with the parents about their child's personal progress. A programme related to personal, social and health education includes aspects of citizenship, healthy living and the dangers of drug abuse, with good support from the school nurse and health and welfare agencies. These lessons are used effectively to support pupils' personal development, their understanding of relationships and awareness of other people's feelings.
47. Very good systems are in place to promote positive behaviour and to eliminate any incidents of bullying or racism. The effectiveness of these systems is reflected in the climate of courteous and respectful behaviour established in school, supportive of family and community values. It comes as second nature for pupils to work as a team either in pairs or small groups. Everyone involved with the school expects the very best of the pupils and this is a key factor in the quality of support the pupils receive. Staff apply the rules of conduct consistently to discover and to eliminate any persistent misbehaviour, bullying or racial incidents. The school follows up all discovered and reported incidents by counselling the victim and working with the perpetrator and his/her parents.

The headteacher sets a positive example to the rest of the staff in promoting high standards of behaviour. She is often around the school talking to pupils about their day and encouraging honesty, good relationships and friendly conduct. Midday supervisors provide a consistent approach to discipline outside the classroom. As a result, pupils are confident that they can turn to any member of staff should ever they feel anxious, unhappy or unsettled. The firmly established system of merits and awards operates successfully throughout the school and continues to act as an incentive for pupils to behave well. The school celebrates success at all levels. All these procedures combine to promote the good standard of behaviour seen in school.

48. The very good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are strictly enforced and are beginning to make parents think twice before taking their child out of school for reasons that cannot be authorised. The school keeps a close watch on trends and variations in the attendance patterns of individual pupils in order to provide data that will trigger additional support. Much thought has gone into a range of rewards and systems to appeal to the pupils and encourage them to attend school more often. Registers are marked with care and strictly in accordance with statutory requirements.
49. Procedures to monitor and assess children's progress are good in both the Nursery and the Reception classes and are well established as a part of planning. The children's progress is tracked through observations on focused activities that are recorded in each child's record book. Ongoing evaluation and assessment are used very well to inform planning.
50. The overall quality of assessment in English and mathematics is rigorous and is effective in contributing to the improving standards. The school utilises a good range of formal assessment procedures in literacy and numeracy. These provide much valuable information relating to the overall performance of the school and the progress made by individuals. The assessments in the literacy programme (SFA) are rigorous and frequent. The information gained demonstrates clearly how well pupils are achieving and the progress they are making over time. This information enables teachers to pinpoint what children know, understand and can do. Work is then accurately targeted for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those from Traveller backgrounds. Assessment in mathematics is thorough, testing pupils' knowledge and understanding half termly. In science, assessment practices are at an early stage, but the procedures recently put in place are appropriate and should enable teachers to use the results to plan work to match the needs of all pupils. Assessment in ICT and the foundation subjects, with the exception of music, is not in place and this is an area for future development. Music assessment is well linked to the requirements of the National Curriculum; the specialist music teacher uses this assessment information to plan her lessons effectively to support pupils' learning and achievement.
51. Generally, lesson objectives are clearly identified in teachers' planning and shared with the pupils. Through good questioning, teachers evaluate whether pupils have met the objectives and this information influences what is taught next. In literacy, numeracy and science each pupil has targets in order to suggest ways in which they can reach high standards. These are providing a focus for pupils' efforts and they are contributing to improving standards. Most pupils have clear specific targets which are manageable and achievable. However, there is little reference to these in teachers' lesson planning and few pupils are aware of their own targets.
52. Assessment and support arrangements for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils from a Travelling background are good. There is early identification of those pupils with learning difficulties. There are regular assessments of progress and information from assessments are used to provide suitable support and to track their progress. All pupils identified as having special educational needs have individual education plans with manageable targets, which are written by the special needs co-coordinator in consultation with teachers, support assistants and parents. These targets are usually specific and attainable. However, little direct reference is made to them in teachers' lesson planning. Support staff are aware of pupils' targets and are fully involved and consulted at the review stage. Annual review procedures for those pupils with statements are good. The school has very good procedures to monitor attendance and track the progress of travellers' children. The school is analysing the links between poor attendance and limited

progress. This information will provide a further tool to improve attendance. The current analysis indicates that the attainment of Travellers' children is lower than their peers because of high mobility, rates of absence and pupils joining the school with no previous schooling. External support, such as the educational psychologist, speech and language specialists, medical services and behavioural support services are used effectively when necessary.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. The school's partnership with parents promotes effective links between home and school. Parents find the school approachable and very easy to work with and as a result are beginning to feel more comfortable about contributing to their children's learning in and out of school. The quality of information available to parents is good, particularly that given on a one-to-one basis. The school has had a limited amount of success in helping parents realise the benefit of sending their children to school more regularly.
54. The majority of parents responding to the questionnaire and all those spoken to during the course of the inspection were very positive about the school and its work. Parents have a very good view of the school and what it provides for their children. They are particularly pleased with the quality of teaching; the way the school deals with their questions or problems and the expectations teachers have for children to work hard and achieve. However, a significant number of parents feel that the school could offer pupils a wider range of activities out of school. The inspection evidence supports their positive views but finds the range of extra curricular activities appropriate for this school.
55. The overall quality of the information available to parents is good. The school finds a number of ways to keep parents informed about its events and activities, primarily through one-to-one contact but also through posters, flyers, newsletters and frequent verbal reminders. Parents have no qualms about approaching teachers and are happy to come in and discuss the progress of their children. They are helped in this respect by staff who make themselves available to parents before and after school and at the popular breakfast club. An increasing number of parents are taking up the opportunities the parent/teacher consultation evenings provide to discuss any factors that may be limiting their children's progress. Parents of pupils with special educational needs have additional opportunities to work in partnership with the school and to understand the individual steps their children need to take to help them progress. Parents of children in the Nursery and Reception classes are well informed about their children's progress and attainment through the termly meetings and the end of year reports.
56. The school has implemented effective procedures to liaise with Traveller families. All Traveller children attend the Breakfast club and this provides good opportunities for parents to talk to the staff about their children's progress and other school matters. Staff are very aware of the needs of these parents and have built up good relationships with them; as a result, parents feel confident to ask staff for help. Staff talk to parents about curriculum issues and how they can support their children rather than give them written documents. The Traveller Service staff have been successful in influencing the families to continue their children's education by sending them to the secondary schools. All five children who were in Year 6 last year are currently in secondary schools. However, most families when they move away temporarily do not inform the school, therefore, the distance learning packs that are available have not yet been used in the school.
57. Procedures for parents to be involved in the identification, assessment and review of those pupils with special educational needs is good. They are invited to be involved in the target setting process and review procedures during parent-teacher consultations and at other times when necessary. All targets are sent to parents or carers but the school needs to develop procedures to acknowledge that these have been received.
58. The end-of-year reports provide a good indicator to parents of their children's progress over the year. The language and style of reporting is clear and easily understood. The section on the pupil's personal progress is good and helps clarify any mismatch of perception between home and school. However, the reports on their own do not make it clear to parents as to what their child

needs to do to improve or what parents could do to help their child make better progress. There is, for example, little mention in the summarised sections as to how pupils' attendance has affected their progress.

59. Governors are keen to promote the school and its successes but their annual report, although in the main complying with statutory requirements, omits to include information on what the governors are doing to improve access for the disabled. The prospectus, despite omitting the address of the school, provides parents with a good introduction to the school's aims, expectations and teaching methods and is a good reference point on school procedures.
60. Parents are keen to see their children do well and want them to do their best. The school is pleased with the support it receives from all parents in its efforts to maintain good discipline. As a result, pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to work are good. Increasingly, parents now come into the school, seeking advice or as willing and active participants in a range of courses organised by the school-based Parent Partnership Project. The activities draw in a number of adults and young parents of pre-school children and serve effectively to reinforce and raise the profile of the school in the local community. Staff always welcome those who wish to see for themselves what the school can offer their child.
61. The school is pleased with the support it gets from parents on occasions that directly involve their children such as assemblies, concerts and consultation evenings. Some, but by no means all, parents involve themselves with their children's learning by encouraging counting, reading and independent research at home. The dedication of parents towards their children's success is evident in the way parents work with the staff, listen to the teachers and begin to realise their own potential within the nurturing culture of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

62. The school is well led and managed. The headteacher offers very good leadership to the school community and she is well supported by enthusiastic and committed staff and by an effective governing body. Parents have full confidence in the headteacher and believe the school to be well managed. The headteacher provides the school with a very clear sense of direction: her vision, high expectations and professional insight give a positive sense of purpose to the life of the school. She led the school community effectively in establishing the new school under the government's Fresh Start initiative and with staff and governors has worked hard to make a success of the new school. Good teamwork, under the very effective leadership of the headteacher, has helped the school progress well in these first years.
63. The leadership of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher has a strong impact on the educational work of the school and is a significant factor in promoting a good sense of teamwork and commitment to improving standards. For example, the commitment of the school to ensuring the success of its literacy programme in raising pupils' achievement is commendable. The school has clear aims and values, which are consistently reflected in its policies and practice. For example, the school's expectations of behaviour are consistently communicated and implemented by all adults in the school. The enthusiasm and hard work of the teaching and support staff create a good climate for learning. This positive ethos is also reflected in the good relationships between the school, governors and the community and the commitment to inclusion and to the welfare of all pupils. All staff work hard to provide and create positive expectations of pupils' behaviour and self-esteem and to promote pupils' personal, social and academic development.
64. The management of the school is good. Good procedures ensure the smooth running of the school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are ably supported by senior staff. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator provides very good leadership and manages the provision in the Nursery and Reception very well. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and support for these pupils is well co-ordinated. The special needs co-ordinator provides good leadership and effective management with appropriate non-teaching time to manage

and monitor provision and provides good support to staff. She is knowledgeable and conscientious with a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve provision, outlined in a clear action plan. The management of the support provided by the local education authority for Travellers' children is good and is very effectively co-ordinated within the school. Management of the curriculum is good. Given the limited number of teaching staff, there are appropriate levels of delegation. The management of English, mathematics, science and ICT is effective. Co-ordinators for these subjects lead developments well. However, some staff have responsibility for more than one subject area and opportunities to enable co-ordinators to make an effective contribution in all subjects are not sufficiently developed. Opportunities for co-ordinators in the foundation subjects and religious education to initiate improvements are developing.

65. Staffing levels are very good. The school has a very favourable pupil to teacher ratio. The recruitment and retention of good, experienced teachers has rightly been a school priority. It has been successful in this and it has sufficient suitably qualified teachers to teach the full curriculum and meet the diverse learning needs of its pupils. There are sufficient well trained learning support assistants to cater for the number of pupils with special educational needs. Learning support assistants make a useful contribution to pupils' learning, especially that of pupils with special educational needs. They are used especially well to support literacy and numeracy and are fully involved in the consultation and review process of individual education plans. Specialist teaching support for pupils from a Travelling background from the local educational authority is increased and decreased according to the number of pupils in the school. The school uses this service wisely and to the best advantage of its pupils. In addition, there is a learning support assistant to help Traveller children in the nursery. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are managed effectively by the deputy headteacher and are based appropriately upon balancing individual needs with school priorities. Procedures for the appraisal of staff are good and the school has introduced the new performance management arrangements well. The school has appropriate induction arrangements to meet the needs of new staff joining the school.
66. Governors are effective in fulfilling their statutory duties. Although there has not been a full complement of governors until recently, a core of very active and committed governors have been keen to ensure the effectiveness of their work and the success of the Fresh Start initiative. They are appropriately involved in the strategic planning through their input into the school achievement plan. Governors have a number of strategies for finding out about the work of the school, including visits to classes, reports from subject co-ordinators and a named governor linked to each key area of the curriculum. They are kept well informed. Governors discharge their responsibilities for special educational needs appropriately. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs liaises regularly with the special needs co-ordinator and there is a termly report to the governors on special educational needs. Although, the governing body has developed a clear structure of committees with defined terms of reference, most governors prefer to work through full governing body meetings. Governors need to consider if this remains the most effective way of conducting its business.
67. Management of the school's finances is good. The school manages its budget prudently and makes efficient use of its financial resources. The school's budget has a higher than recommended contingency figure, because it is forward looking in its financial planning and has earmarked contingency funding for future expenditure on staffing. The process for determining the school's educational priorities are good, with effective teamwork assisting the decision making process. Proposals in the school achievement plan have been fully costed. There is a good standard of financial control and governors are appropriately involved in monitoring expenditure. They check that the spending supports the school's educational priorities. They have a sound understanding of the principles of best value but need to test and question the best value principles, applying these to the school's expenditure more systematically to evaluate the cost effectiveness of its decisions. Specific grants are used effectively for their dedicated purpose. The school received considerable sums of money under the New Deal for schools and has spent this wisely to improve the school environment. Funding from the Fresh Start initiative has been in line with the school's priorities and the school is well resourced and equipped. For example, the school has spent the Fresh Start money wisely to fund the afternoon nursery provision to give a needed additional start to children's education. Funding for special educational needs is used

effectively and appropriately. Expenditure per pupil is high by national comparisons but nevertheless the school gives satisfactory value for money.

68. The school has a number of effective procedures to monitor its work. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the performance of teachers are good, including a programme of formal classroom observations. These arrangements are thorough, positive and developmental. The headteacher observes all staff on a regular basis and provides appropriate feedback. Co-ordinators in the core subjects regularly monitor teachers' planning, observe classroom practice, analyse test results and monitor pupils' progress. However, there are few monitoring opportunities for co-ordinators in other subjects to enable them to have an effective overview. The school's analysis of performance data is soundly used. Staff are becoming more involved in discussing and analysing assessment data and using this information to set targets for pupils in English and mathematics. There is a good understanding of the processes that underpin effective development planning and the school achievement plan is a good working document that provides firm direction. Arrangements to monitor the progress of the plan, including the involvement of governors are sound.
69. The accommodation is good and allows the curriculum to be taught appropriately. The community block, nursery, library and computer suite are recent additions to the school. The site staff work hard to keep the building clean, tidy and bright. Classrooms are well organised and provide an environment that is conducive to learning. Many areas show the commitment of teachers in providing enticing and attractive displays of pupils' work. The outside environment has been improved with new decking, fencing and seating areas. An area has been left to grow wild to attract insects and wildlife for the pupils to investigate. Although people with disabilities have access to most areas of the school, there is no easy access to the first floor for those with physical disabilities.
70. Overall, resources in school are good and support the curriculum well. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes have protected access to a range of large play equipment. The quality and range of resources for English, music, mathematics, physical education and science are good. However, there is only a limited selection of software programs available in school and a small range of books in the library. There is also a shortage of multicultural resources with few religious artefacts for pupils to observe and handle in lessons. There are sufficient accessible resources to support pupils with special educational needs available in classrooms and in the literacy support room.

THE WORK OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS UNIT

71. The Manor Oak Nurture Group is a specialist seven-place facility for pupils aged four to seven and occupies a classroom in the school. It is in its third year of operation. It caters specifically for those pupils who are failing to thrive socially and emotionally in mainstream classes. Pupils are placed in the unit by the local education authority from within the school and other schools in the area. There are currently five pupils on roll, three of whom are at the Action Plus stage and two have statements of special educational need. The facility is staffed and managed by a well-qualified and conscientious full-time teacher who has wide experience and good expertise and knows the pupils very well.
72. Pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum, which is well planned to cater for pupils' individual learning needs. Opportunities for inclusion are very good. Pupils are fully included in many of the main school's activities so that they integrate as much as possible with other pupils in the school. They regularly attend the school's daily assembly and are fully integrated at break and lunchtimes. Pupils are included in the school's English and mathematics sets and work alongside other mainstream pupils of similar academic ability in these subjects. These setting arrangements for literacy and numeracy allow the pupils access to the curriculum at an appropriate level. Pupils also join with the Year 2 pupils for music and physical education lessons. Other curriculum subjects are taught by the teacher on an individual or small group basis. Assessment procedures are good overall and very good in literacy. Individual education plans are used well to monitor the progress of each pupil and they are reviewed regularly.

73. Most pupils enter the unit with standards that are well below average particularly in their literacy skills. Current standards are well below average in English, mathematics and science, although one pupil is working at an appropriate level in English and mathematics. Pupils are making steady progress in speaking and listening, spelling and reading. This is because the pupils take part fully in the school's successful literacy programme, working with pupils of similar ability. The teacher uses questions very well to develop the pupils' speaking and listening skills in all subjects. Most recognise and correctly write words such as 'and', 'the', 'it' and 'is' and use these to write simple sentences. Pupils handle books with care. Word recognition games encourage pupils to co-operate and work well with others. There are good opportunities for pupils to discuss stories with partners to develop understanding. All pupils are making steady gains in their comprehension skills. Most pupils make satisfactory gains in writing, from a low starting point and handwriting and presentation skills are improving. Progress in numeracy is satisfactory. The teacher makes effective use of resources to enable the less able pupils to begin to recognise numbers. In design and technology, pupils show a keen interest and good concentration. Pupils enjoy the activities in physical education and music where they learn alongside mainstream pupils and make satisfactory progress. Good gains are made in personal and social development. The very good, sensitive but firm support given by the teacher promotes gains in confidence and self-esteem and helps pupils to manage their behaviour better. A key and valuable feature of the day is 'snack time' when pupils tidy the classroom and have a snack together which encourages the development of personal and social skills. The classroom is equipped with a computer and pupils are satisfactorily developing their ICT skills and knowledge. The spacious classroom is well resourced and provides a stimulating environment with many opportunities for incidental learning, for example, through the dark and light science investigation area.
74. The quality of teaching is consistently good and often very good. The experienced teacher has a very good knowledge of the pupils and activities in lessons are well matched to their learning needs. The teacher works very hard to meet the needs of the pupils by devising individual learning plans set in a secure and supportive environment. She manages the pupils very well, working hard to raise their self-esteem and confidence. She provides interesting learning activities taking full account of the often short attention span of the pupils. Pupils make good progress against their identified needs. The teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is good. Lessons are carefully planned and teaching methods are effective in ensuring pupils make gains in knowledge and understanding. Relationships between adults and pupils are good so that pupils have the confidence to ask questions and so make gains in their learning. Praise, encouragement and rewards are strong features of the teaching, promoting pupils' interest and developing their independence.
75. Links with parents are good. There is a weekly contact book which goes home at weekends so that parents are aware of how their children are performing. They are fully involved in shaping individual education plans and the procedures for the annual review are good. There are many informal contacts before and after school and parents are invited to attend an open evening on two occasions each year to look at work and discuss progress. There is good support from the educational psychologist and other agencies.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- (i) Continue to improve standards in English, mathematics and science:
- a) in English by:
- making better use of other subjects to develop pupils' writing skills;
 - using word processing packages to support pupils' drafting skills;
 - improving the quality and quantity of books to enable pupils to develop their library and research skills; and
 - taking steps to improve pupils' presentation of their work;

(paragraphs 8, 25, 101, 103, 104, 147)

b) in mathematics by:

- planning the progressive development of data-handling skills;
- using ICT to enhance pupils' learning;
- making the quality of teaching even better by getting teachers to consistently share the objectives for the lesson with the pupils and making more effective use of the opening part of lessons to develop pupils' mental arithmetic skills; and
- using assessment information more effectively to set individual learning targets for pupils;

(paragraphs 110,111,113,114,147)

c) in science by:

- planning activities that challenge the more able pupils;
- using ICT to enhance pupils' learning;
- monitoring the effectiveness of the newly introduced assessment procedures; and
- developing pupils' understanding of fair testing.

(paragraphs 6,118,119,120,121,148)

(ii) Raise pupils' achievements in information and communication technology by:

- ensuring that the full curriculum is covered in sufficient depth with progression in the development of knowledge, skills and understanding;
- making better use of ICT to support pupils' learning in other subjects;
- providing guidance to help lesson planning;
- improving teachers' subject knowledge where necessary; and
- developing procedures for assessment.

(paragraphs 24, 33, 50, 148,149)

(iii) Improve the quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils, particularly in Years 3 to 6, by:

- planning opportunities to enhance pupils' understanding and appreciation of other cultures;
- ensuring that the full curriculum for art and design and design and technology is covered in sufficient depth with progression in the development of knowledge, skills and understanding;
- providing guidance to help lesson planning in geography, religious education and gymnastics; and
- improving teachers' subject knowledge where necessary.

(paragraphs 29, 33,42,126,131,132,137,159,165)

(iv) Continue the good efforts to improve attendance by:

- ensuring that parents are fully aware of the consequences of poor attendance on their children' education.

(paragraphs 19,58)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Provide more opportunities for developing pupils' personal responsibility and initiative (paragraph 15).
- Include in reports to parents information as to what their child needs to do to improve and what parents could do to help their child make better progress (paragraph 58).
- Apply the principles of best value more systematically (paragraph 67).
- Develop the role of all subject co-ordinators in monitoring standards and provision (paragraph 64)
- Put in place manageable systems for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress in all subjects (paragraph 50).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	42

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	1	16	28	10	1	0	0
Percentage	2	29	50	18	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	16	85
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		63

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	41

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	9.0
National comparative data	5.6

School data	3.0
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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	5	7	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	8	4	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67 (65)	33 (24)	100 (65)
	National	84 (86)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	8	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67 (59)	100 (71)	100 (65)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Test data is not included because there were only nine pupils in the year group.

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
79	5	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	11
Average class size	15

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	146

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	691818
Total expenditure	614903
Expenditure per pupil	5394
Balance brought forward from previous year	162076
Balance carried forward to next year	238991

Number of pupils per FTE adult	5
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	97
Number of questionnaires returned	66

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	80	18	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	82	15	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	68	27	2	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	36	8	0	2
The teaching is good.	76	23	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	68	26	3	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	85	15	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	79	20	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	64	33	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	77	21	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	27	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	29	11	11	14

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

76. There is one Reception class and one Nursery class in the Foundation Stage, which is a step in education prior to starting the National Curriculum in Year 1. Children are admitted to the Nursery following their third birthday and go into the Reception class when they are four. At the time of the inspection, there were 10 children attending the nursery all day and nine attending the two part-time sessions. Five children are in the Reception class. There are seven Travellers' children out of total of 24 children in the Foundation Stage.
77. Children are well prepared before they start school. Parents with their children are invited to the school before they start. Good induction procedures ensure that children quickly settle into the routines. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator gives detailed information about the curriculum, so that parents can support their children's learning. Very good liaison is established with Traveller families and leads to positive attitudes towards the school and the importance of education.
78. The majority of children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below average in most areas of learning. Children respond well to the well-structured programme of work and very good quality and range of opportunities for learning. They achieve very well and most children reach the expected standards by the end of Reception year in all areas of learning except in communication, language and literacy. Children with special educational needs receive well-planned support to meet their learning needs and this helps them to make very good progress. Children who come from Traveller families are very well supported by all staff and also receive additional specialised support. This enables them to develop the necessary language skills to gain access to the whole curriculum.
79. The school's provision is very good and this gives children a very good start in their education. The school follows the nationally recommended Foundation Stage curriculum. Teachers and their assistants plan very effectively using national guidance and place appropriately strong emphasis on ways to improve children's personal, social and emotional, communication, language and literacy and mathematical skills. Staff plan the curriculum together and have termly meetings to share expertise. Ongoing evaluation and assessment are used very well to inform planning. Each area of learning is made up of four stages, or stepping stones, from which both progress and standards can be measured. Procedures to monitor and assess children's progress are good.
80. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator teaches in the Nursery. Two teachers share the teaching in the Reception class. In addition, there are two classroom assistants, one of whom works particularly with Travellers' children in the Nursery. Both contribute positively to the teaching and learning. The quality of teaching in all six areas of learning is very good overall. In the Nursery, teaching is consistently very good and in the Reception most lessons are at least good. The children make very good progress in all areas of learning as a result of this very good teaching. There is a very good understanding of the needs of children who come from Travellers' families. The staff provides appropriate support for those children who miss school when families move away for work. All staff are sensitive to their needs and welcome them to school. As a result, children enjoy coming to school and show a great pleasure in learning. However, long spells of absence hinder progress. For example, during the inspection week one child had come back to school after three weeks of absence and was having difficulties settling down. The attendance patterns of a few other children were quite erratic. Homework, taking games, jigsaws and books to share with parents, is used appropriately to help the children's progress in reading. The indoor accommodation is good and the curriculum is extended through the use of the outdoor area in the Nursery. Children from the Reception class have suitable opportunities to use the Nursery outdoor area to explore and investigate through first hand experiences.

Personal, social and emotional development

81. The development of children's personal, social and emotional development is given a high priority and is promoted at every opportunity. Most children are on course to attain the standards expected in this area of learning by the end of the reception year.
82. In the Nursery, most children settle well and enjoy the nursery experience. They quickly adapt to the routines of the day, make friends with other children and show confidence in the staff. They are encouraged to work co-operatively and take responsibility for themselves. They come into the nursery with great enthusiasm and most separate happily from parents. Children are well motivated and apply themselves well to tasks, for example when they play together with dice games or go on wheeled toys dressed as police officers or fire fighters. They help each other and share the computer mouse to colour pictures. This has a positive effect on their achievement. They have good relationships and show good consideration for the needs of others. They help each other to tidy up at the end of the activities. Children are very well behaved; they concentrate very well and sit appropriately in whole class sessions, for example during story times and singing sessions. They learn to share the equipment fairly and wait for their turn to use the computer, the climbing frame or have their turn on tricycles. Children are independent in their personal hygiene, put on their own coats for outdoor play and change for physical education lessons. Children have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Children of all ethnic backgrounds play happily together.
83. In the Reception class, children respond well to a more formal structure and to stories, whole class spelling, writing and numeracy sessions. They are familiar with classroom routines, move sensibly to appropriate tasks and concentrate well for their age. The very good range of stimulating activities provides opportunities for children to make independent choices, select activities and engage in imaginative play. They help each other; for example, in a muesli-making session, children helped each other to hold the grater to grate the apple without any prompt from the teacher.
84. The overall quality of teaching and learning in this area is good. Children achieve well because they are constantly encouraged to develop high levels of independence. All adults provide good role models and there are good relationships between adults and children. Children are treated with courtesy and respect and in turn learn to behave in the same way. Children are provided with a secure, caring environment where they flourish.

Communication, language and literacy

85. Children achieve very well in this area of learning, considering their well below average attainment at the start of the Nursery and by the end of the Reception, most children are close to meeting the Early Learning Goals. Most children speak confidently and have the expected listening skills. They enjoy listening to stories and take part in reading familiar phrases. For example, in the nursery children listened to a story and actively joined in the parts of the story that were familiar to them. When they listened to the story of 'funnybones' they could explain the need to have bones saying, 'if you do not have bones you will flop'. They look at pictures to tell each other stories. Children are learning to write their names and are beginning to use some recognisable letters to write their stories.
86. In Reception, children listen to the story of 'Oliver's Garden' and 'The Enormous Turnip'. With expert guidance from the teacher, they improve their knowledge of different vegetables and their phonic skills. Most children handle books correctly; only the higher attaining children are beginning to use picture cues to tell a story and read some familiar words in a text. Children learn the sounds and letter names of the alphabet and higher attaining children are beginning to spell some three-letter words such as cat, cot and pot. Children are developing their writing skills. Most can construct a simple sentence with support and write a string of letters to convey the intended meaning. They draw and paint with increasing control. Most children write their names without adult support.
87. The overall quality of teaching in this area is very good. In both classes, children are given many opportunities to draw and learn to write. Children are encouraged to talk about what they are doing. This supports them in making good progress in their speaking skills. There are many opportunities for the children to develop new vocabulary as they collectively discuss pictures in the storybooks and in whole class reading sessions. Teachers successfully introduce the children to the schools' literacy scheme. This contributes very well to their learning. The systematic teaching of phonic skills helps children with their reading and spelling. Children who come from Travellers' families are given very good support by all adults and particularly by the specialist support assistant. Those who have potential special educational needs are well supported in most activities. However, opportunities for children to experiment in making up and writing stories independently are limited.

Mathematical development

88. Most children are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they complete the Foundation Stage. In the Nursery, children match, sort and count using everyday objects. They recite numbers to ten, count and recognise numerals to five. They are beginning to recognise simple everyday shapes such as circle, triangle and square. Throughout the Foundation Stage, the children are taught a good range of number songs and rhymes. This helps them to understand the concept of adding and taking away. Children in Reception have opportunities to take part in well-planned practical activities, write number symbols correctly and learn the value of numbers. Most children count to 10 in a range of situations and higher attaining children count beyond ten.
89. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Mathematics is taught across the curriculum, as well as in specific lessons. In the Nursery, members of staff make good use of every opportunity to improve children's counting skills. Practical activities such as counting five ducks or five fire fighters' hats supports children's learning. In Reception, children focus on counting and recognising numbers in daily whole class numeracy sessions, where they are suitably helped to learn mathematical language, such as, 'longer', 'shorter', or 'taller than'. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they plan very well with clear learning objectives, which they share with the children. In group-work children's needs are well targeted. The variety of teaching strategies employed engages children's attention very well and encourages enthusiastic responses to mathematics. Staff assess the children's progress very well and use this to plan next steps in learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

90. Children achieve very well in this area of learning and the majority are in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception year. In the Nursery, children learn the push and pull movements when they play with wheeled toys. They learn about their families when they draw and write about them. They explore and investigate when they plant bulbs. They know how heating can bring changes when they cook jam tarts and cakes. When using the computer, children manipulate the mouse to operate the program on the screen. They learn about a variety of materials when using construction toys, sand, water and play-dough. Children explore everyday objects of interest and develop skills to find out how things work such as when they make binoculars from recyclable materials. In Reception, children learn about the past when they compare themselves with when they were babies. They learn about their locality through visits to the local shops. Children learn about faiths and social customs through the celebration of Christmas and other festivals. However, their understanding of festivals in other religions and cultures is not well developed. They know about materials and how they are changed when they cook apple pies, use clay to make pots and model hedgehogs and construction kits to make baskets.
91. Teaching and learning is very good. All adults support children well in investigating their surroundings and encourage them to solve problems. Children who come from travelling families and those who have special needs are very well supported.

Physical development

92. Children are set to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception year in this area of learning. There is good provision both indoors and outdoors for nursery children to develop their physical skills. Children show good awareness of space and control when they use wheeled toys. They use the large apparatus to climb and balance. Nursery children moved with good control, co-ordination and enjoyment when they danced in the hall, acting as 'rockets', 'sparklers' and 'catherine wheels'. Reception children have opportunities to use the playground at fixed times and to improve their confidence and skills in climbing, throwing and catching bean bags and balls effectively. In the school hall, children learn to be aware of space and develop co-ordination and control in lessons. Reception children show good skills in moving in different ways such as jumping, walking, running, slithering and hopping. Most children handle pencils, brushes, glue spreaders, craft tools and construction kits appropriately. Many control the computer mouse appropriately. Construction kits, puzzles and cooking all give good opportunities for children to use their hands carefully. Inside the class children move confidently, negotiating their space. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is very good. The children are given regular access to well organised activities to further develop the skills gained in the Nursery.

Creative development

93. Children are offered a wide range of opportunities that stimulate their imagination and enable them to make good progress and achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception year. Children know an appropriate range of nursery and action rhymes. They use pencils, felt pens, crayons and paints confidently to present their ideas through drawing, painting, printing and modelling. They experiment with a range of art materials and techniques when they print, make collage pictures and make models with clay. In whole-class sessions, they sing songs and action rhymes. Children know an appropriate range of nursery and action rhymes. In music lessons, they learn to sing and play instruments, using loud and soft pitch. They copy and compose their own simple rhythms. They use a range of materials to make three-dimensional models. They play imaginatively with small toys but do not have many opportunities to role-play to enact and develop their skills in storytelling, particularly in the Reception class.
94. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are given opportunities to experiment with materials and to make their own creative responses. The music specialist skilfully involves all children in singing, playing instruments of their own choice and provides support to develop their skills in composing their own music.

ENGLISH

95. Standards are below average at the end of Year 2 and very low at the end of Year 6.
96. In the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 2, results were well below the national average in reading and very low in writing. Compared with schools in a similar context, standards were broadly similar in reading but very low in writing. Test results in 2002 show an improvement in reading and spelling but less improvement in writing. The current Year 2 pupils are likely to reach standards in reading and writing below average by the end of the year.
97. The 2001 test results at the end of Year 6 were very low compared with the national average and schools in a similar context. The results of tests in 2002 showed a similar picture. There are currently only four pupils in Year 6 and the indications are that standards for this group are likely to be very low compared with the national standards. Three of the four have been identified as having special educational needs and the attendance of one pupil is very irregular. The school's assessment systems clearly show that those who attend school regularly make better progress. The small cohort sizes make any analysis of test performance by gender unreliable.
98. Standards are improving. Analysis of pupils' work and information from the school's assessment and tracking systems indicate that standards are rising as a result of the measures the school has taken. This is more noticeable in the lower part of the school where pupils have had the benefit of the very good nursery provision. It is recognized that it will take time for the impact of the school's literacy programme, 'Success For All' on standards to become noticeable. The school's assessment information confirms that attainment of the older pupils is not likely to rise significantly until at least 2004.
99. Standards in listening are close to those typically found nationally but speaking skills are less well developed and are below average by Year 2 and well below by the end of Year 6. By Year 2, most pupils listen well to their teachers and others and respond appropriately, although many have a limited range of vocabulary. They can convey simple meanings and a few more able pupils are beginning to show confidence, especially when they talk about their interests. Pupils in Years 6 and 5 are not as confident as similar aged pupils in other schools and many, like the younger pupils, have a limited range of words. However, standards are rising because teachers provide very good opportunities for pupils to talk together during lessons and the school works hard to improve speaking and listening skills through the SFA process. Opportunities for pupils to discuss what they are doing have been successfully adopted in other subject areas. Most pupils show good respect for what others have to say. All pupils know that their contributions will be valued and this gives them confidence and raises their self-esteem very well. Further good opportunities are provided in other areas, for example drama in religious education, class assemblies and Christmas plays.
100. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading are below average overall. Most pupils achieve well during the infants from low starting points. Most pupils show an interest in reading and handle books with care and respect but few take books home on a regular basis. Higher attaining pupils read familiar texts confidently and are beginning to develop expression. They understand the main points of what they have read and talk about the main plot and characters in the book they are reading, showing sound understanding. Average pupils show knowledge of the sounds associated with letters and this is helping them to read unfamiliar words. Lower attaining pupils talk about pictures and recognise letters in their names and a few simple words such as 'the' 'and', 'the', 'a' and 'I'. Most have been identified as having special educational needs and are supported effectively through the focused small ability group teaching so that they achieve well. Although their accuracy and fluency are well below average, they are keen to read and use picture clues and their emerging knowledge of letter sounds to help them to attempt to read some unfamiliar words.
101. By the end of Year 6, pupils' reading skills are well below average. Few pupils have yet to develop an enthusiasm to read for pleasure and acquire a wide and interesting vocabulary through reading a range of different and challenging texts. This means that few pupils have developed a critical

appreciation of a range of books, compare texts and authors, or confidently discuss plots and characters. Few younger and lower attaining pupils know, for example, the difference between fiction and non-fiction, biography and autobiography or can discuss the literary merits of books they have read. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, use their knowledge of letter sounds to split up words into small parts to help them read unfamiliar words. Teachers work hard to encourage pupils to read. The SFA programme provides regular and structured opportunities for guided reading. However, few of the Year 6 pupils understand the purpose of a contents list, index and glossary or are able to retrieve information from non-fiction books confidently. Year 5 pupils have a better grasp of these basic skills. The school has introduced regular reading homework with a reading response sheet but these show that not all pupils read regularly enough, or remember to take books home and use them. Pupils are given good guidance in their choice of books from boxes within the classrooms. The library has only recently been established and the school is aware of the need to develop its use and to improve the quality and quantity of books to enable pupils to develop their library and reference skills and independent research work.

102. Standards in writing, spelling and grammar are well below average by the end of Year 2. However, most pupils are achieving at least soundly from low standards on entry to Year 1. Pupils are developing their writing in a wide range of styles and purposes through the SFA programme. A few higher attaining Year 2 pupils achieve well in drafting a character sketch based on the stories of 'Odysseus and the Wooden Horse' and 'Sir Lancelot'. However, these are the exception and most pupils in the year group are working at a much lower level, writing simple sentences and instructions with support from their teachers. Few have yet grasped an understanding of the use of full stops. Lower attaining pupils are at an emergent writing stage, copying teachers writing. The good structured teaching is gradually helping to raise standards in spelling. Pupils are taught to listen to letter sounds and blends and carefully sound them in a very structured and focused way. There is daily repetition of key words reinforced with regular spelling tests and games with success rewarded with individual and team points.
103. Standards in writing, spelling and handwriting are very low by the end of Year 6. Many of the basic key words are incorrectly spelt and most pupils are unsure of spelling strategies, rules and conventions because they have not had a firm foundation in the past. Most pupils are writing sentences and are using full stops and capital letters with increasing accuracy. The quality of writing is hampered by a lack of vocabulary, handwriting and poor spelling. Older pupils do not write at length and opportunities for writing do not feature strongly in other subjects. The school is working hard to address unsatisfactory achievement in the past through its structured literacy programme. The grouping of pupils into ability sets enables pupils to achieve at least as well as all other pupils at similar levels of attainment since the work is appropriately matched to their learning needs. Handwriting and presentation skills are below expectations across the school. Although teachers use handwriting sessions to improve shape, space and consistent letter size, these are not often or rigorous enough. The modelling of good handwriting by teachers in board work is inconsistent across the school.
104. The quality of teaching is good. Of the 11 lessons seen, two were very good, five good and two satisfactory. Teachers and support assistants have a very good understanding of the SFA teaching programme and are committed to its success. Most teach basic skills very well. Lessons are planned well to provide good quality focused teaching. Most lessons proceed at a brisk pace which keeps pupils interested. Teachers have high expectations and manage pupils and activities very well so that behaviour is good and often very good in lessons. Relationships are a very strong feature of most lessons and this results in most pupils enjoying lessons and working hard. Good questioning is a key feature of the most successful lessons. Across the school, very good use is made of the materials and resources such as reading materials, phonic materials, word lists and white boards to stimulate learning. However, computers are currently not used enough to consolidate and extend pupils' literacy skills. Teachers' marking in SFA lessons is satisfactory and supportive. However, it does not always let pupils know how they can improve. ICT is not used enough to consolidate and extend pupils' literacy skills.

105. Provision is good. Pupils across the school are grouped in nine small teaching ability sets. Groups are based on carefully made assessments of pupils' reading comprehension skills. Support assistants assist teachers in most groups and pupils get very good support and attention. Two very competent learning support assistants teach one group. The teaching and learning materials are very closely matched to the requirements of the pupils within each group. Assessment procedures are good. Work is assessed regularly against set targets. Pupils within each group are individually assessed by the co-ordinator every eight weeks and the groups reviewed and adjusted. Any gaps or slow progress in pupils' learning is successfully identified and supported through an intensive withdrawal tutoring system on an individual or small group basis. The teachers and coordinator carefully track pupils' progress after each eight-week period. These tracking systems monitor progress effectively and provide clear evidence of improving standards for those who regularly attend school. Pupils are making faster progress in speaking and listening, reading comprehension and spelling than in writing.
106. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management and supports teachers very well. Through focused monitoring of teaching and learning, she has identified areas for development and produced a clear action plan to continue to raise standards especially in writing. Pupils have individual targets for improvement but most pupils are not clearly aware of them so the impact is lost. There is a good range of literacy resources to support the literacy programme and these are used very well to support pupils in their learning.

MATHEMATICS

107. Standards are below expected levels at the end of Year 2 and well below at the end of Year 6.
108. Results from the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2001 were well below the national average but in line with the average for similar schools. Results were higher than the previous year. All pupils achieved the expected Level 2, although no pupils achieved the higher Level 3. In 2002 only three quarters achieved Level 2 but 10 per cent achieved Level 3. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 are consistently very low in comparison with both national and similar school averages. The percentage achieving the expected Level 4 in any one year is very low and no pupil has achieved the higher Level 5.
109. Inspection evidence and test results indicate a steady if gradual improvement in standards, particularly in Years 1 and 2 where pupils have benefited from the very good nursery provision. In the current Year 2, most pupils are likely to reach expected levels in their number work and some are in line to exceed these by the end of the year. Most pupils can order and sequence numbers to 100, double single-digit numbers and know that halving is the reverse. They know what each digit represents in two-digit numbers and can do simple addition and subtraction. More able pupils can do addition with numbers less than 1000 and have a sound understanding of place value. Pupils are beginning to develop an understanding of multiplication and can find number pairs to 12. More able pupils can work with multiples of two, five, 10 and 100 and are fascinated with large numbers, including infinity. Most pupils have a sound grasp of the relative value of coins and more able pupils can work out money problems, involving totalling and giving change with coins to £1. Pupils' skills at mental recall are below those typically found nationally and they are not good at explaining the strategies they use. Attainment in other aspects of mathematics is below national standards. Many pupils can measure in a variety of non-standard units and centimetres and name and describe two- and three-dimensional shapes.
110. In Years 3 to 6, the proportion of pupils in each year group achieving below expected levels is larger than that typically found nationally and there is very little evidence of any pupil achieving above expectations. The higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieve standards in line with expected levels. For example, the standard of work currently undertaken in the top set on co-ordinates is similar to that found nationally. Two of the four Year 6 pupils have a sound knowledge of the four operations of number and understanding of related number facts. They have a firm grasp of place value and are confident with large numbers. They have a sound knowledge of fractions and can work out solutions to simple calculations involving fractions and percentages.

They can use the four operations with decimals competently, multiplying and dividing numbers and decimals by 10 and 100. However, the other pupils struggle with basic number operations. Standards in other aspects of mathematics are often well below expectations. For example, standards in data-handling and graphical representation are low.

111. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are generally good and sometimes very good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy. Planning is good. The weekly planning structure provides appropriate learning activities over a sequence of lessons. Individual lessons are well prepared and follow the structure suggested in the numeracy strategy. Lesson planning clearly identifies the learning intentions and specifies activities appropriate to pupils' different levels of attainment. However, teachers do not consistently share the objectives for the lesson so that pupils know what they will be expected to do and learn. There is a high proportion of direct teaching with clear explanations, instructions and demonstrations. This helps most pupils to make at least satisfactory gains in developing their understanding. Teachers promote satisfactorily the use of mathematical vocabulary but should provide more opportunities for pupils to explain the strategies used. Teachers' questioning is generally effective and keeps pupils 'actively listening'. Lessons start with a whole-class session on developing pupils' mental arithmetic skills. The best lessons promote pupils' mental skills with quick fire questions and games to which the pupils respond well. However, the opening part of lessons is not always used effectively to develop pupils' mental arithmetic and sometimes not enough is done to involve all pupils. Management of pupils is very good and the transition to the main activity is invariably smooth. Generally, the concluding part of lessons successfully draws together pupils' new learning with an assessment of whether the objectives of the lesson have been met.
112. Following the success of the arrangements for grouping pupils in literacy, the school has reorganised the teaching of numeracy in Years 3 to 6 into four teaching groups based on pupils' prior levels of attainment. This is proving effective in raising pupils' achievement. Teachers have a good understanding of pupils' different learning needs and plan work based on their prior learning. The work is suitably matched to pupils' capabilities, enabling them to make appropriate gains in their learning. More able pupils are well taught and make good progress because the teachers' expectations are high and the work challenging. The less able pupils are well supported in small teaching groups. The 'catch-up' group consists of pupils on the special educational needs register, is well taught and makes steady progress. Their teacher successfully motivates them and they respond well. The teacher from the Traveller support service makes a very valuable contribution, teaching one group very effectively. Pupils from Traveller backgrounds are interspersed between the different groups and all teachers are aware of their learning needs. They make similar progress as other pupils, except in the cases where poor attendance hinders progress. In Years 1 and 2, teachers make good use of learning support assistants to give additional help to pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to make good progress. Teachers cater appropriately for the needs of higher attaining pupils, but do not always ensure that they ask them more challenging questions during whole class sessions.
113. The curriculum is satisfactory but there is insufficient emphasis on progressive development of data-handling skills. The use of ICT to enhance pupils' learning is unsatisfactory. Assessment procedures are good. The school has effective measures for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress against the key objectives in the Numeracy Strategy. There is effective analysis of pupils' performances in lessons to enable the teachers to adjust teaching plans accordingly. However, the use of assessment information to set individual learning targets for pupils is not yet well established.
114. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator offers clear leadership and has a sound overview of standards and provision through a regular programme of monitoring of teachers' planning, pupils' work and class observations. She has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision. There is a clear plan of action in place and the key priorities for the future development of the subject are identified. The school has started to analyse pupils' responses in tests and identify weaknesses but more needs to be done. There is a good range of resources.

SCIENCE

115. Standards are broadly in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2. Standards are well below average at the end of Year 6. Standards are improving from a very low level. As yet pupils at the end of both Years 2 and 6 are not reaching higher levels in science.
116. In the teacher assessments for 2001 at the end of Year 2, all pupils were assessed as having achieved the nationally expected level. However, no pupil was assessed as achieving the higher Level 3. Results in the national tests in 2000 and 2001 at the end of Year 6 were very low in comparison with both national and similar school averages. No pupil has yet achieved the higher Level 5.
117. By the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils can, for example, explain a force as pushes and pulls and the effect of forces on stationary and moving objects. Pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of food groups and know which substances in the home are dangerous and how these should be stored. In a Year 1 class, many pupils had a good understanding of light sources and their importance in every day life.
118. By the end of Year 6, the majority of pupils can, for example, describe the changes that occur when materials are mixed and how to separate solid particles of different sizes by sieving. They recorded their evidence well with clearly labelled diagrams. In a Year 5/6 lesson, pupils understood that some solids dissolve in water to give a solution; they also used and understood the terms filtration and evaporation. Older pupils' understanding of what is meant by a fair test is insecure. By the end of a Year 3/4 lesson, many of the pupils knew that the water took up more space because it travelled up the straw, but could not generalize about liquids taking up more space when heated.
119. Overall teaching is good, with some very good features. The lessons are well prepared and what pupils are expected to learn is clear and shared with them. It is evident in all lessons that pupils are gaining confidence in using scientific vocabulary. Teachers' very good questioning skills are a strong feature of lessons. Questions are inclusive of all pupils and challenge them to think, discuss and test their predictions through their practical work. In a Year 5/6 class, pupils were thoughtful about ways in which they could test the content of solutions, after which the teacher recalled previous learning and skillfully led them on to extend their ideas and understanding. Traveller children are well supported in science by the specialist teacher; her support is effective in encouraging their participation and this enhances their learning. Pupils from Traveller backgrounds achieve similarly to all pupils. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Pupils discuss their work well in pairs and groups and they are eager to answer questions. Behaviour is very good and pupils respond immediately to the signals to regain their attention. Pupils' presentation is improving; diagrams are clearly drawn and labelled and numerical evidence is presented in the form of charts. However, ICT is insufficiently used to process data or as a research tool.
120. National guidance provides the basis for the planned curriculum, although at times the depth of study is not sufficiently planned to extend more able pupils. Pupils' literacy skills are developed through the provision of very good opportunities for speaking and listening and the use of scientific language. Skills in numeracy are developed when pupils measure and collect and record data, for example, when Year 2 pupils recorded their favourite flavours in food tasting but links with numeracy are not well established. Pupils' social skills are enhanced through the many opportunities they have to work in pairs and groups, which they do successfully across the school.
121. Good subject leadership is contributing to improving standards across the school. The co-ordinator has instigated a manageable assessment system well founded in the National Curriculum levels of attainment. If this is consistently used, it will provide teachers with valuable

information about pupils' achievements and any misconceptions that they may have. Science resources are good and they are well and safely stored.

ART AND DESIGN

122. Standards are broadly similar to those expected nationally by the end of Year 2 but are below expectations by the end of Year 6.
123. Year 2 pupils mix colours carefully to match skin tones and draw self-portraits using different media. They are responsive to ideas and share their thoughts about different colours that are warm and cold when discussing their bonfire pictures. They have sound understanding of pattern, texture and tone. Sketchbooks are used to develop a satisfactory awareness of colour and shape and design.
124. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have not sufficiently developed the range of skills and knowledge expected for their ages. From the very limited examples of work seen, there is a lack of maturity in the portraits they have done. They have had limited opportunities to use different media and develop an understanding of colour, texture, pattern, line and tone. Sketchbooks are not used effectively to develop an awareness of design, colour shape and form and modify and improve their work. Pupils have a limited awareness of famous artists because they have not had sufficient opportunities to talk about and look at examples of art, including the work of artists from other cultures. Although pupils have had some experience of using clay, there have been insufficient opportunities for pupils to work in two and three dimensions or experience a range of materials, tools and techniques.
125. It is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching and learning. Very little teaching was seen during the inspection as in most classes, art was taught in the previous half term. However, the analysis of pupils' work indicates some shortcomings in the quality of learning and underachievement in Years 3 to 6 as pupils have limited understanding of basic skills and techniques. There are missed opportunities to develop spiritual awareness and the joy that can be gained from looking at artwork. For example, there have been few opportunities for them to think about how they feel and what they like and dislike in pictures. There is limited use of ICT to support pupils' learning. In the one part lesson seen in Year 2, the teacher displayed good subject knowledge and understanding and provided good support as pupils made a bonfire silhouette picture, using warm colours and cutting shapes from black paper.
126. The co-ordinator offers sound support to colleagues but because the subject has had low priority within the school, provision is unsatisfactory. The time allocation is well below that typically found nationally and curriculum planning is weak. Whole school assessment procedures have yet to be developed although there is some informal assessment at the end of units of work but procedures are not consistent across the school. The co-ordinator has identified the need to develop a portfolio of pupils' work evaluated against National Curriculum expectations to help teachers make judgements about standards. Currently, there is no monitoring of teaching and standards. The school is shortly to work with a local artist and this will raise the profile of the subject within the school. There is a satisfactory range of materials and resources which are readily accessible.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

127. Standards are broadly similar to those expected nationally by the end of Year 2 but are below expectations by the end of Year 6.
128. Pupils experience an appropriate range of activities in Years 1 and 2. These are soundly planned to develop the stages of designing, making and evaluating. Year 2 pupils soundly discussed how they made winding mechanisms for 'Incey, Wincey Spider' and undertook their textile work on fruits linked to art. They use their imagination well in their designs and most follow these closely, taking care in their work. They select from a sound range of materials and their cutting and

sticking skills are satisfactory overall. Teachers encourage them to evaluate their work and talk what they have learnt and how they could improve.

129. In Years 3 to 6, pupils have insufficient opportunities to use a range of materials, control technology, electrical circuits and computer technology in the design process. Few have knowledge of the safe use of tools, such as saws and other woodwork tools. Pupils lack knowledge and understanding of the planning and designing process and designs are not sufficiently detailed. Their designs do not always clearly indicate sizes and dimensions. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to work with a range of materials or to undertake small, focused practical tasks, leading to the making of a final quality product. In their evaluations, pupils do not clearly identify how finished products might be improved or what went well. In a Year 5/6 lesson, pupils enjoyed sampling biscuits and completed a chart on what they liked and disliked about the appearance, flavour and texture in preparation for making their own. Year 3 and 4 pupils designed purses but these lack detail of size and materials used. They had insufficient opportunity to look at money containers and undertake disassembly to see how they are made. Many rushed in designing and cutting motifs without sufficient thought as to how the pieces would fit together. One group practised stitches but standards were below expectation.
130. Achievement for most pupils, including those identified as having special educational needs, is satisfactory in the infants but unsatisfactory in the juniors. The progress of pupils from a Travelling background is similar to other pupils, except for those with poor attendance.
131. Teaching in the three lessons seen was satisfactory. Teaching is sound overall in the infants but the quality of learning is unsatisfactory in the juniors. The school allocates too little time to the teaching of the subject in Years 3 to 6 to fully implement the design and technology curriculum in sufficient depth. Teachers' planning does not always clearly indicate what pupils are expected to do and learn in lessons. There is not enough investigating and evaluating of familiar products and items or emphasis on practising small focused tasks. Expectations in the designing, planning and making stages are not high enough to ensure quality final products. There is some lack of confidence and knowledge and understanding amongst staff. Sound opportunities are provided to promote relationships and personal and social development as pupils work in pairs or groups discussing and sharing what they are doing. This also provides quality opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills.
132. Management of the subject is sound. The co-ordinator has only recently become responsible for the subject and is only in school two days a week. She has a clear idea of what needs to be done and is aware that standards in the juniors are not high enough. There is some informal monitoring of teachers' planning and pupils' work but there is no monitoring of teaching and learning. The subject currently alternates with art on a half-termly basis but the time allowance is well below national recommendations and is insufficient for teaching in depth. There are no formal assessment procedures in place. The co-ordinator has rightly identified the need for a folder of examples of previous work, annotated against National Curriculum levels to help teachers make accurate assessments. There is a satisfactory range of materials and resources including construction kits to support the design process in the infants. These are accessible and soundly organised in a central store. However, resources for junior aged pupils are insufficient as there are currently no resources for controlling models using control technology or working with wood.

GEOGRAPHY

133. The standards achieved by current Year 2 pupils are in line with national expectations. They are well below expected levels for Year 6 pupils.³
134. Year 2 pupils are beginning to develop a sound understanding of their local area. Most pupils know where they live and many successfully identify human and physical features of places

³ Judgements are based on lesson observations, the analysis of pupils' recorded work and teachers' planning and interviews with staff.

beyond their own locality. Many confidently answer questions about different places and environments. In the lesson observed, Year 2 pupils compare their locality with York and confidently identified some of the main features, such as cathedral, traffic, river and shops. They develop adequate understanding of different seasons and types of weather. The analysis of pupils' work reveals that Year 2 pupils have experience of map-work and preparing simple plans but the standard is below expectations.

135. Year 6 pupils have adequate knowledge and understanding of how rivers erode, transport and deposit. Their knowledge and understanding of the use of keys and symbols when using atlases and maps is unsatisfactory. Evidence indicates that pupils have suitable opportunities to develop mapping skills, for example, through their study of the River Cray. Pupils use different sources such as books, maps and photos to extract information. Most pupils however do not have sufficient skills in the use of the Internet and CD-ROMs for research work. Pupils' understanding of how people can cause damage and improve the environment and how physical features of places impact on the activities and lives of inhabitants is insufficiently developed. There are only four pupils in Year 6 but standards overall are well below average. Standards of attainment for Year 5 pupils are better.
136. The quality of teaching in the three lessons seen was good. Teachers' expectations of pupils are generally appropriate and planning takes account of clear objectives for learning at different levels. The teachers used appropriate methods and effective questioning. For example in a good Year 1 geography lesson, the teacher made very effective use of a multi-media presentation to introduce pupils to local geographical features and their learning was enhanced by using an art package to make their own ICT representation of their journey to school. However, in general there is little use of ICT to support pupils' learning. The quality of pupils' learning and their attitudes to the work in geography are good. They work with enthusiasm and apply themselves well to tasks that provide appropriate challenge. In lessons, pupils work at a suitable pace and react well to praise and encouragement by teachers. Considering the well below attainment on entry, most pupils, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress over their time in school. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress and those in Years 3 to 6 make satisfactory progress in lessons. Travellers' children are well supported and where their attendance is satisfactory they make appropriate progress.
137. The coordinator provides satisfactory leadership and has identified clear plans for future development. She has recently analysed pupils' work across the school and recognises the need to improve standards. The school needs to do more to adapt the national guidance to help teachers with their lesson planning. Appropriate assessment procedures to monitor progress and to inform future planning are underdeveloped. There is a long-term overview of topics and a detailed scheme of work to guide teachers' planning. Resources are adequate and the coordinator is looking to improve these. Currently, there is no residential visit for older pupils to develop study of another locality or other geographical skills.

HISTORY

138. The standards of work of the current Year 2 pupils are in line with national expectations but below expected levels for Year 6 pupils.⁴
139. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the importance of famous people from the past, such as Guy Fawkes. They are confident in using historical terminology such as 'past' and 'present' and identify changes that have taken place over time, for example, in clothes.
140. Year 6 pupils know some historical facts such as the condition of poor children, the changes in clothes and transport in Victorian times and can compare these with their own lifestyles. But they cannot name historical figures of the period or any personalities such as Lord Shaftesbury who sought to bring about changes in society. Their knowledge and understanding of the range of historical periods is also unsatisfactory. Their understanding of the importance of evidence in learning about past societies is satisfactory. However, pupils' knowledge and understanding of the interpretation of history is not well developed.
141. In the Year 2 lesson, the quality of teaching and learning was very good. The teacher made excellent use of resources to develop knowledge and understanding of the time of Guy Fawkes and helped to develop pupils' research skills. The lesson had very clear learning objectives, which were shared with pupils. These objectives focused on the development of historical skills as well as knowledge. At the start of the lesson, pupils gained very good information through an effective teacher presentation as well as from finding information from books and fact sheets. The teacher supported Travellers' children and those who had special educational needs very effectively and as a result their achievement was good.
142. There were no history lessons seen in Years 3 to 6 so no secure judgements can be made on the quality of teaching. Pupils had an opportunity to dress up in Victorian clothes and had a Victorian day in school. Good use has been made of some visits to local museums to stimulate pupils' interest and extend learning. Attitudes to learning history are good. Pupils are interested and keen to share their knowledge and opinions. However, there is little recorded work in pupils' books and pupils' poor writing skills hinder their progress. Nevertheless, scrutiny of teachers' long-term planning and pupils' work indicates that curriculum requirements are met. The pupils have had access to a range of sources of historical information.
143. The nationally recommended guidance on the curriculum is used appropriately by all teachers. Teachers make sound links with literacy, encouraging pupils to work and discuss their finding in pairs. Numeracy skills are developed when pupils talk about dates and make timelines. Insufficient use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning. Appropriate procedures for assessment and recording pupil progress are not yet in place. Teachers assess pupils' learning as they work through units of study, but pupils' progress is not consistently recorded. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership and management for the subject. She has identified appropriate priorities, for example the need to improve her knowledge and understanding of the subject and to improve resources.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

144. Standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 are well below expected levels. Standards achieved by Year 6 pupils are very low in comparison with those typically found nationally.
145. Standards are improving gradually: an audit of standards conducted by the co-ordinator soon after her appointment compared with those assessed by teachers at the end of the summer term last year indicates satisfactory progress from extremely low standards. Few pupils have access to

⁴ During the inspection week, history was taught only in Year 2. Evidence on standards was derived from this lesson, work in pupils' books, discussions with pupils and teachers' planning.

computers outside school and the school has to start with developing pupils' basic understanding of computers. Pupils now have a sound understanding of the everyday use of ICT outside the classroom. Standards are relatively higher among infant pupils.

146. By Year 2, pupils' achievements are well below those expected. Year 1 pupils can use the mouse to select and move items on the screen. They understand that a computer can be used to create pictures and make satisfactory progress in selecting and using tools to create their own map of their journey to school. With support, most Year 2 pupils can follow instructions to open and close programs, find the correct file and at the end of a session save their work. They are beginning to use mouse techniques appropriately but their mouse and keyboard skills are below those typically found. Their word processing skills are limited. Some can write a number of sentences but few can change the layout by changing fonts, size and colour. They have little experience of data handling programs for example, to enter data to produce simple pictograms.
147. By Year 6, pupils can use various tools in an art program, such as pencil, paint brush and spray can competently to create their own pictures. They can use the icons on the menu bar to select colours, infill and to erase. However, their word processing skills are below average. Individually some can word process pieces of appropriate length and can use cut and paste techniques to reorganise their work, but there is little evidence of pupils inserting pictures from a clipart library into text or copying and pasting from the Internet to a word document. They do not have the skills to experiment with the layout of text by changing fonts, size, colour and type or to create a multi-media presentation. They have little experience of using the Internet to send emails or in accessing web sites and using search engines to find information. Their knowledge and understanding of data handling programs is low. There is limited evidence that pupils can create graphs but pupils cannot enter data into a database and use the database to answer questions. Pupils have limited knowledge of spreadsheets and control technology.
148. Teaching is satisfactory but has a number of shortcomings. The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school and the quality of learning depends largely on the level of the teachers' subject expertise. In a well-paced lesson in Year 2 the teacher's clear explanations and instructions enabled pupils to make steady progress. However, pupils' progress is often hindered by their lack of independence and over reliance on adults to help them with spellings and to provide advice on what to do next. ICT is not used sufficiently to support pupils' learning across the curriculum, although there are some examples of teachers doing so. For example in a good geography lesson, pupils' learning about directions was enhanced by the opportunity to use an art program to make their own representation of their journey to school.
149. The school has worked hard to raise the status of the subject and it has done much to improve provision for ICT, although many of these initiatives are too recent to have had much impact on standards. The addition of a new ICT suite provides a good learning environment. Although all pupils now have regular lessons in the computer suite, this facility is underused because it is used as a teaching base each morning for English and mathematics. Resources are satisfactory: the school has a good number of computers and other hardware but there are insufficient software programs. A programme of staff development has helped to improve teachers' confidence and expertise, although some need further in-service to develop their own expertise and guidance on how to teach the subject. The school uses the national recommended guidance as the main scheme of work and has allocated appropriately the units of study to different year groups, reflecting current levels of achievement. It needs, however, to provide guidance to teachers on using this scheme in planning lessons. The school has begun to develop appropriate assessment procedures but more needs to be done to guide practice and inform pupils of how well they are achieving and progressing in their work.
150. Management of the subject is good. The coordinator is relatively new to the post. She is keen and enthusiastic and provides strong and positive leadership. However, opportunities to monitor standards and evaluate the work of the school are insufficient. Nevertheless, the co-ordinator is well informed and has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision. There is a clear plan of action in place and the key priorities for the future development

of the subject are identified. This should enable the school to continue to make progress in the delivery of the ICT curriculum.

MUSIC

151. Standards are in line with those expected by the end of Year 2 but below those expected by the end of Year 6.
152. In Year 1, pupils chose instruments to either play loudly or softly to link with the 'weather song' successfully accompanied the song. Most pupils know the names of the instruments, how to play them, the sound they make and how to care for them. In Year 2, pupils could respond to a song, coming in with their instruments on cue and playing at the correct loudness for their part. This was very successful and pupils from the Nurture Group played well alongside other pupils. In a mixed Year 5/6 class, pupils played numbered sequences with rests on tuned instruments. They worked well in pairs and most pairs, by supporting each other, could play confidently and recognise sequences others played.
153. Pupils sang well in assembly, their diction was clear and they sing with a sense of both phrase and musical expression. Pupils have opportunities to take part in productions in school, to sing in the community and join in musical events with the Small Schools Cluster Group. These are enjoyed, are successful activities and they make a useful contribution to pupils' social development.
154. The quality of teaching is good. Music is taught by a specialist music teacher who visits the school one day per week and teaches all the children. The teacher is enthusiastic and lively which enhances pupils' interest and participation in lessons. The teacher has good subject knowledge and plans her lessons effectively, using the national guidance and other resources. The teacher's good behaviour management is a strong feature of her lessons. Lessons move at a brisk pace and keep pupils active. Pupils have opportunities to sing, play percussion instruments and compose short pieces as a class or in groups. All pupils including those with special educational needs and those from Traveller backgrounds, achieve similarly.
155. The music teacher leads the subject well. She has an effective system for assessing pupils' achievements and this information influences what she plans for pupils to learn next. Resources are good and there is a range of instruments from across the world.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

156. Standards are in line with those expected at the end of Year 2 in gymnastics and games but below expectations at the end of Year 6 in gymnastics.
157. By Year 2, pupils can jump and land safely demonstrating good shapes in the air. They travel confidently in a variety of ways, using different body parts and directions. With the support of good teaching, pupils' spatial awareness improved as the lesson progressed and this helped them to share apparatus well with others. In a Year 2 games lesson, pupils practised their throwing and catching skills. The majority of children were skilful at bouncing the ball and maintaining good control with either hand. Some pupils threw accurately to a partner. All pupils enjoyed working in pairs and readily persevered to improve their skills. Pupils had a sound understanding of safety and why this was important. Pupils from the nurture group who joined the lesson achieved similarly to other pupils.
158. By Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of safety requirements in gymnastics. They work well with a partner, quickly adapting to each other's skills and developing sequences together. However, the quality of pupils' movements is unsatisfactory; their movements lack the clearly defined shape and body tension which is so important in gymnastics.
159. Teaching is satisfactory overall but the quality of teaching varies. Teaching was good in three lessons but unsatisfactory in one. Strong features in the lessons are teachers' good relationships with their pupils, well-managed behaviour and the enjoyment that pupils gain from their lessons. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls and pupils from traveller

backgrounds achieve similarly to all pupils. In good lessons, time is well used and the level of activity is suitably brisk. Teachers use their own and pupils' demonstrations effectively to improve pupils' work and, with further opportunities to evaluate their work, pupils could achieve more highly. Teaching is unsatisfactory where teachers' lack of subject knowledge results in pupils not receiving guidance on how to improve the quality of their movements and inappropriate selection of apparatus unsuitable for the ages of the pupils.

160. The curriculum provides an appropriately balanced programme covering all elements of the National Curriculum. Year 5/6 pupils go swimming in the spring term; it was, therefore, not possible to make a judgement on standards of attainment. The games' curriculum is well supported by additional coaches coming to the school in curriculum time and at lunchtime. All pupils have an opportunity to take part in the lunchtime programmes, for example, there is a multi-sport programme for Key Stage 1 pupils and Key Stage 2 pupils enjoy seasonal sports, for example, rugby at present. It was not possible to observe these activities, but pupils spoke enthusiastically about how many skills they were learning. Pupils also have opportunities to take part in competitive sports in the Small Schools Cluster Group.
161. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic about the subject and has a clear action plan for improvement. There are new and very good resources for games and gymnastics which are well managed and efficiently used. The school needs to focus on improving standards in gymnastics and developing a manageable system for assessment.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

162. Standards are below the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus by the end of Years 2 and 6. Achievement of pupils, including those identified with special educational needs, is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 but unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6. There was limited evidence of written work in pupils' books⁵.
163. By Year 2, pupils have limited knowledge and understanding of aspects of Christianity. Pupils are developing a basic understanding of Christian Festivals such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter and festivals of other religions. They know how and why Christians celebrate Christmas and the significance of giving gifts. However, their knowledge and understanding of religious symbols, objects, people, places and stories is below expectations. Few are able to give a personal view on simple religious or moral issues as required by the locally Agreed Syllabus.
164. By Year 6, pupils' knowledge and understanding is below and for a few, well below the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. They have, for example, little knowledge and understanding of places of worship, holy books, or religious figures of Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism or Islam and the importance of these for believers. Although they have some awareness of Christian ceremonies such as baptism, marriage and funerals, they are unaware of the significance of these and differences in other religions. Few can describe the inside of a church and the significance of the 'furniture' found inside such as the altar and font.
165. The quality of teaching is satisfactory but there are some shortcomings. In the three lessons seen, two lessons were satisfactory and one good. Teachers usually introduce lessons by explaining the purpose of the session but there is a lack of expectation and challenge in some lessons, reflecting insufficient planning. Teachers give pupils good opportunities for discussion that promote their personal and social development well and help develop their knowledge and understanding. Resources such as videos, pictures and artefacts are satisfactory and used soundly to develop children's understanding of religions. Teachers do not always make clear what pupils are expected to do and learn in planned activities. There is a lack of challenging and imaginative use of literacy in different ways, for example writing as a reporter, or translating a story into a modern day example.

⁵ Further evidence was gathered from talking to pupils and teachers and looking at documentation and wall displays.

166. The co-ordinator provides sound support to colleagues and provides satisfactory leadership and management. During the past two years, there has been little emphasis on developing religious education across the school because of other more urgent priorities. There is some informal monitoring of teaching but no focused monitoring of standards. A satisfactory curriculum plan has recently been introduced which meets the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus and caters for the mixed aged classes in Years 3 to 6. There are sound links with the local churches and the local Church of England minister visits to support teaching in the classrooms and undertake worship. There are currently no whole school assessment procedures to track pupils' knowledge and understanding and improve teaching. The co-ordinator has rightly identified the need to further develop links and visits with other faith groups to give pupils first hand knowledge and experience. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.