

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ELMTREE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Elm Tree Hill, Chesham

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110309

Headteacher: Mrs Barbara Veale

Reporting inspector: David Penney  
23039

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> December 2002

Inspection number: 250103

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Elm Tree Hill Chesham Buckinghamshire
Postcode:	HP5 2PA
Telephone number:	(01494) 771474
Fax number:	(01494) 785254
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Michael Bateman
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23039	David Penney	Registered inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Information and communication technology Music	What sort of school is it? How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? What should the school do to improve further?
8986	Philip Andrew	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
16038	Jill Bavin	Team inspector		The work of the Language Department
22522	Mary Warburton	Team inspector	Foundation stage Science Art and design	How well is the school led and managed?
22657	Mark Madeley	Team inspector	English as an additional language English History Religious education	How well does the school care for its pupils?
15011	Marion Wallace	Team inspector	Special educational needs Geography Physical education	

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Ltd  
7 Hill Street  
Bristol  
BS1 5RW

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WC2B 6SE

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Elmtree School is an average-sized infant school with an attached nursery class and a 20-place Local Education Authority designated department for pupils with speech and language difficulties. It is situated in the centre of Chesham, although, as a result of parental preference, many pupils come from areas that would be considered outside the immediate area of the school. In the main school, including the Language Department, there are 138 boys and girls aged from 4 to 7 years. This is a change in the nature of the school since the last inspection, at which time it also contained Year 3 pupils. Children enter the Reception year in the term after their fourth birthday. Fifty-one children attend the Nursery class, which is currently part of the Reception year group, part-time. Their attainment on entry to this year group, overall, is well below the levels expected, particularly in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and in personal, social and emotional development. The Language Department currently has 13 pupils aged from 5 to 7 years, all of whom have statements of special educational need. In the rest of the school, there are 27 pupils on the school's register of special educational need for learning, emotional and behavioural or communication problems; two of them having statements. Including the Language Department, the proportion of pupils with special educational need is broadly in line with the national average but the proportion with statements is well above average. The school has a rich ethnic mix; just over half the pupils come from white ethnic backgrounds, just over a third are of Pakistani heritage and there are small numbers of each of a range of other heritages. The proportions of pupils having English as an additional language (35.9 per cent) and of those at an early stage of acquiring the language (21.2 per cent) are high when compared nationally. The main languages spoken at home are Punjabi and Urdu. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly similar to the national average. The school has recently gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Investors in People award and the Charter Mark.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a good school, overall, with many very good or outstanding features. The work of the Language Department is outstanding. Standards of care are high and all pupils are fully included in all that the school has to offer. The school is a harmonious and supportive environment for pupils and their families and the level of satisfaction among the parents is exceptionally high. The quality of teaching is good, with many examples of very good teaching. The leadership and management of the school are good, overall, ensuring that the school's aims are met very well. However, school's procedures for improving attendance have not proved effective to combat low attendance, which has a consequent effect on pupils' progress and standards and the school's effectiveness. Although standards in the national tests were well below average in 2002, the figures are adversely affected by the inclusion in the results of the pupils in the Language Department and pupils make good progress in relation to their prior attainment, overall. Some, including those from the Language Department and those with other sorts of special educational needs, achieve very good results as a result of the high quality of the support they receive. On balance, the school gives good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The work of the Language Department is outstanding.
- The headteacher sets a very good pastoral direction to the work of the school and is supported strongly by the staff and governors and by parents, whose opinions of the school are exceptionally high.
- The quality of teamwork is very high and all staff support each other fully, ensuring that the school has made good improvements recently and is very well placed to improve further.
- High standards of care, very good provision for pupils' personal development and very good behaviour management procedures, which are reinforced by very good extra-curricular provision, result in very good relationships, attitudes to work and behaviour for all pupils.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good, with many examples of very good or better teaching, which means that pupils make good progress over time, especially those with special educational

needs and those in the Language Department, who enjoy very good provision and get close support from skilled teaching assistants.

**What could be improved**

- Standards in national tests are below the national average.
- The use made of individual targets, especially in English and mathematics, to raise attainment.
- Attendance rates are well below average.
- Aspects of practice and provision in the Foundation Stage.

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

**HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Because the school has changed in nature since the last inspection, it is not possible to give an overall judgement about improvement. Nevertheless, results in the national tests for Year 2 pupils over the last five years have risen in reading, writing and mathematics at a rate that exceeds the national trend, especially in reading and mathematics. However, results remain volatile as a consequence of the different proportions of pupils in each year group that have special educational needs and, although pupils achieve well by comparison with their prior attainment, more needs to be accomplished before standards are consistently in line with the national averages.

**STANDARDS**

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
Reading	D	E	E	E	very high                    A* well above average        A above average                B average                        C D below average well below average        E very low                        E*
Writing	D	E	E	E	
Mathematics	E	E*	E	E	

The table shows that results in the national tests for Year 2 pupils in 2002 were well below average when compared with all schools nationally and with those schools with similar proportions of pupils claiming free school meals. However, in each test a greater proportion of pupils achieved the expected levels than was the case in the previous year. In addition, if the results of the pupils from the Language Department are left out of the calculation, results in reading and mathematics were below the national average but, in writing, they matched the national average. Results in the national tests over the last five years have risen in reading, writing and mathematics at a rate that exceeds the national trend, especially in reading and mathematics; however, trends have been downwards over the last three years in all tests. Teachers' assessments of standards in science in 2002 indicated that standards in Year 2 were well below both the national average and that for similar schools. The findings of the current inspection are that children enter the nursery class with a wide range of ability but, overall, their standards are below those expected, with important weaknesses in their communication, language and literacy skills, their knowledge and understanding of the world and their personal, social and emotional skills. Children make good progress, overall, in Foundation Stage. As a result, when they enter Year 1 their standards are closer to those expected nationally. This year about half of the pupils are likely to achieve the standards expected of the average pupil on entry to Year 1, although there are still weaknesses in communication, language and literacy skills and in knowledge and understanding of the world. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve good and occasionally very good, results in relation to their prior

attainment, especially those from the Language Department, those with other sorts of special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Nevertheless, because of the comparatively large proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, standards in Year 2 remain below average in English and mathematics. Standards match those expected in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education and, because of recent initiatives taken by the school, in science.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and activities in the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Behaviour is very good in class and around the school. There is almost no incidence of oppressive behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships are very good throughout the school. All pupils and adults value and respect each other fully.
Attendance	Poor. Attendance is well below the national average. Unauthorised absence is above the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning are good, overall, and are never less than satisfactory. They are satisfactory and sometimes good in the Nursery class and good in Year 1; they are very good in the Reception class and in Year 2, as well as in the Language Department. There are examples of teaching and learning that are at least very good in all year groups and in the Language Department. The teaching of science and geography is very good and of design and technology and music is satisfactory. All other subjects are taught well, as are all areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good in the Foundation Stage and very good in Years 1 and 2 because of the increased levels of targeted and well-qualified support provided there. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in the Foundation Stage for similar reasons; provision in the Nursery class is further enhanced by the presence of bilingual teaching assistants. Pupils' key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are used to good effect in other lessons. Teachers prepare their lessons very carefully throughout the school and plan suitable activities to meet the differing needs of all pupils. Skilful teaching assistants make a considerable contribution to pupils' learning and relationships are very good, so that pupils are willing and confident learners who try hard. Where teaching, while satisfactory, is less effective, it is because the planning is imprecise, so tasks are insufficiently matched to individual's needs. In isolated lessons, the pace is not consistently swift or the teacher directs pupils' efforts too much, limiting their opportunities to investigate. Where teaching is most effective and learning is at its most swift, teachers have a very good understanding of the needs of pupils and manage their learning and behaviour very effectively, so pupils try hard to produce their best work, time is used efficiently and the pace of the lesson is high, gaining and retaining pupils' attention and providing good levels of challenge and motivation. Tightly focused planning ensures that relevant tasks are matched closely to pupils' developing needs, enabling them to build securely on previous learning. Explanations and learning objectives are clear, high quality support ensures that pupils' questions and queries are answered promptly and imaginative teaching strategies result in sustained concentration, high levels of interest and very good learning.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. There is scope to improve provision in the Nursery class. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented effectively. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good, as is the range and amount of activities outside lessons. The school meets the needs of all its pupils very well, overall. The partnership with other schools is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The early identification of pupils' needs ensures that all available resources are targeted towards the areas of greatest need in a highly supportive and flexible manner. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to the achievements of these pupils. The work of the Language Department is highly effective.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Pupils have full access to all lessons and receive focused and effective support from designated teaching assistants. Bilingual support in the nursery class is particularly effective. Teachers make good efforts to ensure that explanations are clear in class lessons. Regular assessments, apt targets and frequent reviews of specific provision result in good levels of achievement. Some pupils occasionally miss assemblies or other lessons for additional language lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good. The high level of provision ensures that pupils develop into mature, confident and likeable individuals.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school looks after pupils very well and has very good procedures for promoting good behaviour. Procedures for improving attendance are not effective. The information derived from good assessment procedures in English and mathematics is used well, as it is in science and information and communication technology. The way the school uses individual targets for individual pupils is not effective enough.

The school's partnership with parents is very good.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good, overall. The headteacher, ably supported by a very effective senior management team, provides a clear direction to the work of the school and a very supportive environment for learning. Subject leaders make a valuable contribution to improving the curriculum. The leadership and management of the Language Department and of provision for pupils with learning difficulties are particular strengths.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors fulfil their legal duties very well. Through their excellent partnership with the school, they have a clear understanding of strengths and areas for development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school makes good use of all available information, including test results, the views of parents and pupils and reports from staff, to identify appropriate targets for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes very good use of all available resources, including those available to support pupils in the Language Department and those who have English as an additional language. The school tries hard to get good value for money. The accommodation is adequate, although there are limitations, especially for those with physical difficulties. Resources are good

	and the high numbers of staff are very well matched to the demands of the curriculum.
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**PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Their children make good progress at school.</li> <li>• The school has high expectations of their children.</li> <li>• The school is led and managed well.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Their children become mature and responsible people.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the positive comments of parents. It judges that the amount and type of homework is appropriate for pupils of this age. The level of dissatisfaction expressed by parents was exceptionally low.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. In 2002, standards in the national tests at the end of Year 2 were well below the national average when compared with all schools and when compared with similar schools<sup>1</sup>. The school has met the non-statutory targets it has agreed with the local authority regularly over the last few years, with one minor shortfall in reading in 2001 and is likely to meet them again in 2003. Test scores have been rising at a rate that exceeds the national trend over the last five years even though, over the last three years, they have worsened by comparison with the national picture, as a result of increased proportions of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) who have taken the tests.
2. If the results of the pupils in the Language Department, all of whom had statements of special educational need, are discounted, the school's test scores in 2002 were marginally below those of all schools nationally and well below average compared to similar schools in reading and mathematics, but matched both averages in writing. This represents a good level of achievement for this group of pupils.
3. Boys achieved more highly than girls, reflecting the gender balance of those with all learning difficulties. For example, while the girls performed marginally better than their peers nationally in all tests, boys were two or three terms behind the average for all boys nationally. The school has taken steps to try to remedy underperformance in reading by buying many books that appeal to boys. In all three tests<sup>2</sup> fewer pupils achieved the higher grades than was the case nationally.
4. There is a higher than normal proportion of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) in the school. Many of these pupils enter school with no English at all and this can be a disadvantage in the test situation. They receive a great deal of additional support and generally achieve well; indeed the school's analysis shows that, as a whole group, EAL pupils achieved better than first language speakers in last year's tests.
5. Other factors adversely affecting the tests scores are the pupils' low levels of attendance, with, statistically only, each pupil missing almost one day every two weeks and the large number of pupils born in the summer months in last year's Year 2. These children only have one term in the reception class, whilst older children have three. Thus, they miss out significantly on the high quality teaching in that class.
6. The findings of the current inspection are that pupils make good progress, overall, during their three years in the school and achieve good results in relation to their prior attainment, often from a low starting point. However, standards by the end of Year 2 are below the national average in English and mathematics, whilst they are broadly comparable in all other subjects.
7. It is important to note that, at the time of the inspection, all children in both the Nursery and Reception classes were part of the same year group, the Reception year. Children enter the Foundation Stage<sup>3</sup>, usually by joining the Nursery class, with skills and knowledge that are, overall, below those usually found, with significant weaknesses in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Many children do not speak English well and about one in five speak no English at all. They also have quite limited knowledge of the world around them, being unable to name common sights like animals, street names and places in Chesham, although their

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<sup>1</sup> 'Similar schools' means those schools with a similar percentage of pupils able to claim free school meals.

<sup>2</sup> The three tests are reading, writing and mathematics.

<sup>3</sup> The Foundation Stage is the time when children are four and five years of age. They are usually taught in Nursery and Reception year groups.

number skills are satisfactory. From this low starting point children make steady progress through the Nursery class because there are many adults, including bi-lingual assistants, to help them, although aspects of planning require improvement. Progress accelerates in Reception class where a very stimulating environment and high quality teaching help them improve at a much quicker pace. As they move into Year 1 children are mostly on track to achieve the Early Learning Goals<sup>4</sup> in mathematics, personal, social, and emotional development, physical development and creative development. Many are unlikely to reach the appropriate level in communication language and literacy, particularly the speaking and listening element, and in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

8. While a high number of Year 2 pupils achieve the appropriate standards in English, some pupils still have difficulty using a wide vocabulary and sound sentence structure when speaking and nearly one third have reading skills below the anticipated level. In mathematics standards are below the national average because of the high proportion of pupils who work at lower levels than is to be found in most schools nationally. For example, these lower-attaining pupils struggle to double simple numbers accurately and are still learning to read the measure on rulers. In all other subjects most pupils reach the standard expected nationally. They also reach the levels anticipated by the locally agreed syllabus in religious education.
9. In Years 1 and 2 pupils are making good progress, overall, and in mathematics, science, art and design, geography and physical education. This rate of progress is due to a combination of pupils' previous learning and the high quality of teachers' subject knowledge and their ability to present information and tasks in a stimulating way for all pupils. Progress is satisfactory in English, design and technology, history, information and communication technology, music and religious education. Coming from the Foundation Stage, pupils start at a generally lower level in these subjects than in the others. Teachers teach these subjects well, use resources to enhance their pupils' understanding and explain tasks well.
10. Pupils with English as an additional language make very good progress in the nursery and reception classes primarily because they have two bi-lingual assistants to help them learn. In Years 1 and 2 their progress is good, overall, even though their designated assistants sometimes are used to support pupils with different needs in the same group. They continue to acquire English and the technical vocabulary of other subjects whilst being well supported by assistants. Their targets help them understand what they have to learn.
11. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make very good progress, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Their targets are very specific and they are helped to work towards them by highly skilled teachers and assistants. All pupils identified with special educational needs complete work with support alongside others of similar prior attainment, which contributes to the very good results pupils achieve.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

12. The very good attitudes, behaviour and personal development of the pupils are a great strength of the school. It is these attributes that contribute greatly to the ethos of the school. As a parent remarked during the inspection, "This is an inclusive school which raises self-esteem with very good social and intellectual development".
13. When children start school in the Nursery class, their attainment in this area of learning is below, and often well below, what is expected for their age. Throughout the Nursery and Reception classes, they make good progress because adults support them very well and set good examples of how to work and behave and because personal and social development is a priority. By the time they reach the end of their Reception year, most children can take turns when working together and playing games, sharing fairly. They are aware of their own feelings and

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<sup>4</sup> The Early Learning Goals are the nationally expected standards for children joining Year 1.

those of others and discuss these during circle time<sup>5</sup>. They work well together in pairs and small groups and have good manners, saying 'please' and 'thank you' regularly. Children also become increasingly independent and able to make choices.

14. All pupils are very keen to learn and their parents confirm that they like coming to school. Support staff and teachers are skilled in applying the strategies agreed by the whole school for managing behaviour in a very positive way and this contributes to the pupils' growing confidence and joy in learning. Many pupils attend the extra-curricular clubs and this extends their learning and contributes to personal development.
15. Pupils with English as an additional language generally have very positive attitudes to school. They usually enjoy lessons because teachers explain things using simple language and the assistant supports their understanding. If the teacher's explanation becomes too hard for them to comprehend they quickly lose concentration and, on rare occasions, silly behaviour follows. Pupils with learning difficulties are happy and secure within their class groups and relate very well to their classmates and adults. This gives pupils the confidence to join in with all school activities and to explore new areas of their learning. They work well in the classroom, exhibit good levels of concentration and are eager to learn. They respond to encouragement very well.
16. Behaviour across the school in the classrooms and in the playgrounds is very good. A typical example is the manner in which everybody keeps to the left, as is the rule, at all times when going up and down the stairs. In all the lessons observed behaviour was good or better; it was excellent in almost a third of all lessons seen. There were no incidences of oppressive behaviour seen during the inspection and no evidence that any took place. There are no exclusions. In the answers to the parents' questionnaire there was 100 per cent agreement that behaviour in the school is good.
17. The very good relationships between the pupils and the adults and between the pupils themselves are a great strength of the school. In lessons the pupils listen carefully and work well together in groups. It was noticeable how exceptionally well they respected each other and how they accepted differences in beliefs or values, demonstrated clearly by the preparations for Christmas by all the pupils and during the same period celebrating the Muslim festival of Eid. Another good example was in the school council meeting, where there was a lively debate on proposals for improving the school dinner menus. The debate was well informed by opinions drawn from each class by the representatives. The mentor discreetly and effectively guided these young pupils in their first steps in citizenship.
18. There are satisfactory opportunities for accepting responsibility around the school. For example, the Year 2 pupils sit at all the tables with the younger pupils at lunchtime and then help to clear up afterwards. In lessons, the school's very good ethos encourages pupils to participate and to develop their self-esteem, to develop their own ways of doing things and to become confident and mature for their age. In the parents' questionnaire 98 per cent agreed that the school helps the pupils to be mature and responsible.
19. Attendance, at 90.4 per cent, is very low and four percentage points below the national average. The level of attendance has fallen since 1999/00, although it is higher now than it was in 1997. There are several reasons for the poor attendance but the main factor is the taking of holidays during term time, compounded by large numbers of occasional days off that are notified to the school as being caused through sickness. This results in levels of 'authorised' absence that are one and a half times greater than the national average. The level of unauthorised absence is slightly above the national average. The level of late arrival has decreased this term.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

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<sup>5</sup> 'Circle time' is a lesson in which the class comes together to discuss in confidence any matters of individual or group concern.

20. The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall. Teaching and learning are never less than satisfactory. They are satisfactory and sometimes good in the Nursery class and good in Year 1; they are very good in the Reception class and in Year 2, as well as in the Language Department. There are examples of teaching and learning that are at least very good in all year groups and in the Language Department. The overwhelming proportion of parents think that teaching is good and they are justified in their opinions.
21. Eight lessons were observed in the Language Department. In these, teaching and learning were very good in five and were excellent in the remaining three. This very high level ensures that the needs of these pupils are met exceptionally well, which helps them to make very good progress in relation to their prior attainment and, because of the way support is organised throughout the school, to be fully integrated in all that the school has to offer. In turn, this makes an outstanding contribution to their personal, social and emotional development in a wider sense. Parents' heartfelt appreciation of what is done for their children is fully justified.
22. In the remainder of the school, 34 lessons were observed. Teaching and learning were satisfactory in six of them and were good in a further 12. Very effective teaching, resulting in swift learning, was observed in 14 lessons and in two lessons teaching and learning were excellent. The teaching of science and geography is very good because teachers employ some imaginative strategies to generate enthusiasm. In design and technology and music teaching and learning are satisfactory. All other subjects are taught well, as are all areas of learning in the Foundation Stage, which has a beneficial effect on pupils' achievements.
23. The quality of planning is variable in the Foundation Stage. In the Reception class lesson plans clearly indicate what children are going to learn and do, but planning in the Nursery class is less precise and so some activities do not have sufficient focus to ensure that children learn appropriately and, sometimes, time is not used as productively as it might be. Teaching in the Reception class is very good because of the teacher's very good knowledge of the needs of children of this age, a clear focus on learning at a level that is appropriate for each individual and the very good relationships that exist. The very good use made of additional support, including support for children who have special educational needs or English as an additional language, ensures that all children make good progress.
24. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good in the Foundation Stage and very good in Years 1 and 2 because of the increased levels of targeted and well-qualified support provided there. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in the Foundation Stage for similar reasons. Provision in the Nursery class is further enhanced by the presence of bilingual teaching assistants who have excellent knowledge of their pupils and use this to encourage them to work hard all the time. They know when to support and when to say 'How will we find out?' or similar questions which get the pupils to think for themselves. They keep pupils on track by helping with the reading or their understanding of the task. This ensures that the children are supported fully in developing their language, social and emotional skills as well as being thoroughly integrated into the class and the school. In Years 1 and 2, support for pupils with English as an additional language is sometimes eroded as the designated staff support a wider group than just the targeted pupils. These decreased levels of individual language support balance the benefits of full integration within the class as a whole.
25. The key skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well and teachers ensure that these skills are used to good effect in other lessons. For example, pupils' literacy skills are used well in design and technology to give instructions on how to make a poppy, in religious education to retell the story of The Prodigal Son in their own words and in history to write a descriptive diary entry about the Great Fire of London. Numeracy skills are utilised well to measure paper size in design and technology and to produce pictograms of pupils' favourite foods in information and communication technology (ICT) lessons. Pupils' ICT skills and competencies are used well to support work in English and mathematics lessons, each of which take place once a week specifically in the ICT

suite. In addition, teachers use the Smart boards<sup>6</sup> in their classrooms very effectively, overall. They prepare their lessons thoroughly and store 'prompts' on disk for future showing on the boards. This ensures that lessons progress at a swift pace, that explanations are clear and that pupils' attention is focused effectively.

26. Throughout the school, teachers prepare their lessons very carefully. What pupils are expected to learn is clearly identified and suitable and different activities are planned to ensure that full account is taken of the differing needs of all pupils. The number of teaching assistants is very generous and they are skilled people who make a considerable contribution to pupils' learning, especially for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Relationships are very good, which means that pupils are willing and confident learners who try hard because they know their efforts will always be appreciated. Homework is used soundly in Years 1 and 2 to reinforce and extend pupils' learning.
27. Where teaching, while satisfactory, is less effective, it is because the planning is imprecise, as explained in paragraph 23. Other individual and isolated lessons were less effective because they were not conducted at a consistently swift pace or the teacher interrupted pupils' concentration or directed their efforts too much, limiting their opportunities to investigate and explore, as in a Year 2 music lesson.
28. Where teaching is most effective and learning is at its most swift it is because:
- teachers have a very good understanding of both the academic and the personal needs of pupils and manage their learning and behaviour very effectively, generating very good relationships and eager workers, who listen attentively, work confidently and try hard to produce their best work. The work of the teachers and teaching assistants in the Language Department is a very good example of these strengths;
  - lessons are prepared very well so time is used efficiently and the pace of the lesson is high, gaining and retaining pupils' attention and providing good levels of challenge and motivation. In a Year 2 physical education lesson, pupils learned at a very brisk rate because the teacher provided successive challenges, for example clapping twice between throwing and catching a ball. Pupils enjoyed this because it captured their imagination and interest. In addition, in a session with the speech and language therapist, a Year 1 boy made excellent progress in remembering rhyming words because of the high level of challenge in a one-to-one situation;
  - planning is tightly focused on the needs of individuals and groups of pupils, resulting in relevant tasks that are matched closely to their developing needs, enabling them to work productively and to build securely on previous learning. In a lesson in the Reception class, for example, children achieved very good results because of the careful planning of a range of appropriate activities and the high levels of interest shown by the children in what they were given to do;
  - explanations and learning objectives are clear and are checked well through a range of means, including good questioning, so that pupils are well aware of what is required. A geography lesson in Year 2 provided a very good example of how the teacher's very challenging questions helped to extend pupils' knowledge of Egypt's physical features, such as the pyramids and the River Nile;
  - imaginative teaching strategies, sometimes including outside visitors, result in sustained concentration, high levels of interest and very good learning. The visit of a Finnish national to a Year 1 class generated a very great deal of interest and concentration among the pupils and ensured that they made outstanding gains in their knowledge and

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<sup>6</sup> 'Smart boards' are essentially screens that are linked to computers. They enable teachers and others to control computer programs that are projected onto the screen without needing to operate the computer keyboard.

understanding of life in a foreign country. This also made a considerable contribution to their cultural development; and

- the use of all available resources (human and physical) contributes very well to high quality support so that pupils' questions and queries are answered promptly and no time is lost in the lesson.

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

29. The curriculum is broad and fulfils all statutory requirements. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is planned from national guidance and takes full account of all areas of learning. For pupils in Years 1 and 2 it contains all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented well and are having a beneficial effect on pupils' achievements. Provision is firmly supported by very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and is further enhanced by a very good range and amount of activities outside lessons.
30. The balance of the curriculum is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. Recent improvements in curriculum planning for the youngest children are beginning to be effective in ensuring that their learning is based more securely on practical activities. This provides a sound basis for children's intellectual and conceptual development. As yet, while planning in the Reception class is precise and detailed, planning in the Nursery class does not ensure that every activity is closely enough matched to children's individual and developing needs. There is, therefore, a difference in the quality of the curriculum between children of the same age group. There is a good balance to the curriculum in Years 1 and 2. A suitable amount of time is given to each subject with extra time being given appropriately to developing pupils' reading and writing skills, following a thorough analysis of need based on national tests results and to physical education. Teachers plan their programme of work for the term in year group teams with extra input from the co-ordinator for the curriculum. This ensures that pupils in parallel classes receive very similar experiences and that tasks become appropriately more difficult or complex over time.
31. The curriculum is relevant to the needs of the pupils. Where appropriate, national guidance has been adapted to the school's context. For example, the teachers have altered a geography study unit originally focused on school car parks so that it now is based more usefully on the school's environment. Much of the work each term is taught through a series of topics with the intention of providing a fully integrated and coherent curriculum for all pupils. This works well and teachers have planned successfully to make good links between subjects, such as developing pupils' writing skills in religious education tasks or practising mathematical skills in design and technology lessons. The potential of information and communication technology (ICT) to support work in, for example, mathematics and English is exploited very well. 'Themed events' allow a longer period of time to be spent on focus activities, such as a writing day and a science investigation week, both of which are planned for later this school year.
32. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school has adapted its practice well to the requirements of the new Code of Practice. Pupils have full access to the National Curriculum and are encouraged by all members of staff to become independent in their learning and social skills. Work is carefully planned to meet individual pupil's needs, as identified on their individual education plans. Members of staff are effective in establishing a supportive environment so that pupils feel secure, work willingly and develop their self-esteem and confidence. Designated teaching assistants provide very good support, which has a beneficial effect on the progress that pupils make and on the way they develop confidence in their learning. For example, teaching assistants use body and sign language very well to encourage pupils, to ensure they understand the questions and that they can participate fully in all lessons.
33. Pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL) are fully included in all lessons. Skilful teaching assistants help them understand explanations and tasks, although in Years 1 and 2



their effectiveness is less than in the Foundation Stage. This is because they often have responsibility for guiding the work of a group of pupils, some of whom are not EAL and so cannot always spend as much time with individuals as they might. Some pupils are withdrawn from lessons, such as religious education or physical education, or from assemblies, sometimes without the knowledge of parents and the governing body, so that additional language teaching can be provided.

34. The school has a sound policy for recognising and helping gifted and talented pupils. It has very successfully supported these pupils in the past, although currently there are no recognised pupils in this category.
35. The relevance of the curriculum is enhanced greatly by the very good amount of activities outside lessons, including clubs and visits, as well as the good number of visitors. Teachers and others run a good number of club activities, such as for information and communication technology – ‘cyberclub’ – French, maypole dancing, gymnastics and basketball, which are well attended and add to their experience and enjoyment. Visits to such places as Portsmouth Docks or local parks increase pupils’ knowledge of the topics they are studying in school and improve their understanding of the wider world. Regular visitors to the school include people from local places of worship, including mosques and churches. A very good range of other visitors is invited in to talk to pupils on matters relevant to the immediate topic being studied. These include, for example, a local vet to talk about animal care in the Reception class, a Finnish parent to tell Year 1 pupils about life in her home country and talks about Christian celebrations and Muslim weddings from a vicar and from a parent.
36. The school is integrated well into the life of the community through, for example, pupils singing to local senior citizens as they take harvest produce to them, raising large sums of money for charities, such as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and using the sports field of the local community college to hold their sports day with students from that college helping to run the event. The school is the base for the local initiative to encourage parents as first teachers (PAFT) and personnel from local sports clubs run a number of the activities that take place outside lessons. Links with schools locally and more widely are very good. Teachers from the school run courses for their colleagues locally in, for example, ICT. The staff from the Language Department are to organise a national conference in 2003 to share the success of their practice more widely.
37. Provision for pupils’ personal development is very good. An all-pervading ethos of mutual respect and support characterises the work of the school and enables pupils to grow and to flourish. All pupils are thoroughly integrated into all that the school does and great efforts are made to ensure that the academic, social, emotional and personal needs of everybody are met as fully as possible.
38. Provision for pupils’ spiritual development is very good. Throughout the school, a purposeful atmosphere exists in which individual differences and needs are recognised and respected fully. For example, Language Department pupils are fully integrated into classes, working in all subjects with pupils of like prior attainment and need in that subject, so that their individual talents are fully recognised. This is an excellent example of how to cater for individual talents and needs. The personal, social and health education programme makes a very good contribution to pupils’ development through, for example, regular ‘circle times’. This helps pupils to understand human feelings, emotions and beliefs and contributes very well to their behaviour and attitudes to each other. It also includes, as and when appropriate, sensitive reference to drugs misuse and to sex education. Pupils are given opportunities in religious education lessons to consider the meaning and importance of religious events, such as Eid or the Christian Nativity story. For example, one Year 2 pupil wrote, “Angels are important because they bring messages from God” and another, “Mary is special because she has to take care of the Son of God”. Acts of collective worship make a very good contribution to pupils’ spiritual development by providing opportunities to reflect on, for example, what is special to each individual.

39. A clear moral code is applied consistently throughout the school. This gives all pupils a very good framework to work within and they have a clear understanding of what is acceptable behaviour and what is not. All adults in the school act as very good examples of the virtues of fairness, respect and hard work. The system of receiving approval, written in the 'Well Done' book and displayed for all to read in the school entrance hall and on the school's website, for work well done or for good efforts or attitudes makes a considerable contribution to establishing the very good attitudes and behaviour that characterise the work of the school. This has recently and effectively been reinforced by requiring those whose behaviour has slipped from the expected high standards to discuss their errors with the headteacher, to acknowledge in writing what they have done wrong and to say how they will improve their conduct. This encourages pupils to take responsibility for their actions and to face up to the consequences of unwise decisions.
40. The ethos of complete respect for every individual and the very good emphasis put by the school on including all pupils in all the school offers make considerable contributions to pupils' social development. Lessons are organised so that there are ample opportunities for pupils to co-operate and collaborate in groups of varying sizes and composition. Reasonable opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility for aspects of the class and school life. For example, every class has a monitor system for such duties as returning the register to the office or for tidying up tables after lessons. In addition, every Year 2 pupil has a responsibility for overseeing a dinner table and encouraging good order and social interaction. The school council meets regularly and provides a very good opportunity for pupils to gain experience in community involvement and decision making. The school also looks outward, for example, by involvement in raising money for charities and taking Harvest produce to the local older residents.
41. The provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Throughout the work and life of the school there is due respect for and celebration of the cultural as well as the religious life of the Christian and the Muslim pupils in the school. This is fostered through the regular visits from religious leaders to assemblies, an explicit acknowledgement of the implications of major festivals, such as Eid or Christmas, and the study in religious education lessons of the main tenets of both faiths that is extended to include consideration of the effect of them on everyday lives. Other visitors, such as a Finnish lady in Year 1, extend pupils' understanding of life in other lands well. In music lessons, pupils listen to and sing songs from a range of other cultures, such as calypsos and Aboriginal music. In art and design lessons, Year 2 pupils paint Japanese characters as part of their wider study of Japan and Japanese culture. A display of costumes from around the world further promotes an understanding of the traditions of other cultures. These measures promote racial and cultural understanding very effectively, with the result that the school is a harmonious and peaceful community.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

42. The school is very good at looking after the pupils and ensuring their physical and emotional welfare. Parents commented that this provision has improved in recent years. A secure environment is provided for the children to develop their knowledge and understanding. This is a major strength of the school.
43. The procedures for child protection are good. There is a named member of staff for co-ordinating the provision and the school works closely with the outside agencies when necessary. The school policy for Internet use is effectively followed in all classes. All the necessary health and safety requirements are securely in place. Pupils spoken with during the inspection fully understood the fire drill procedures. There is very good provision of first aid and treatment facilities, including a well run and well stocked first aid room. All the members of staff have had first aid training and training in dealing with febrile convulsions and anaphylactic shock.
44. The procedures for checking on and encouraging good behaviour and for eliminating aggressive behaviour are very good. All the members of staff implement these policies consistently across the whole school. The success of these policies is seen in the behaviour in the school and in the positive answers to the parents' questionnaire. The school has an 'I am sorry' book that helps

- pupils accept responsibility for their own behaviour and is another positive contribution to their personal development.
45. The procedures for tracking and supporting pupil's personal development are good. They are mainly informal, but are effective because in this relatively small school staff members know the pupils and their families very well. A written record is kept of the comments made in the annual reports.
  46. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance have not been effective enough to reverse the drop in attendance levels evident in recent years. The level of non-attendance adversely affects the achievements of individuals and is a contributory factor to the school's results in the Year 2 national tests. The analysis of absence patterns is useful in identifying a relatively high proportion of absences notified as being because of sickness, which are necessarily recorded as authorised absences and of holidays taken in term time. Recent efforts by the headteacher to improve prompt arrival have been effective because they have involved meeting the parents involved face-to-face. However, routine written reminders about the importance of attendance to the parent body as a whole have been less effective. The headteacher recognises the need to address the problem of low attendance as a matter of priority. Registration is carried out efficiently and promptly at the start of each session.
  47. The school's arrangements for checking on pupils' academic performance are good. Through no fault of the school, in the Foundation Stage the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress has been changed three times in three years and this has not provided a firm basis on which to measure pupils' potential. The new national guidelines have been adopted and it is hoped that they will provide a sounder base from which to work in future. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in Years 1 and 2 are good and are applied consistently. Statutory assessments in Year 2 are well established and the school analyses the results well by gender and by ethnicity. From this analysis they realised, for example, that boys were not achieving their potential in reading and took appropriate action. The teachers make good use of assessment information to guide their lesson planning in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology and satisfactory use in other subjects. Good use is made of continuing records to help pupils make academic and social progress.
  48. Pupils' academic progress is tracked well and school policies are implemented very well across the school. Pupils are well aware of their targets in English and these are often displayed on their book or table. These are not yet applied with enough rigour to set specific challenges in order to raise standards further. Comparable targets in mathematics or other subjects are not evident. In this school, the teaching process includes good procedures for assessment, recording and monitoring attainment and progress. There are some well presented portfolios of pupils' work, for example the writing samples which enable teachers to better understand the standard required.
  49. Children with English as an additional language are assessed as they come into school in the Nursery class and provided with appropriate support. Assistants assess pupils when they move into Year 1, set them targets and prepare work for them. Targets are reviewed regularly so that they continue to act as a spur to learning.
  50. The school keeps detailed records and documentation on all pupils with special educational needs. From an early stage assessments are used effectively to identify attainment, progress and targets for further development. This ensures that all class teachers are knowledgeable about individual difficulties pupils might encounter, helping to ensure that every pupil receives the appropriate support and guidance. Informative records of each pupil with special educational needs enable progress to be tracked over time and teachers and support staff make ongoing notes on attainment and progress. These records enable teachers to identify any problems and plan future targets effectively. The school has continued improve the quality of the individual education plans, which are now very good. All pupils have their own very specific and effective individual targets that are reviewed regularly. There are very good links with the appropriate outside agencies.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

51. That the parents have an extremely positive view of the school is clearly demonstrated by the answers to the parents' questionnaire, the discussions at the meeting with parents and discussions with parents during the inspection. A parent commented, "Elmtree is an amazingly supportive, caring and positive environment".
52. The school's links with the parents are excellent and reinforce the attainment and progress of the pupils. In the parents' questionnaire 98 per cent said that they found the staff easy to approach and the same percentage stated that the school works closely with parents. There is excellent communication with the Language Department parents and the parents of children with English as an additional language feel very welcome in the school. The school welcomes families from all nationalities and families particularly appreciate this. The bi-lingual assistants are very useful in helping families understand messages from school. They are also preparing a taped version in Urdu of the school brochure. The school has established very good partnership links with parents of pupils with learning difficulties. All parents are invited to attend meetings to discuss the achievement and progress of their children and home targets are reviewed regularly. The school values the triangle of school, parent and pupil all working together.
53. Information is accessible for all with translators available, when necessary. There is a very good attendance at the parents' evenings. The links with the parents are enhanced daily as, at the start of each school day, parents bring their children into the classrooms and can spend some ten minutes helping them settle down and looking at their reading books. Thus the school day begins in a positive manner. The school is organising courses for parents to help them support their children with literacy.
54. Parents are fully involved in the work of the school. Every morning, for example, five parent volunteers deliver to the classrooms freshly filled bottles of water for each child in spite of there being three flights of stairs in the school. The parents give strong support in the classrooms with nine parents helping regularly each week. There is a strong Parent Teacher Association (PTA), which is very well supported by all the parents and has raised £6500 in the current year. Funds from the PTA have provided, for example, the smart boards in each classroom.
55. The quality of the information provided for parents is good. In answers to the parents' questionnaire, 99 per cent of parents stated that they feel well informed about their child's progress. The school holds two general consultation evenings each school year and in the spring term a meeting to review the individual education plans for the children needing special help. In addition any parent can request an interview. Attendance at the meetings is nearly 100 per cent. The annual school reports to parents are clearly written, giving good descriptions of the work undertaken in the year and of the child's progress. However, the reports at the end of Year 1 do not give any indication of the National Curriculum levels at which the children are working nor their targets for achievement at the end of Year 2.
56. The parents make a satisfactory contribution to learning at home and give support to the teachers. The home reader cards are well used and many of the parents and pupils complete the comments.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

57. The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher, ably supported by an effective senior management team and knowledgeable governing body, provides clear direction to the work of the school and strong pastoral leadership. Subject leaders make a valuable contribution to improving the curriculum. The leadership and management of the Language Department and of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties are particularly effective.
58. The headteacher is the driving force behind the work of the school. Her clear vision is reflected very well in all aspects of the school's work. She promotes a very caring, supportive environment

for pupils, enabling them to learn and so developing confidence and self-esteem. The health and safety, well-being and personal development of all pupils is at the heart of the school's work and all staff work effectively together towards this vision. The school places a great deal of emphasis, very successfully, on preparing pupils in the personal and social aspects of their development. Building on the improvements already happening, the school is now aware of the need to use the information available about pupils' attainment and progress more rigorously, so that more challenging targets can be set for individual pupils and standards improved further. It is also aware of the paramount need to improve the levels of pupils' attendance and this is an identified priority area in the current school improvement plan.

59. There is a strong sense of teamwork throughout the school that is evident at all levels. All members of staff share a desire to improve and move forward. Subject leadership is very good, overall. Teachers carefully check and evaluate the subjects for which they are responsible by analysing available data, looking at pupils' work and observing the teaching and learning process. In some subjects this information is being used to set individual targets for improvement. However, this is not consistent or rigorously in place in many subjects and has not yet resulted in high enough standards in English and mathematics, although there are indications that improvements are likely in the near future. Most co-ordinators have very good knowledge about their subject and use this effectively to support and develop their colleagues' confidence and expertise. The senior management team works effectively, with individual strengths used appropriately, although not enough use is made of the very comprehensive data about pupils' progress in order to set more challenging targets.
60. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent. The two co-ordinators are well supported by the headteacher and governing body. Funds for special educational needs are well used and pupil's interests are foremost when planning the budget and funding allocation. The headteacher and co-ordinators are committed to providing the best possible support for all pupils with special educational needs. Resources for special educational needs are excellent. Many have been tailor-made to meet the individual needs of specific pupils.
61. The governing body is very effective in fulfilling its legal responsibilities and has a clear view of the strengths and areas for development within the school. Through an effective committee structure and regular meetings it is able to check on and evaluate progress and make a valuable contribution to school life. Subject leaders regularly report to governors on curriculum matters, enabling them to have a good understanding of each subject. Governors are fully consulted regarding the school improvement plan, discussing with the senior management team the priorities and amending them as necessary. They review the progress of priorities on the school improvement plan through regular and detailed reports from the headteacher and staff and by both formal and informal visits to the school. However, they have yet to be successful in ensuring that the levels of pupils' attendance improve.
62. The school improvement plan is a very detailed, comprehensive document that provides structure to the development of the school. It is produced following very thorough consultation with all staff, governors and parents, a process of review and evaluation of previous developments and a very secure self-evaluation system that takes account of all aspects of school life. The current priorities for development are appropriate and are well on target. However, the wealth of data in the school is not linked well enough to the planned actions for each area to set challenging targets. Additionally the action plan for the Foundation Stage has not yet been effective in securing improvement in the Nursery class and levels of absence are too high. All identified priorities are financed fully, with, for example, the finances earmarked for the support of pupils with English as an additional language being used well to pay for extra staffing. This helps their achievement and standards. The school contributes substantially to maintaining this high level of support for these pupils.
63. The procedures for checking the quality of teaching and securing further improvements are very good. There is a clear system in place that ensures that all teachers and assistants are observed regularly, professional discussions take place and targets are set. As well as this statutory structure, more frequent and informal observations and discussions take place and this

is very successful because of the very good, trusting relationships that exist within the school. Great care is taken to ensure that staff development is closely linked to areas of need and that all staff are able to access training and support identified by themselves and by team leaders. This is very effective in ensuring that all members of staff feel valued and that their own development is of major concern to the senior managers in the school. Good use is made of individual strengths and expertise, for example, that of the Language Department leader, to support and develop staff. As yet the skills of the very good Reception class teacher have not been used well enough to assist in improving provision in the Nursery class, even though she has supported such development in other schools.

64. The school effectively supports new staff through a clear policy, very good, detailed documentation and the opportunity for them to 'shadow' established staff to learn the school's routines and procedures. This is effective in ensuring that new members of staff feel supported and welcomed and that their introduction to the school goes smoothly. This approach is also successful in providing opportunities for the training of new teachers and placements for other students.
65. The school makes very good use of new technology in teaching. The smart boards are used in mathematics and English lessons in the computer suite, as well as in class mathematics lessons in Years 1 and 2. There is very good and efficient use of computers for financial management, including trying hard to get the best value for its spending, for the preparation of the school budget and for many school records. The very efficient school financial administrator/secretary keeps the use of modern technology in school administration constantly under review.
66. The match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum is very good. There are very good levels of teaching support in and for the Language Department. Teaching assistants are well qualified and informed. The bi-lingual assistants work well in the Nursery class and also provide translation services if there is a need. The lunchtime assistants, known as 'lunchtime teachers', meet regularly with the headteacher and are fully briefed on behaviour policy and all relevant school policies. The whole of the staff work very well together as a team and this attitude supports the learning of the pupils. The lack of a caretaker does not affect the provision or safety.
67. The accommodation is adequate for teaching all subjects. The building and grounds are well kept but unsuitable for those pupils and adults with physical difficulties because of the many levels and stairs. There are two small playgrounds with limited space for ball games but good use has been made of sloped areas with play and climbing equipment. There are pond and wild life areas in the grounds that are used well, for science for example. There is a sloping area of grass that is used in the summer term for physical education. Sports day was held in the grounds of the local community college with assistance from those older students.
68. The learning resources are good, overall, with those for the pupils with learning difficulties being excellent and those for history and the Language Department being very good. In addition, there is a new computer suite that is very well resourced and furnished, including adjustable height chairs, which are important for allowing equality of access for children of varying heights and ages. In art and design, design and technology, religious education and music resources are satisfactory.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

69. In order to improve pupils' standards, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, the headteacher, staff and governors should now:
  - (1) Improve the rigour and effectiveness with which individual targets are used to raise attainment;

*(Paragraphs: 48, 58, 59, 62, 88, 94 and 105)*

- (2) Take rigorous steps to improve the levels of pupils' attendance; and

*(Paragraphs: 5, 19, 46, 58, 61 and 62)*

- (3) Improve provision in the Foundation Stage.

*(Paragraphs: 7, 23, 27, 30, 62, 63, 78, 80, 81, 83 and 87)*

**In addition, the governors should also consider the following points:**

- a) Reviewing the way that teaching assistants and time are used to support pupils with English as an additional language in Years 1 and 2;
- b) Including in the annual written reports on pupils' progress references to the National Curriculum levels reached and what the individual needs to do next to improve their standards; and
- c) Ensuring parents and governors are informed of all the extra provision made for pupils with English as an additional language.

***References to these points are in paragraphs: 10, 24, 33 and 55***

## **THE WORK OF THE LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT**

70. Provision for pupils with speech and communication difficulties is extremely good. Highly knowledgeable and proficient leadership and management ensure that the specialist team work exceptionally well together to the benefit of the pupils and their families. Specialist teaching for pupils in small groups in the Language Department is consistently at a very high standard. The quality of support for pupils with speech and communication difficulties in class alongside their peers is also consistently very good. Additionally, the school welcomes these pupils extremely positively, so pupils are truly included in all areas of the curriculum. The result of all of this exemplary practice is that pupils make extremely good progress in relation to their particular area of difficulty and good progress in their academic learning. Parents are understandably highly appreciative of the Language Department's work.
71. The exceptional strengths in the provision include:
- the specialist team is extremely well qualified and knowledgeable, enabling them to assess and meet individual pupil needs with precision;
  - their commitment to meet the needs of the 'whole child' means that pupils make enormous gains in self-esteem; and
  - the team never lose sight of the ultimate goal of social and academic independence, so the extent to which pupils are supported is closely monitored, and pupils are neither constantly swamped with adult attention nor left to flounder.
72. The school makes special provision for up to 20 pupils and during the inspection there were 13 pupils with speech and communication difficulties in the school. This group of pupils all have statements of special educational need, although within the umbrella heading of 'speech and communication' they represent a wide diversity of need. In recent years most pupils have had a sufficiently severe level of difficulty to affect adversely the school's national test results.
73. The specialist team comprises a teacher in charge of the department, a full-time speech and language therapist and four full-time teaching assistants. The Language Department had only just been formed at the time of the last inspection so a full comparison of provision then and now is not possible. However, the department has clearly developed considerably, not only

increasing its provision from ten places, but also developing the knowledge and understanding of the staff through specialist qualifications. This enables them to develop more specialised programmes to help a greater diversity of need more effectively for more pupils.

74. This whole team shares an exceptionally high level of experience and expertise, which they constantly seek to enhance and update. The teacher in charge and the speech and language therapist complement each other very well. One of the benefits of the high level of professional qualifications represented within the team is that the department makes extremely sensible use of a battery of different tests, enabling them to develop a precise understanding of each pupil's needs. The team also shares a total commitment to addressing each child's specific needs while ensuring that every opportunity is given for that child to learn alongside their peers. This does not mean pupils working at a separate table with the teaching assistant in the mainstream classroom. Rather, at Elmtree, children with speech and communication difficulties work in the ability group that reflects their understanding of a subject taught alongside their peers. This means that, like all pupils, they sometimes work with the class teacher, sometimes the teaching assistant and sometimes independently. This is true integration.
75. Pupils also work very successfully in small and very carefully convened groups in the Language Department designed to meet their individual needs. For example, pupils may join groups specifically designed to increase tongue and muscle control. They may work individually to increase their understanding of, for example, prepositions and sequencing words in a sentence; or they may work specifically on listening skills. All pupils participate in group work designed to help them learn how to use their developing skills. These groups are clearly enjoyed by the pupils and make a significant contribution to their increasing self-esteem. The mix of experiences that pupils enjoy makes a positive contribution to developing their social skills and confidence; as one pupil in Year 2 confided to her mother, *'there's nothing I can't do'*.
76. All members of the Language Department staff monitor each pupil's progress very closely and information is shared very openly with pupils and parents. One parent described this as, *'we're there every step of the way'*. While Individual Education Plans provide a good overview of pupils' needs, they do not fully reflect the detailed and outstanding work that takes place in:
- assessing children's skills;
  - monitoring their progress;
  - involving them in their own learning by setting targets with them; and
  - and working closely with families.
77. In summary, the Language Department is staffed by a team who provide an exceptionally effective service to children and families. The members of the team reflect upon their work, constantly seeking ways to develop further, but without losing sight of the most fundamental needs of these young pupils. Consequently, pupils make enormous strides in their language, communication and social skills while developing well academically and personally.



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	5	19	12	6	0	0	0
Percentage	11.9	45.2	28.6	14.3	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	138
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	14

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2	13
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	7	33

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	68

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.1

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9

National comparative data	5.5
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National comparative data	0.4
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	33	22	55

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	22	26
	Girls	20	21	21
	Total	41	43	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (57)	78 (72)	85 (77)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	26	19
	Girls	20	20	19
	Total	41	46	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (61)	84 (77)	69 (62)
	National	84 (84)	84 (83)	89 (89)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>
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***

<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
63	0	0
1	0	0
11	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
33	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	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 – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.7
Average class size	27.6

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	351

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	105

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001 - 2002
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	<b>£</b>
Total income	560, 862
Total expenditure	583, 823
Expenditure per pupil	3, 582
Balance brought forward from previous year	49, 583
Balance carried forward to next year	26, 622

Number of pupils per FTE adult	4.3
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	189
Number of questionnaires returned	74

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	77	23	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	80	20	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	74	24	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	58	24	9	1	4
The teaching is good.	91	8	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	77	22	1	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	93	5	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	22	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	78	20	0	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	93	7	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	82	16	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	30	1	1	16

## **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**

78. It is important to note that the use of the term 'Nursery' in this report does not mean that the children concerned were of the age normally associated with the term. At the time of the inspection the children in the classes called by the school 'Nursery' and 'Reception' were part of the same cohort – the reception year – even though they are in two different classes. This is significant because it means that some children only have one term in the Reception class, where provision is better, and other children have two or three, and this has an effect on the progress they make. Children start in the Nursery class at the beginning of the term after their fourth birthday and transfer to the Reception class at the beginning of the term in which they are five, having spent two terms in the Nursery.
79. Because of the frequent changes to the initial assessments used by the school in the Foundation Stage, which have not been of the school's making, it is difficult to judge attainment on entry or progress made compared with other schools. However, inspection evidence indicates that when they start the Reception year attainment, overall, is below that which would be expected for children of that age, particularly in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world, although a broad range is represented. They make satisfactory progress during their time in the Nursery class and good progress in the Reception class. As a result, by the time they enter Year 1 most children are close to achieving the Early Learning Goals in most areas of learning, although overall attainment is still below average.
80. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good, overall, and in the Reception class it is very good. The long-term planning is clearly based on the six areas of learning and the national guidance for children of this age. More detailed planning is satisfactory in the Nursery class and good in the Reception class. In the Reception class lesson plans clearly indicate what children are going to learn and do. However, in the Nursery class, although this information is included in half-termly plans, there is insufficient detail in daily and session plans. This means that some activities lack focus and that adults do not always make sufficient use of the opportunities that present themselves for consolidating and developing children's learning at an appropriate level.
81. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good, overall. In the Reception class it is very good because of the teacher's very good knowledge of the needs of children of this age, which results in a clear focus on learning and planned opportunities for children to develop their skills of, for example, speaking and listening, high expectations of their progress and very good relationships. The very good use made of additional support, including support for children who have special educational needs or English as an additional language, ensures that all children make good progress. In the Nursery class teaching is mostly satisfactory but sometimes good. In this class a qualified teacher is not always present. The deputy headteacher is the Nursery manager and because of other duties is frequently not present during Nursery sessions to provide a role model and direction to the key workers. Nevertheless, adults support children well and relationships are good, but there is less focus on children learning at an appropriate level. For example, in communication, language and literacy sessions, progress is good when adults work one-to-one with a child, encouraging them to talk or to recognise letters, but is less good in whole group sessions where there are too few opportunities for children to talk and when they do so, insufficient use is made of their contributions.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

82. Children make good progress in both classes because adults support them very well and they are set good examples, and because personal and social development is a priority. By the time they reach the end of the Reception year, most children can take turns when working together and playing games, sharing fairly. They are aware of their own feelings and those of others and

discuss these during circle time, recording thoughts such as, "Safia is happy when she has an ice-cream" and "Peter felt sad when his sister hurt him". They work well together in pairs and small groups, such as when measuring their heads, talking about what they are doing. Good use is made of snack time in the Nursery to emphasise hygiene when washing hands, healthy eating when having fruit and good manners when saying, "please" and "thank you". Pupils respond well to these opportunities and make good progress. They also learn to work and play with increasing independence and to make choices about what they will do, or what they would like to drink.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

83. In the Nursery class few children can recognise rhyme, but the higher-attaining children know some letter sounds. Few readily pick up books to look at by themselves, but the majority listen attentively when stories are read to them. The highest-attaining children recall and comment on stories, but those of lower prior attainment usually use one-word answers in response to questions. Children make some attempts at writing when working with adults but few choose independently to practise writing skills, often because the opportunities for them to do so are limited and lack stimulation. Although there are some opportunities for role play in the nursery and reception classes, not enough use is made of this to develop language and communication skills by providing more stimulating resources and activities and ensuring adults intervene to ask questions and promote conversation. Children in the Reception class know how books are organised, look at the pictures and talk about the story. Higher-attaining pupils recognise some of the words and can make simple predictions about what might happen next in the story. They are beginning to use their knowledge of letters to help them read unfamiliar words, for example, by sounding out the letters 'b', 'o' and 'x' to read 'box' and recognising the initial letter of words. They recognise some rhyming words. Some attempt to write for themselves, but most need support from an adult or the teacher's writing to copy from. In circle time they talk and listen well to each other and to adults.

### **Mathematical development**

84. Higher-attaining children in the Reception class reliably count objects up to 13 and record the numerals. They have knowledge of early mathematical language such as 'bigger than' and 'smaller than' and correctly order the days of the week. They follow a simple mathematical pattern and recognise some two-dimensional shapes. In one lesson most children accurately measured around their partner's head using a piece of card, in preparation for making a party hat. In the Nursery class, most children recognise a circle, triangle and square correctly. They use containers when playing in the water trough to explore capacity, guessing how many it will take to fill a bucket and using terms such as 'full' and 'empty'. They measure using bricks and blocks, developing an understanding of 'longer' and 'shorter'.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

85. In the Nursery class children gain in computer confidence when using the mouse to click and select a letter on the screen. They have learned how to care for animals, such as a dog that was brought into the class and have fed a lamb from a bottle. They use construction kits to make models and explore food, making sandwiches and soup. They have investigated plants and different textures. In the Reception class children observe natural objects and identify similarities and differences. They use the computer to play number and letter games and in a topic about opposites they explored concepts such as wet and dry, day time and night time, hot and cold and old and new objects, for example teddy bears. On a walk to the park they learned the difference between near and far. During the inspection good use was being made of the Christmas season to learn about Christmas traditions and festivities, as well as its significance as a Christian celebration. Children make good progress, particularly in the Reception class, because of the emphasis this area of learning is given and the good range of activities and experiences that are provided.

### **Physical development**



86. Children make good progress in this area of learning and many reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. They move with co-ordination and control and handle tools, such as scissors, with increasing control. In the Nursery class children jump and run showing an awareness of space by avoiding hoops. They develop their motor skills through manipulating small items such as glue sticks, cutting using scissors and joining in with actions to accompany a song. In the Reception class children develop good hand control in a range of tasks, such as when measuring around a classmate's head. When playing outside they confidently climb, ride tricycles, jump and run, showing good spatial awareness. In a class lesson children marched, stretched and jumped to warm up their bodies in preparation for exercise, then moved with co-ordination, control and imagination in dancing to music. They moved at different speeds and levels and worked well in pairs to mirror movement.

### **Creative development**

87. In the Nursery class children paint their own pictures and also paint in outlines drawn by adults, such as a group Christmas tree. Their observational drawings of musical instruments and faces are of a good standard. They learn how to mix colours and print with a variety of objects, such as sponges and corks. Some of their paintings, such as 'trees' and 'sunflowers', are framed for permanent display and this promotes children's self-esteem. They use a range of materials in collage work, producing simple Christmas decorations. In the Reception class children draw and paint using appropriate colours and tools. They explore shade and colour, such as in paintings of night-time. They have made a good attempt at painting snowmen and their paintings of 'Pat the Cat' have pride of place in the class art gallery. They have made models of musical instruments. During the inspection no observation of role-play or musical activities in the reception class took place, although children danced creatively like 'snowflakes' to music in a dance lesson and could identify fast and slow parts of the music. Nursery children sing enthusiastically, identify percussion instruments and play them, although not in time to the music. Little was seen of the use of role-play to further creative development during the inspection and the resources observed, though adequate, were not inspiring to promote pupils' interest. This is an area for development.

### **ENGLISH**

88. Pupils' standards in the national tests in 2002 were well below national averages for all schools and below average when compared with similar schools<sup>7</sup>. Test scores have risen over the last five years and the rise exceeds the national trend, particularly in reading. Girls outperform boys, especially in reading and the school has taken appropriate measures to improve the performance of boys, including purchasing books that will be of specific interest to them; resources are now good. Fewer pupils achieve the higher grade in reading or writing tests and this is partly because the school does not challenge them sufficiently. The school has achieved the targets agreed with the local education authority this year and future targets are realistically challenging.
89. Standards in Year 2 currently are below those found nationally, partly because the school has a larger proportion of pupils with special education needs than most schools. Most pupils make satisfactory progress through Years 1 and 2, often from a low starting point.
90. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make good progress. They are well supported by teachers and support staff. Tasks are made accessible by good explanations and simpler language. Those pupils who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language (EAL) generally make good progress. Trained support assistants aid them and teachers are usually careful about the language they use when giving explanations. The school does not recognise sufficiently well the difference between lower-attaining pupils and EAL pupils and they are often taught together. This inhibits the progress of EAL pupils because they do not hear good language models all the time.

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<sup>7</sup> Similar schools are defined as those having similar percentages of pupils able to claim for free school meals. In this case the school is in the group of schools having between 8 per cent and 20 per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals.

91. By the end of Year 2, pupils are generally confident speakers and listen attentively. They organise their thoughts quite well but lower-attaining pupils often use quite limited vocabulary when answering teachers' questions. They are learning to speak out when answering teachers' questions. In spite of teachers' best efforts, the vocabulary of the majority remains weak and EAL pupils struggle to answer using sentence structure, often opting for a phrase or a single word. Pupils listen attentively to teachers' explanations and react appropriately to instructions. They are starting to listen to detailed instructions, such as when playing the 'sound bingo' game, in which they take great delight.
92. Reading standards in Year 2 are below average. There are fewer higher-attaining pupils than is expected nationally because many pupils start from a low base standard. All pupils read simple texts well. Most read the shared text from, for example, 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' along with the teacher, though EAL boys find this very difficult and need the help of the support assistant. Most use their knowledge of letter sounds successfully to break down words and often look at the picture for some further clues as to the texts' meaning. However, EAL pupils find this strategy very difficult because they do not have the vocabulary to express what they see. Those with more experience are reading suitably difficult texts with harder words and more characters. Whilst higher- and average-attaining pupils are reading with good flow and few errors or hesitations, none of the pupils are yet reading with sufficient intonation or expression. Lower-attaining pupils sometimes 'finger point' at words and memorise the simple text in order to give the impression of reading. Higher-attaining pupils read widely for their age. They understand the texts and answer simple questions about the plot and main characters with ease. They are aware of a few well-known authors and express preferences in their choice of reading material.
93. Writing standards are below those found nationally. In Year 2 pupils write stories, instructions and descriptions using a reasonable vocabulary. They are excited by the interesting activities the teachers prepare for them, like writing about 'the Magic Door' after reading an extract from a 'Narnia' book. Higher-attaining pupils use simple punctuation correctly and spell simple words accurately using their knowledge of letter sounds well. They spell 'ar' words accurately during a lesson on sounds. Handwriting style and letter formation are improving and show good shape and few letter reversals. The work of lower-attaining pupils contains too many simple errors, no punctuation, letter reversals and errors in spelling, which show that they do not understand letter sounds sufficiently well.
94. Teaching is good in all classes. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use well to prepare stimulating and challenging lessons for their classes. For instance, the display of the 'Magic Door' with wintry effects around it helped pupils to imagine the scene of their story much better. They teach letter sounds and writing styles well and pupils use these skills in English and in other subjects confidently. They use resources well to enliven lessons and pupils respond very positively and with great interest. Extra staff are also used well to support pupils who need help and they concentrate better because of this help. Teachers have very positive relationships with their classes and use praise well to motivate everyone. They use innovative teaching methods. For example, in Year 1 a teacher demonstrated writing skills and deliberately made mistakes that the class gleefully corrected. Teachers mark work regularly giving praise and encouragement. They rarely comment on how the work might be improved or on the pupil's English targets.
95. The subject plays a positive part in pupils' cultural and spiritual development. Books are carefully chosen to reflect the rich cultural mix of the school whilst some books, like 'Dogger' and 'The Owl Babies' allow pupils to examine their own feelings and beliefs.
96. Literacy skills are being used in other subjects but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to write using different styles and to research in books and on CD-ROMs in some subjects. The interactive Smart boards are used quite well by teachers in lessons but it was rare to see pupils using the computer during an English lesson other than in the specific times allocated weekly for such lessons in the computer suite.

97. The subject is managed very well. The coordinator shares her commitment to the subject and to the pupils well with colleagues. Teachers are supported very well. Training is organised, expertise is shared and resources are plentiful. The subject's action plan is good and focuses on raising standards, especially of higher-attaining pupils. Test scores are analysed thoroughly and the information is used well to guide future lessons. Lesson planning and teaching are checked regularly and teachers spend a lot of time looking at pupils' work, agreeing its standard and putting together a file of examples, which they can all use.

## **MATHEMATICS**

98. The overall results for Year 2 pupils in the national tests in 2002 were well below the national average and also that for schools where similar proportions of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Nevertheless, since 1998 standards have risen at a rate that exceeds the national trend because of the increasingly effective use being made of the National Numeracy Strategy and the high quality of teaching, linked to improvements in the use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning.
99. The school's results in the national tests for Year 2 are significantly influenced by the fact that all pupils' results are taken into account, including the pupils from the Language Department, whose learning difficulties adversely affect the overall average of the results attained. For example, when the 2002 results are recalculated to omit the results of Language Department pupils, results are below average nationally and compared to similar schools.
100. Currently, standards in Year 2 are below the national average, because there is a larger proportion of lower-attaining pupils than would be expected nationally, which depresses the average. However, all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve good results in relation to their prior learning over time and very good results in many of the lessons observed during the inspection.
101. Year 1 pupils add two single-digit numbers correctly, some with help. Higher-attaining pupils, who form about a quarter of the group, have a swift and accurate recall of appropriate basic addition facts. When working in the context of money, about half of pupils sometimes confuse the number of coins they are using with the value they hold, with a number of lower-attaining pupils having little understanding of the concepts involved. Higher-attaining pupils have a secure grasp of place value of two-digit numbers and count correctly in sequence to 100, while average attainers are secure with the number system to 20 and lower attainers count correctly until they reach two-digit numbers. While lower attaining pupils are developing their understanding of the language involved in mathematics, such as 'longer/shorter' and 'more/less', average- and higher-attaining pupils measure length reasonably accurately using arbitrary measures, such as cubes.
102. Year 2 pupils build on these foundations well. They have a generally appropriate grasp of the number system, which enables them to use a reasonable range of strategies to double single digit numbers accurately to double six. However, while higher-attainers recall the facts swiftly and accurately to double ten and sometimes beyond that, lower-attainers struggle to be accurate beyond doubling three. They use a firm grasp of even and odd numbers well to check the reasonableness of their answers. All pupils link this level of understanding securely to their work on halving shapes, understanding as they do so that this is the opposite of doubling. Lower-attainers, therefore, gain a secure understanding of the need to fold shapes in half accurately to ensure that each half is exactly equal; average attainers match half-shapes correctly to make the whole shape, realising as they do so that two halves make a whole; higher-attainers find a reasonable variety of ways to split a variety of two-dimensional shapes into exact halves. Average-attainers have a sound understanding of basic multiplication as being, for example, two 'groups of' three, while higher-attainers extend this appropriately to realise that multiplication is a form of repeated addition. While lower-attainers are developing a reasonable understanding of how to read the scale on a ruler, average-attainers use rulers correctly to measure straight lines, although they lack sufficient accuracy and higher-attainers measure curved lines reasonably accurately in centimetres.

103. The quality of teaching is good, overall. There are many examples of very good teaching in the lessons seen. Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly and different tasks are chosen well to meet the differing needs of groups of pupils, often using the information gained from their regular and supportive marking of the previous day's work to alter plans to reflect the extent to which pupils have understood their previous tasks. A good example of this was a Year 2 lesson that was altered to ensure that pupils had further appropriate opportunities to practise their skills of doubling numbers. Lessons are carefully prepared, sometimes building logically on the homework set. Good use is made of the Smart boards in each classroom to focus pupils' attention, to ensure that explanations are clearly given and to sustain a good pace to the lessons. For example, in a Year 1 lesson on recognising the value of coins and totalling amounts, the teacher invited pupils to work on the board and to move the required amount of money to match the total required, which involved many of the class and maintained concentration effectively, although the board was fixed at too great a height for many pupils to reach fully to the diagrams.
104. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject. This, together with the very good amount of skilled support they receive from teaching assistants, ensures that the explanations and help given to groups and individuals addresses their problems promptly and fully. This is especially effective for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Teachers sometimes use imaginative strategies to involve pupils and to extend their learning. For example, the use of a programmable toy in a Year 2 lesson enabled pupils to get a good grasp of angles because they had to enter instructions, such as 'Right 180' to turn the toy back on itself and they were able to see the results immediately. Relationships are very good and teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and application to work are high. In addition, tasks are well chosen to meet the different needs of individuals and groups within the class, which means that pupils are interested and work willingly. As a result, they enjoy the subject, their behaviour is very good and lessons are productive. In a very small proportion of lessons, however, although teaching and learning are effective, the detailed explanations of concepts are sometimes not accurate. This was shown in a Year 2 lesson introducing written fractions, where the teacher explained  $\frac{1}{2}$  by saying that numerator represented the whole part and that this was to be divided by the denominator.
105. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well. She has a good grasp of the strengths and areas for development in the subject because she checks the quality of teaching and learning regularly, providing informal feedback to all of her colleagues. Planning systems are securely linked to national guidance, which assures appropriate progression over time. Good assessment procedures ensure that additional help and provision, for example the provision that is linked to an appropriate computer program (known as 'TAMY'), is targeted at those with most need and results in good gains in learning. The information gained from assessment is also used well to set targets for end-of-year levels for each individual and in each year group and is reviewed at regular intervals to judge the success of provision. However, there are no individual detailed targets that would enable teachers and pupils to judge the extent of pupils' achievements more regularly. Good levels of appropriate professional training for teachers have resulted in sustained enthusiasm for the subject, resulting in the production of suitable games to interest and enthuse pupils. As a result, the amount and quality of resources are good.

## SCIENCE

106. In the teacher assessments of science for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2002, standards were well below the national average, with no pupils achieving the higher Level 3. When compared with similar schools, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 was very low, in the bottom five per cent of the country. More pupils achieved Level 2 in the area of "Life Processes and Living Things" than in the other areas of science.
107. Inspection evidence indicates that standards throughout the school are similar to those expected nationally. The school has had a recent focus on developing investigative approaches to science and this is having success in promoting higher standards than achieved previously in this area.

A more structured approach to planning investigations has been provided for pupils and this enables them to consider how to carry out a fair test. The higher standards achieved in life and living processes are because teachers make good use of resources in this area, including the school's wildlife area and pond.

108. Pupils in Year 2 sort materials correctly according to their properties, for example, whether they are hard or soft. They have a secure understanding that some materials will change when heated or cooled and pupils of higher prior attainment accurately predict what might happen. They have a satisfactory knowledge of the conditions needed to sustain life. In a Year 1 lesson pupils correctly identify five features of living things and, with help, sort pictures accurately into things that were living and things that were not. In doing so pupils of average and higher attainment give valid reasons for their choices, building on what they had learned when working with the teacher. Year 1 pupils correctly label the main parts of the body and sensibly suggest which foods are healthy, the highest attaining explaining why.
109. Throughout the school pupils make good progress in science given that, on entry to Year 1, only a minority has achieved the Early Learning Goals in knowledge and understanding of the world. Their learning is good because of the high quality teaching and the fact that they have very good attitudes to the subject. They listen well, enjoy their lessons and try hard to improve. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils learning about reversibility watched attentively as the teacher boiled a kettle and enthusiastically offered suggestions as to how steam was formed.
110. Pupils who have learning difficulties make good progress because of the support they receive, as do pupils who have English as an additional language, because of clear explanations and range of teacher approaches adopted.
111. Teaching in science is very good. Teachers plan their lessons very well with clearly identified learning outcomes that build logically on previous lessons. They take care to use the correct scientific vocabulary such as 'condense' or 'predict'. Science is effectively taught as part of cross-curricular topics, which incorporate the required units of work appropriately. This approach ensures that good links are made with other subjects and that learning is set in a meaningful context for pupils.
112. The leadership and management of science are very good. The co-ordinator is well qualified and has very good subject knowledge and regularly participates in training and development, subsequently sharing her knowledge with all staff. She carefully monitors the subject through looking at teachers' plans and pupils' work, observing lessons and talking to pupils. These activities enable her to have a clear view of the subjects' strengths and areas for development. A current focus is to improve the number of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 at the end of Year 2. This has been carefully planned for by identifying the precise learning needed to achieve Level 3 and incorporating it into medium-term planning and checking pupils' progress through assessment. Overall, assessment is good. It is well planned to take place at the end of each taught unit and used effectively to plan future work for pupils at all levels. The co-ordinator regularly reports on progress in science to the governing body.
113. Resources are good and are well organised according to the units of work taught in the school. There are satisfactory links with literacy through the use of large print research books that can be shared with the class as a whole and with information and communication technology through the use of CD ROMs, although this is recognised as an area for further development. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' moral development through the emphasis on respect for animals and drugs awareness in Year 2. Social development is encouraged through collaborative group work. The school ensures that pupils who have language difficulties or English as an additional language are fully included in all aspects of science through the provision of practical experiences and by focusing on the relevant scientific language in all lessons.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

114. Standards in art are in line with expectation for age by the end of Year 2. When they enter Year 1 pupils are achieving standards that are just below the levels expected by the Early Learning Goals. Overall, pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding and their achievement is good.
115. Pupils in Year 1 draw well, showing good attention to detail, colour and proportion, as seen in their self-portraits. They experiment with different tools and techniques, for example pencil, pastel, charcoal and crayon. They develop an awareness of shades and colour mixing and work well with three-dimensional art when looking at sculpture. Pupils in Year 2 continue to make good progress in developing their observational skills, as seen in their paintings of poppies to commemorate Remembrance Day. They use a range of tools and techniques, for example using paper and fabric in work on weaving and printing when looking at natural and man-made patterns. A particular strength is the use of photography. Pupils copy photographs using pencil and crayon and evaluate their work, identifying similarities and differences. They use photographs to create a montage and to develop storyboards, building on work about holidays and creating tableaux to photograph themselves.
116. It was not possible to observe the teaching of art during the inspection, but evidence from teachers' planning, samples of work and discussion with the co-ordinator indicate that it is good.
117. The leadership and management of art are very good. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic about ensuring that art has a high profile in the school. She has good subject knowledge, which she actively seeks to maintain and develop and provides good support, training and development for all staff. The monitoring of the subject is very good and includes looking at teachers' planning, lesson observation, discussion with teachers and pupils and work sampling. This enables the co-ordinator to have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and to prioritise areas for development, resources and training needs. The curriculum is good with all areas having suitable coverage and planning that ensures a continuity of experience and a progression in learning for all pupils. Art and design makes a very good contribution to pupil's spiritual and cultural development by looking at the works of famous artists such as Van Gogh and William Morris and by improving pupils' self-esteem through valuing their efforts using a range of styles. Records of pupils' progress are kept and a termly award for art is to be introduced to provide motivation, particularly for more able and talented pupils. Resources for art are currently satisfactory, but are set to improve when money is received following a successful bid for a grant. This is intended to enhance provision and standards by funding the acquisition of cameras, visiting artists and visits to exhibitions.
118. The subject has provided very good links with parents through a workshop in art and design on National Art Day. Parents and children worked together on collaborative collages, which are on display in the school hall. This made a very good contribution to developing links with parents and their understanding of the provision of art in the school.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

119. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language, achieve satisfactory results in relation to their prior attainment and, by the end of Year 2, attain standards that meet those expected nationally.
120. Year 1 pupils design and make mechanisms that slide and move in appropriate ways. They pay sound attention to both the practicality and the aesthetics of their designs, drawing their anticipated products clearly. They develop satisfactory ability to think ahead when they make lists of the ingredients they require for fruit salads, for example. Year 2 pupils also make clear drawings, for instance, of the poppies they intend to make, linked to their work on Armistice Day, or of ice cream sundaes. In this year group lower-attaining pupils give logical but incomplete instructions while average and higher-attaining pupils write instructions that are increasingly comprehensive and detailed and are occasionally labelled. When making moving toys and winding mechanisms, pupils select the materials they require independently from a small range.

Using mathematical skills soundly, they measure and carefully cut out paper of the required size to cover the faces of their boxes but none use alternative means of covering the boxes, for example by wrapping paper around them. In one lesson, one girl showed exceptional cutting skills when she cut out a beautifully shaped small reindeer. Pupils pay good attention to turning their designs into models that both work and look good. About a third of pupils in Year 2 forecast what they would need to bring their designs to reality but there are very few examples of labelling to annotate their drawings.

121. Because of the timing of the inspection, only one lesson was observed. However, it is clear from the scrutiny of pupils' books and display work that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall. Teachers' planning is thorough and appropriate objectives for each lesson are identified, based firmly on what pupils have already experienced. In the Year 2 lesson observed, teaching and learning were good because the teacher had a good understanding of the subject, which enabled her to lay appropriate and repeated emphasis on the basic process and concepts involved in the exercise, for example the stability and suitability of the models for the purpose intended. However, on occasions, pupils were directed too closely which, although deliberate on the part of the teacher as the pupils had had little experience of this type of work with mechanisms, limited the opportunities they had to explore alternative solutions to the problems they faced. In addition, the questions asked by the teacher, although highly appropriate, were phrased in such a way as to beg a single correct answer rather than challenging pupils to justify their own ideas and thoughts. Nevertheless, the teacher enjoyed skilled support from a good number of teaching assistants, which ensured that when pupils met problems or needed something explained, this happened promptly so that no time was lost and pupils worked productively. Because relationships were very good, pupils worked with good levels of effort and concentration, enjoyed the tasks, behaved very well and were willing and confident to attempt new skills. This led to good learning for all pupils.
122. The subject is led and managed soundly and the co-ordinator monitors her colleagues' plans regularly. The scheme of work is based securely on national guidance with a regular system of assessment at the end of units of work, which enables teachers to alter subsequent plans in the light of what has gone well and what needs improvement. Since the last inspection, teachers have received appropriate professional training and, as they have remained in the same year groups for some time, are gaining in confidence and familiarity with the required elements of the curriculum. Resources for teachers and for the pupils are satisfactory. There is no evidence that the potential of information and communication technology has been exploited to enhance pupils' learning in this subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

123. By the age of seven pupils attain the standards expected for their age. All pupils achieve well and make good progress, including pupils with learning difficulties and pupils who speak English as a second language.
124. All pupils make good progress in their learning because teachers plan interesting lessons that children enjoy. They are encouraged to develop their curiosity, knowledge and appreciation of other countries and locations. Pupils in Year 1 are guided to prepare questions to ask a visiting parent talking about Finland. They all know Finland has lots of lakes and mountains and it is much colder than in England. Higher-attaining pupils explain it is colder because it is nearer to the North Pole, following which the teacher uses maps and a globe effectively to show how near Finland is to the North Pole. Pupils then prepare a suitable travel brochure writing and drawing about life in Finland. Average-attaining pupils draw and write about two things they remember and lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs write about one fact they have learnt about Finland, such as there are lots of mountains and lakes and they draw pictures. Lessons are interesting and fun. Pupils experience eating rye bread and listen to a familiar story told in Finnish and higher attaining pupils comment on the similarities of some of the Finnish and English sounds.

125. The good progress continues into Year 2. Pupils know and understand a suitable range of facts about other countries, such as Egypt. They have developed a sound concept of distance, for example they know Egypt is nearer to England than Japan is. They are developing a good understanding of environmental conditions; for example, they know Egypt is a hot country and suggest clothes for 'Bonnie Bunny' to take in her suitcase. Higher attaining pupils explain clearly the difference between a physical feature and a special feature. Lessons contribute well to spiritual and cultural development, as pupils are stimulated to appreciate the cultural differences and show joy, interest and excitement learning about different places. Pupils show good levels of independence as they record their own difficult spellings and words they encounter.
126. The quality of teaching is very good overall with instances of excellent teaching in Year 1. Teachers generate a lot of interest and enthusiasm for different countries because lessons are extremely well prepared and delivered at a very good pace. The work is well matched to pupils' differing abilities and pupils with special educational needs are supported very well. Teachers use information and communication technology well to enrich learning. They use the Internet to show pictures of Cairo when pupils are learning about Egypt and this helps pupils contrast and compare conditions in Cairo with London. They make good use of Smart boards and resources in lessons. Pupils are encouraged to use literacy skills well; they talk and independently write about different places. Assessment is good and teachers use it well as a basis for their future planning. The subject is very well planned and makes good use of the local environment for example pupils find out about controlling parking outside their school and write about safety aspects.
127. The co-ordinator leads the subject very well. The school has adapted national guidelines for their overall planning and adapts these plans further to meet the specific needs of all current pupils. The co-ordinator checks planning and lessons and has a very clear understanding of the skills to be taught. Visits and visitors such as parents are very well used to enrich learning. Geography resources are good, including a wide selection of books in the library to enhance learning.

## **HISTORY**

128. Standards in Year 2 are broadly in line with those found nationally. Pupils have a growing understanding of major events in British history, like the Gunpowder plot and the Great Fire of London and where they fit into a time line. They know about Diana, Princess of Wales and have considered what makes her an important historical figure. They have used the Internet to research information about her. Nearly all pupils make satisfactory progress, including those with learning difficulties. The exceptions are the pupils with English as an additional language (EAL), who make good progress. These pupils have very little understanding of British history and have to learn the appropriate technical vocabulary too. From this low starting point they achieve as well as other pupils.
129. Very few lessons were observed because of the timing of the inspection. Teaching is of good quality. Teachers ensure that pupils understand what they are going to learn about which helps them focus on 'historical thinking'. The Smart boards and other resources are used well and pupils enjoy watching the lesson unfold on the screen. Historical vocabulary is used regularly and correctly and, consequently, pupils learn it in context. 'Timelines' are used effectively to ensure pupils' understanding of when events occurred. Support staff help pupils with EAL and special educational needs well. Tasks are often adapted to make them more accessible to these pupils. Pupils enjoy history because the teachers present facts in a lively way and involve them in discussions. They recall an interesting visit to the local cenotaph in some detail. 'Talking partners' are used well to allow pupils to discuss their thoughts with a friend before have to answer questions.
130. The subjects contribute positively to pupils' personal development. They learn how to behave on visits and for visiting speakers. They develop their social skills through pair and group work and enhance their understanding of British culture through the lesson content.



131. The subject is managed very well. The action plan appropriately focuses on standards. Good use is made of information gained from regular reviews of how well topics have been taught to alter subsequent plans, as necessary. Teaching and lesson planning are checked and evaluated and teachers are given appropriate advice, when necessary. Very good resources have been purchased for each of the study units and these are used well, for instance to help pupils understand about Victorian life.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

132. Year 2 pupils attain standards that match those expected for their age. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve satisfactory results in relation to their prior attainment.
133. In Year 2, pupils enter text carefully, sometimes using two hands correctly. Keyboard skills are often rather slow as they search for the correct key. They change the size, colour and type of font to create the desired effect for their display work. They use the shift and space bar keys correctly, for example to form capital letters. They know that the program automatically underlines words that are spelled incorrectly, but they do not know how to use the program to correct them. They load, save and print their work appropriately. They have a secure understanding that ICT is about more than just computers, realising that information can be gathered and stored in a number of different ways, including computer programs, the Internet and books. Pupils use art programs to draw satisfactory pictures, using a range of appropriate tools, such as the airbrush and infill commands. Year 1 pupils give programmable toys series of instructions to control their movement increasingly accurately across the classroom floor.
134. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and the available programs. This ensures that they match tasks and resources closely to the needs of pupils. Teachers' use of the newly purchased Smart boards is very good and serves to focus pupils' attention well as well as ensuring that the introductory sessions move at a swift pace because teachers have prepared their lessons thoroughly. However, many pupils are unable to make full use of this resource because the boards are fixed too high up on the walls for them to reach above about halfway up them. Relationships are very good between adults and pupils and between the pupils themselves. This means that pupils are confident to attempt the work set because they know their efforts will be recognised and also that the pupils collaborate and, when necessary, share resources very sensibly and effectively. Teachers and skilled teaching assistants work very effectively together, ensuring that all pupils enjoy the subject and sustain very good levels of concentration. In the most effective lessons, for example in a Year 2 lesson to write letters to Father Christmas, teachers use the expertise of teaching assistants very well, for example to finish off the work with some of the class in the very useful ICT suite, while they attend to the needs of the rest of the class. This ensures that no time is lost and all pupils are fully involved in learning for a very high proportion of the time, making very good gains in learning.
135. Teachers use ICT effectively in other subjects. For example, in mathematics teachers prepare the introductory parts of the main lessons very closely using the Smart boards as a kind of interactive overhead projector, which is very effective in retaining pupils' attention and explaining concepts and activities clearly. In a Year 2 religious education lesson, the use of a videotaped cartoon about the Nativity was effective in promoting reflection on the meaning of Christ's birth. To support Year 1 science work on living and non-living things, the use of a digital camera, linked to the Smart board, showed pupils clearly the detailed outline of small creatures, such as bugs. In addition, the co-ordinator runs a 'cyber club', which is targeted to include those pupils known not to have computers at home in an effort to overcome the potential differences in learning that might otherwise occur. This is a very good example of the way that the school makes every effort to ensure that all pupils benefit equally from all it has to offer.
136. The subject co-ordinator leads and manages the subject very effectively. She has a high level of personal expertise and enthusiasm and successfully communicates them to her colleagues. She has overseen very helpful recent developments in the subject that include improvements in resources, including the very well equipped ICT suite, training for colleagues and developments in

planning and assessment systems, both of which are good. The school has its own website, which is updated regularly to celebrate, for example, the best work done each week by pupils and the weekly entries in the 'Well Done' book. A suitable Internet policy has been formulated to protect pupils fully and is practised in every class.

## **MUSIC**

137. By the end of Year 2, pupils' standards match those expected nationally. They achieve satisfactory results compared to their prior attainment, including those with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language.
138. Pupils in Year 2 compose a simple score using the symbols they have devised earlier to depict instruments and the instructions of how to play them, such as long, short, loud and soft. In this they build well on their previous learning, including the work done in Year 1 to play patterns of sounds from the notation they have 'written' as a class group with the teacher. Year 2 pupils collaborate well, with one from each group being elected to be the conductor, whose directions they follow closely while rehearsing and improving their performance. They play their instruments sensibly and carefully, participating fully and making good efforts to produce a piece of music that was as good as it could be in the time given. About half the group correctly name a reasonable variety of instruments, such as claves, maracas and tambourines.
139. The singing in assemblies is good. Pupils pay good attention to the sounds they produce, for example, singing lullabies softly and sweetly and to pitch, tempo and duration. In this they are helped by sensitive piano playing, which leads and supports their efforts well.
140. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons thoroughly. Their expectations of pupils are high and they manage them well and this results in pupils who know what they have to do in both academic and personal terms and who behave well in lessons. Pupils are confident learners who are very willing to 'have a go' because relationships are very good and they know that their efforts will be appreciated whether right or wrong. The amount of resources is sufficient for every pupil to have an instrument to play, which ensures that all pupils are fully involved in learning for a high proportion of the time and helps them to enjoy making music. In lessons where the teaching is more effective, as in a Year 1 lesson, teachers have a good understanding of the subject, which allows them to teach basic skills correctly, such as how exactly to play a chime bar to achieve either a long or a short sound and to explain clearly, for example, the difference between duration and volume by reference to well chosen recorded music. Where teaching, although satisfactory, is less effective, it is because the teacher tends to direct pupils' work too closely, limiting their exploration of sounds and does not involve pupils fully in evaluating their own work.
141. In recent years, the co-ordinator has made a good contribution to developments in the subject through teaching a series of lessons in each class in which she has demonstrated each unit of work in the scheme of work. She has also given colleagues a number of helpful ideas for the teaching of singing. This has improved the confidence of her colleagues and, consequently, the quality of teaching and learning. It has also served to give her a good idea of the strengths and areas for improvement in the subject. The scheme of work is satisfactory and has been strengthened by the purchase of sufficient instruments to ensure that every class has good access to a range of instruments from around the world. This makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development, as does the inclusion in the scheme of song types from different countries, such as calypsos, aboriginal music and songs from the Pakistani culture. Assessment procedures are informal but satisfactory, overall. They enable teachers to alter subsequent plans to improve the curriculum over time but do not concentrate on the individual achievements or needs of each pupil.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

142. By the end of Year 2 pupils attain the expected standards in physical education. They achieve well and make good progress in their learning. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language, make the same progress in relation to their prior attainment.
143. Pupils in Year 1 know how to lift and carry apparatus safely. Higher-attaining pupils can perform a range of different jumps landing with resilience. They balance well on different body parts and are aware of whether they are balancing on small body parts such as hands and feet or large body parts such as tummies and back. All pupils confidently travel on different body parts. Higher-attaining pupils are beginning to travel in wheeling actions using their hands and feet and they can transfer their body weight onto hands as they bunny jump around the room. All pupils are learning to control and hold the body still when they are balancing.
144. Pupils build on the good progress they made in Year 1. Pupils in Year 2 use space in the hall well and they travel in different directions. Balance is developed well. Pupils balance a beanbag on different body parts and travel around the room. Pupils have learnt to adapt their body movement to jumping and landing, for example they all bend their knees appropriately. Their ability to control a ball is developing well; they know how to throw and catch and bounce a ball. Higher-attaining pupils can perform two claps before catching a ball. Higher-attaining pupils are learning what to do to gain possession of the ball when playing in a game with two players on either side. They are beginning to use the space at the side of their opponent to run into to gain possession of the ball. Pupils explain what they have to do to improve and are aware of what they are doing because teachers are constantly checking and reinforcing learning. Pupils develop their ability to work with a partner and their aiming skills well. For example, higher-attaining pupils pass a ball to a partner by first bouncing it into a hoop. Pupils have a good understanding and awareness of the importance of physical activity because teachers draw attention to this aspect. They know their heart is beating faster because of the exercise. Dance skills are developed well. Pupils create their own dance mirroring a partner in a greeting dance.
145. The quality of teaching is good overall. All pupils change briskly for lessons taking approximately two minutes. This expectation and pace then set the tone for the rest of the lessons. Pupils benefit from three lessons per week, which ensures continuing progress in all areas of learning – games, gymnastics and dance. Lessons are well planned and teachers have a good knowledge of the subject. Teachers modify the task well for pupils with special educational needs. For example they are asked to perform under-arm passes to a partner rather than over-arm passes. The pace of lessons is good. On rare occasions, pupils are over-challenged and placed in a game with too many players too soon. As a result, lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs gain less possession of the ball. Attitudes and behaviour are very good because teachers draw attention to this aspect and pupils are clear about what is expected. In the better lessons teachers use their observational skills well to identify pupils performance and comment on how they could improve. Literacy skills are used well, pupils are encouraged to talk about and learn a good range of physical education vocabulary.
146. Leadership and management of physical education are very good. Teachers have adapted national planning to suit the individual needs of the school. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching and learning in lessons and checks planning. There is a good range of appropriate resources, which are stored, centrally and easily accessible. The good range of extra-curricular activities extends and enhances learning in physical education.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

147. Standards in Year 2 are broadly similar to those anticipated by the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils understand the Christmas story and are beginning to understand why it is important to Christians. They have heard stories from Islam and understand that Mohammed is important to Muslims. Other celebrations are used to enable pupils to start to understand different world religions, for example Hanukkah and Chinese New Year. Almost all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, make satisfactory progress. The exceptions are those pupils in the early stages of learning English as an additional language who are starting with neither the specialist

vocabulary nor any idea of Christian festivals. They attain similar standards to their classmates so their progress is good.

148. Very few lessons were observed because the school teaches this subject with history and geography as 'topic'. Teaching is good and pupils are challenged to consider traditional stories from different viewpoints. Teachers ensure pupils understand what they are going to learn and this helps focus their attention well. Resources are used to stimulate pupils' interest, such as the video of the Christmas story. Teachers have a good understanding of the programme, which enables them to keep the lesson lively. Pupils respond positively to the lessons, are interested in the stories of Mohammed, visits to the church and visiting speakers who talk about Islam. Pupils mostly discuss the stories and ideas. Written work is usually worksheets or pictures. Only occasionally do pupils use a word processing package to enhance the presentation of the pupils' work.
149. The subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. They enjoy learning about world religions and relate them to their own experiences. They are starting to reflect on the views of Christians and Muslims and trying to understand 'why they believe, what they believe'. They cooperate well when using 'talking partners' to organise their thoughts before discussing important ideas.
150. The subject is managed well. A clear and useful programme has been available for teachers to follow, which is closely based on the locally agreed syllabus. Suitable resources are available to teachers to support their lessons.