

INSPECTION REPORT

MONKWICK INFANT SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Colchester

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114741

Headteacher: Mrs C M Chadbourne

Reporting inspector: Ruth Frith
2490

Dates of inspection: 31 March – 3 April 2003

Inspection number: 252095

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Road Monkwick Colchester Essex
Postcode:	CO2 8NN
Telephone number:	01206 573849
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr T Sutton
Date of previous inspection:	23/03/1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2490	Ruth Frith	Registered inspector	Geography History Foundation stage Educational inclusion English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9744	Peter Brown	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21103	Val Ives	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs	
20063	Gerard Slamon	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Religious education	
27243	Ian Tatchell	Team inspector	Science Music Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	18
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	21
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	25

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Monkwick Infant School and Nursery is an average size community school for boys and girls aged three to seven years. There are 232 pupils on roll, including 78 children in the nursery who attend part time. The school is situated on the edge of a large housing estate and families live in either council or other rented accommodation, housing association properties or private housing. The percentage of pupils receiving free school meals is above the national average. On entry to school, overall, pupils show levels of attainment well below those seen nationally for children of the same age. Currently, 41 pupils are identified as having special educational needs with a further 39 pupils being monitored closely because of perceived difficulties with their learning. One pupil has a statement of special educational need. Most of the pupils with special educational needs who require regular additional support have moderate learning, emotional, behavioural, speech or communication difficulties. A small number of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and six speak English as an additional language. Five of these are at the early stages of learning English. Two pupils come from a Traveller background.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Monkwick Infant School and Nursery is a good school with many significant strengths and is well placed to improve further. Staff provide a supportive and caring ethos which promotes effective learning and enables pupils to flourish. Pupils achieve well and standards are rising in most areas. The oldest pupils are currently attaining below average standards in English, mathematics and science and average standards in all other subjects. The quality of teaching is very good in the nursery and reception classes and good elsewhere. The school offers a broad and interesting curriculum which successfully incorporates effective support for those pupils who experience difficulty with their learning or who are at the early stages of learning English. Leadership and management of the school are good and the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well and standards are rising in most subjects.
- Very good foundations for learning are established in the nursery and reception classes.
- The quality of teaching is very good in the nursery and reception classes and good in Years 1 and 2. Support staff make a positive contribution to the pupils' learning.
- The school's nurturing environment and ethos of respect and co-operation successfully promote good attitudes and behaviour resulting in very good relationships and personal development.
- Girls and boys of all abilities, and those from different backgrounds, are well provided for and included in all aspects of school life.
- Staff provide a rich and stimulating curriculum which maintains pupils' interest and concentration.
- The school is well led and managed.

What could be improved

- Attendance.
- The use of computers.
- Pupils' skills of research and enquiry.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement since the last inspection has been good and staff demonstrate a clear commitment to further improvement. The school has successfully addressed the key issues arising from the last inspection in 1998. The aims of the school are now regularly reviewed and these, together with the curriculum policies, provide a secure basis for school planning and improvement. The governing body is now better organised and, together with staff, is more involved in the school development planning process. Subject co-ordinators have developed their roles and now promote and monitor their subjects more effectively. Senior managers perform their duties well and focus more sharply on school improvement. In addition, staff have developed new schemes of work and ways of assessing

what pupils have learnt and use this information to plan appropriate work for pupils of different ages and abilities. Consequently, the quality of teaching is better. The building of the nursery has significantly improved educational provision for the youngest children.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

In the nursery and reception classes, children achieve well and are likely to reach the standards that are expected in their knowledge and understanding of the world, and in their creative and physical development by the time they start Year 1. However, a significant number of children are unlikely to reach the expected standards in communication, early reading, writing and number skills. Children are already reaching the national targets for their personal, social and emotional development. In the 2002 national tests, Year 2 pupils achieved standards which were below average in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared with the results from similar schools, however, the standards were average. Results of the 2002 teacher assessments for science indicate below average standards. These results show an improvement on the position last year for writing and mathematics and a similar picture in reading and science. Evidence from this inspection indicates that the current group of Year 2 pupils is achieving well in English, mathematics and science, although the overall standards remain below average. Pupils are working at levels appropriate for their age in all other subjects. Pupils are not reaching higher levels in information and communication technology (ICT) because the teachers have not yet developed the most efficient use of the newly established computer suite. Pupils with special educational needs, English as an additional language and the higher-attainers are supported and challenged well. They make progress similar to their peers. No significant difference was noted in the progress and achievement of boys and girls during the inspection, although, in the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2002, girls did better than boys in reading, writing and mathematics.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are interested in what they do and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave well and are polite and courteous to adults and each other.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils become increasingly more responsible and considerate as they progress through the school. They are sensitive to the needs of others. Relations between pupils from different ethnic backgrounds are good.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. For the last academic year, attendance rates were below the national average.

The pupils' good attitudes and behaviour, and their very good personal development and relationships, provide a good basis for their learning and make a positive contribution to the levels of attainment they achieve.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Very 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 has improved significantly since the last inspection. This is due largely to the increase in very good teaching and the lack of unsatisfactory lessons. Teaching is very good in the nursery, where the good support and encouragement offered by staff ensure that the children settle quickly and develop good attitudes to learning and good behaviour. These strengths are systematically built upon in the reception classes where children become more familiar with school procedures and expectations. Throughout the school, teachers focus on developing the core skills of literacy and numeracy within a broad range of curriculum experiences. They have adopted the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well and the teaching of English and mathematics is good. Teaching is good in specific ICT lessons, but teachers are not yet planning enough opportunities for pupils to use the new computer suite or to practise these skills in other subjects. Teachers are not making the most of resources such as the library to develop pupils' enquiry skills and do not systematically develop the pupils' ability to work on their own. The school's valuable additional support for pupils with special educational needs results in these pupils achieving in line with their abilities. Higher-attaining pupils are challenged appropriately. The needs of pupils speaking English as an additional language are well met through good class teaching, as are those of pupils from the Traveller community. Teachers manage pupils well and have high expectations of work and behaviour.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. Pupils receive a very good range of interesting learning experiences which maintains their concentration and helps them to develop good attitudes to learning. More attention needs to be given, however, to developing pupils' library and ICT skills.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The needs of pupils are quickly identified and they receive good support. The curriculum is adapted, when necessary, to enhance their learning and this ensures they make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported and fully involved in all activities. Good progress is made as a result of good quality teaching.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Provision for pupils' personal development through the promotion of spiritual awareness and knowledge of social and moral responsibilities is very good. Provision to raise pupils' awareness of their own and others' cultures is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Staff have good knowledge and understanding of their pupils and monitor and support their academic performance and personal development well.

The school tries hard to encourage parents to become involved with their children's learning at home and in school and the quality of information provided is good. Overall, links with parents are satisfactory.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The recently appointed headteacher has quickly gained the confidence of staff, governors and parents. She is effective in creating a team of staff who are keen to continue to improve the quality of education they provide. Other senior staff ably assists her.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The relatively inexperienced governing body has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They fulfil their legal responsibilities and have identified priorities for improvement, for example, procedures for monitoring health and safety.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Staff have improved the ways in which they evaluate their work and have established a system of monitoring and target setting that is guiding school improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school manages and uses its resources satisfactorily. Correct financial procedures are followed and staff and governors obtain the best value for their spending. The school has identified the need for further training in financial management.

There are sufficient suitably qualified teachers to ensure that class sizes are not too large. Support staff are effective and the good support they provide is a contributory factor in the pupils' learning. Learning resources are satisfactory overall and used well to support learning throughout the school. The accommodation is satisfactory, although inspectors would endorse the view of managers, governors and parents in relation to the improvements needed in the playground.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school and make good progress. • The staff help children to become responsible and this encourages them to behave well. • Teaching is good and children are expected to work hard. • Parents feel comfortable talking to staff about any queries they might have and feel well informed. • The school works closely with parents. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The playground. • More extra-curricular activities.

Inspectors endorse the positive views held by parents and the regard they have for the school. They looked closely at the issues raised by a very small number of parents, and agree that pupils would benefit from a more stimulating playground. They believe extra-curricular activities to be good but appreciate that these are for pupils in Year 2 only.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children are admitted to the nursery after the age of three. Although some children are achieving levels expected for their age, a significant number are not, particularly in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Children make good progress in the nursery and reception classes due to very good teaching and the provision of a very good curriculum. By the time they start in Year 1, children currently in the reception classes are likely to reach national standards in creative and physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Standards are likely to be below those seen for children of the same age nationally in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development but above those for personal, social and emotional development.
2. Results of the 2002 standard assessment tests for pupils in Year 2 indicate that, in comparison with all schools, pupils' attainment was below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Results of the 2002 standards teacher assessments in science indicate that the number of pupils reaching the expected level for their age (Level 2) was below average. When compared with pupils from similar schools, pupils attained average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. These results indicate an improvement in writing and mathematics and a levelling off in reading and science from the previous year. The trend of improvement over the last five years is broadly average, with a greater improvement in writing.
3. Evidence from this inspection indicates that many pupils currently in Year 2 are working at a level appropriate for their age in English but few are working above that. Consequently, overall standards are below average. Pupils make good progress, supported well by a range of good strategies which support their speaking, listening, reading and writing. For example, the strong focus on the teaching of phonics across the school helps pupils to learn the sounds that letters make, and the use of reading partners increases their confidence. The school has successfully introduced the National Literacy Strategy since the last inspection and this has helped to raise the quality of teaching and learning. This, in turn, has supported the rise in standards since then.
4. Standards in mathematics are below average for pupils in Year 2, although evidence from national tests and information provided by the school show that their achievement is better than at the time of the last inspection. Standards have risen and are now closer to the national average. Very good assessment procedures are in place which are used well to track individual pupils' progress and target appropriate work. The adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy has helped to improve the quality of teaching throughout the school, which, in turn, supports pupils' progress.
5. The percentage of Year 2 pupils working at the level appropriate for their age in science is higher than at the time of the last inspection. However, overall standards are still just below average. This is mainly because those with special educational needs are not likely to reach this level despite the good progress that they make. Overall, standards are rising due to improvements in teaching, particularly the way teachers use the assessment of pupils' work to plan the next stage in learning.
6. Pupils in Year 2 are currently reaching average levels of attainment in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, ICT, music, physical education and religious education. Pupils are not reaching higher standards in ICT because the school has only recently completed the computer suite and staff are not yet incorporating ICT into their planning in all subjects in order to make the most effective use of this resource.
7. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those learning English as an additional language is small. As a result, it is difficult to analyse accurately trends of attainment and progress of these pupils. Nevertheless, inspection findings show that these pupils are

supported well, have full access to the school's curriculum and their progress is similar to that of their peers. Although differences in the attainment of girls and boys have been noted in national test results for seven-year-olds, no significant differences were seen during the inspection.

8. Pupils of higher attainment are challenged well and reach standards in line with their abilities. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make progress similar to their peers when taking account of their prior knowledge. They make good progress towards the targets identified for them in their individual education plans. This is the result of very good support both from the co-ordinator and class teachers and from teaching and learning support assistants.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils display good attitudes to school. They are enthusiastic to learn and are keen to participate in the various extra-curricular opportunities provided by the school. In lessons, pupils are attentive and display a willingness to work independently or in collaboration with others when given the opportunity to do so.
10. The behaviour of pupils throughout the school is good. They work quietly and with purpose allowing them to take full advantages of the many learning opportunities available to them. Instances of disruptive behaviour are rare but, in the few cases which do arise, behaviour management strategies are used well to defuse difficult situations. In the playground, behaviour is equally good. Pupils play purposefully often in the form of organised games. Occasionally, play can be somewhat boisterous but without any malice or intent to hurt. Instances of vandalism, or other forms of destructive behaviour, are virtually unknown. No cases of bullying were observed during the course of the inspection nor indeed of any other form of oppressive behaviour. There were no exclusions during the previous academic year.
11. Pupils of all ages have a good appreciation of how their actions impact on other people. The school effectively fosters this awareness and pupils are constantly reminded that what they do, and what they say, can be upsetting to their family and friends. This message is regularly reinforced through the use of circle time when pupils sit in a circle, discuss issues and talk about their feelings. In one particular session observed, pupils in Year 2 openly discussed how their actions could affect others. Pupils, throughout the school, display a good respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. They fully understand that differences exist between people but do not allow these to impede relationships.
12. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to demonstrate initiative and responsibility. Initiative is appropriately encouraged in lessons, an example being in a Year 2 music lesson where pupils were given the opportunity to volunteer themselves as spokesperson for their particular activity group. Responsibility is encouraged through participation in the "buddy patrol", where pupils help others in the playground, and as a classroom helper. Teachers recognise, and exploit, opportunities for pupils to display initiative and exercise responsibility, by giving them appropriate tasks and challenges. However, there are too few planning opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to work independently, for example on small research tasks.
13. Relationships between pupils, and with adults, are very good and are a major strength of the school. Pupils collaborate very effectively with each other in the classroom, working either in pairs or groups. Out of the classroom strong social bonds have been forged by mutual regard for one another. Relationships with adults, both teaching and non-teaching, are also very good and are based on respect and confidence. The strength of these relationships provides a solid foundation on which academic and personal development can be built.
14. Levels of attendance at the school are unsatisfactory, falling below the national average. The level of unauthorised absence is higher than the national average. Punctuality is satisfactory although a minority of pupils regularly arrive at school late. Registration is carried out quickly and efficiently in accordance with legal requirements.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The school has significantly improved the quality of teaching since the last inspection and this has helped to enhance the progress which pupils make and the standards they achieve. Teaching is very good in the nursery and reception classes and good in the rest of the school. In the lessons observed, teaching was good or better in 81 per cent and very good or occasionally excellent in 45 per cent. This quality of teaching reflects the value placed on supporting staff and encouraging them to do well. A good programme of professional development is in place and teachers regularly share their expertise and good practice, for example through planning their lessons in year group teams. All these features, together with the strong team spirit present in the school and the commitment of staff, result in good practice.
16. The very good teaching in the nursery helps children settle quickly and is an important factor in the way children develop very good personal, emotional and social skills. This is built upon in the reception classes when children become more familiar with school routines and expectations. Teachers and support staff in the nursery and reception classes have a good understanding of how young children learn and use this to plan a good range of activities which maintains the children's interest and supports their learning. A good balance is made between direct teaching and activities which encourage the children's ability to make choices and work independently or with each other. The support staff give valuable help to children and work with the teachers to provide a consistent approach to teaching and learning.
17. These good features are systematically built upon in Years 1 and 2, where the teaching is good and sometimes better. Teachers focus well on developing the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and have successfully used the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to raise standards. Staff have identified the need to continue to improve the pupils' writing, which was a weakness identified in the last inspection report. Now, there are well-planned opportunities for developing pupils' writing skills and for using these in other lessons besides English. This has resulted in good improvement. Similarly, teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy and very good assessment procedures to set appropriate work which meets the needs of all pupils. This has improved the quality of mathematics teaching. The setting of pupils in Year 2, so that they are working in classes of pupils with similar ability, has also helped teachers to plan for the different learning needs within the year group more precisely. In one very good Year 2 lesson observed, the teacher's high expectations resulted in pupils working well and choosing numbers to work with which challenged them. One pupil's comment of *"I want a hard challenge"*, indicates the pupils' enthusiasm for the subject and the desire to do well.
18. Across the school, teachers' planning is good but particularly so in the Foundation Stage of learning. Here, staff work well together to provide a variety of activities which encourages the children to make good progress from a well below average level of attainment on entry to school. They pay due regard to the national guidance for children of this age and plan work to extend confidence, skills, knowledge and understanding in all six areas of learning. A particular strength is the way in which they plan outdoor activities covering these areas. In Years 1 and 2, teachers identify what is to be learnt and share this with pupils. This means that the pupils are clear about what they should learn, and at the end of most lessons have the opportunity to reflect on the progress that they have made. Most teachers start lessons by recapping on previous learning and then introduce new information and skills, either through explanation or demonstration. The pupils then work either in groups or independently to consolidate this learning and come together as a class at the end of the lesson to share learning points and evaluate what they have done. Within this structure, a good range of teaching methods is used to gain the interest of the pupils and ensure that they are involved in their learning. For example, in a very good Year 2 science lesson, pupils were encouraged to develop their understanding of sound using a good range of resources to investigate. This followed a good session led by the teacher which consolidated previous learning and assessed the pupils' understanding through careful questioning.
19. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is very good and this helps them to manage pupils' behaviour very well. Staff have high expectations of how pupils should behave and use the agreed strategies to encourage good behaviour through the provision of interesting tasks and positive reinforcement. The resulting good behaviour means no time is wasted and pupils sustain

good levels of concentration. This was particularly noticeable in a Year 1/2 literacy lesson when the good range of activities built systematically on what the pupils had learnt before and the teacher used a range of voices and gestures to make the learning fun. Pupils laughed with delight as the teacher demonstrated ways of speaking to replace the word 'said' in their writing, for example by screaming and shouting, but they quickly returned to full concentration once the learning point had been made. Teachers and support assistants are very skilled in recognising when individual pupils need additional attention and this results in the needs of individual pupils being well met and all pupils maintaining a good pace of learning.

20. Teachers demonstrate respect for their pupils and are encouraging and supportive. Consequently, most pupils are confident, keen to answer questions and put forward their views. Pupils' personal and social development is well supported through personal, social and health education lessons. In one excellent Year 1/2 lesson observed, the teachers' sensitivity and skills were well used when talking about 'worries' and how people deal with them. Because the pupils felt safe, they were able to speak about their concerns, for example, of being lost and all their comments were treated with respect. The teacher ended the lesson well by taking the pupils outside with their 'box of worries' in order to let them disappear. Teachers could, however, improve pupils' personal development further by planning activities that encourage them to work more on their own.
21. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils well and encourage them to improve and work harder in lessons if they think they can, or give additional support when learning becomes difficult. Teachers comment on pupils' work in lessons and sometimes in their books and this ensures that most pupils are clear about how they can improve. Targets are set for pupils and this, too, helps them to understand and recognise the next stage in their learning. Support assistants work very well alongside class teachers and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. For example, in a very good Year 2 mathematics lesson, the teacher and teaching assistant worked very well together offering a high level of direct teaching as pupils worked in groups on a variety of tasks. Here, there was a particularly good balance between direct teaching and the pupils being encouraged to work on their own. Provision of homework is satisfactory and supports the work done in school, particularly in English.
22. The quality of teaching and the learning, which it promotes, is very good in music. Teachers are clear about what they want the pupils to learn and lessons move at a good pace. Pupils are fully involved and all are encouraged to use their voices, play instruments, listen to music and join in discussions. Teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, art and design, history, ICT, physical education and religious education. Teachers have benefited from the national computer training which has increased their expertise and confidence. They now need to use these to plan a more consistent use of the new computer facilities in order to raise pupils' standards further. The teaching of design and technology and geography is satisfactory.
23. The school recognises the needs of higher attaining pupils and they are appropriately challenged within mainstream lessons. Staff have also identified gifted and talented pupils and support them well in lessons and through additional sessions with a specialist teacher. Pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those from Traveller backgrounds, are well supported, so that they are included in all class activities and progress at a similar rate to their peers, in line with their levels of attainment. Teachers and support staff are effective in ensuring that pupils who speak English as an additional language receive support when necessary in order to learn the meaning of unfamiliar words. In one lesson observed in a reception class, a good variety of strategies were used to develop the child's use of vocabulary and understanding of unfamiliar words, resulting in their full participation and consequent good progress. Teachers are aware of the possible differences in the needs of girls and boys and use a good range of teaching methods to meet their needs.
24. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good. It is based on very detailed assessment. This is seen through the careful planning of lessons, the match of work to the ability of each pupil and the individual preparation of resources to support their work. The teaching programme for these pupils is either on a one-to-one basis or in group sessions and has a significant impact on their progress, particularly in English and mathematics. A secure learning environment is achieved and good relationships are established which enable pupils to become

confident and want to improve. In addition, clear instructions build confidence and enable pupils to sustain concentration and complete the tasks set for them to do. The school has invested considerably in support staff. They are very well deployed and have a considerable influence in guiding the learning of pupils with special educational needs.

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

25. The very good curriculum meets statutory requirements and reflects the guidance given for the National Curriculum. The teaching of religious education is fully in line with the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Acts of collective worship meet requirements. The curriculum offers a broad and balanced learning experience for all pupils. The school is fully inclusive and prepares the pupils for the next stage of their education; pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs enjoy full access to the curriculum.
26. Policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects and teachers and subject co-ordinators meet to agree medium-term plans. Good links between subjects enhance and extend pupils' learning. There is good provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE), which includes aspects of sex education and drug awareness. Although there is not a comprehensive scheme of work for PSHE, all classes discuss particular issues as they arise during the day and they are often discussed again at circle time. Health education is particularly strong and is supported by the school's annual health week and regular keep fit sessions. The national strategies for teaching numeracy and literacy are well established throughout the school. The library is not used sufficiently, however, to help pupils to develop their enquiry skills or encourage them to work alone.
27. The school successfully achieves its aim that all pupils receive their full entitlement to a good quality education and are treated with respect and consideration at all times. There are clear policies in relation to equal opportunities which are fully implemented to ensure that all pupils have access to the curricular opportunities without discrimination. This is also evident in the way that teachers direct questions to pupils and ensure their full participation. The school also complies with the Race Relations and Disabilities Acts and has systems in place to monitor their implementation.
28. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum. Class teachers and support staff are very well aware of individual needs and pupils who need additional support are identified early. The pupils' individual education plans are very well written; the targets are specific and measurable and progress is closely monitored. The school satisfactorily identifies gifted and talented pupils and their needs are successfully met.
29. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant revision of all curriculum plans to incorporate the latest national guidelines. A nursery has been established providing these pupils with a good preparation for their move to the infant school. A recently completed suite of computers is provided centrally for all pupils complementing the existing classroom based computers. Staff have not yet fully developed the curriculum to support the recent development of the computer suite or planned for its most efficient use.
30. The range of after school activities provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and interests. Those activities that do take place are open to all Year 2 pupils. Pupils have opportunities, which include, learning German, participating in folk dancing, and singing in the choir. All pupils including those with special educational needs are fully integrated into all school activities, including extra-curricular activities and making visits to local places of interest.
31. The school has good links with the local community and welcomes parents and visitors into the school. The school nurse and community policeman visit as part of their area responsibilities. Opportunities to develop art and music throughout the school are enhanced by the visiting artists and the school's involvement in the local dance and music festivals. Effective use is made of the school, the local environment, visits to museums and other places of interest to promote learning across the curriculum.

32. Links with the local junior and secondary schools are being developed by the headteacher who is keen to build on the present links between staff and the shared use of facilities. For example, the school uses the junior school field for their annual sports day. The local sports centre has also been approached by the headteacher to discuss the use of some of their facilities.

33. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good and a strength of the curriculum. Good provision is made for their cultural development. Parents agree that the school is successful in creating a climate within which pupils can grow and flourish. This is achieved through the importance placed on respect for self and for others. Evidence of this is seen in lessons and assemblies, where pupils are encouraged to value each other's contributions and to applaud achievement. All members of the school community are encouraged to smile at each other, to say 'please' and 'thank you'. The welcome extended to parents, visitors and pupils by the administrative staff, strongly supports this feeling of warmth and openness. There are many opportunities for pupils to explore their own feelings, values and beliefs and the way they impact on people's lives. An excellent circle time, for example, provided pupils with opportunities to explore and examine their different problems and troubles in a sensitive and supportive atmosphere. Pupils are taught to appreciate difference and to respect the integrity of the individual. Subjects such as art, music and science make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development and help them consider their responses and feelings on observing works of art, listening to the works of famous composers and considering the wonders of nature.
34. The school provides its pupils with a strong moral code as a basis for behaviour. The strong behaviour policy is promoted consistently in classes and all aspects of the school. The importance of truth, self-respect and justice are communicated through the school's evident concern for these values. Hymns such as 'I'm special, you're special, black or white, we are all special' teach pupils the importance of the individual. The very good example set by all adults who work in the school and the high quality relationships between all members of the school community, give strong support to pupils' moral development. Pupils are appropriately rewarded for their good behaviour and are made aware of the school's sanctions for inappropriate behaviour. They are made to feel that they are important members of the school community and, as a result, they respect and care for school property and work on display. The very strong and supportive ethos ensures that pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong.
35. Pupils' social development is fostered within a community which shares common, inclusive values. A feature in all lessons and at playtimes is the way boys and girls of all abilities and backgrounds are encouraged to work and play together harmoniously and to enjoy each other's company. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to respond to the needs of their peers in a thoughtful and emphatic way. Pupils on 'Buddy Patrol' for example, take their duties seriously and show care for those who are upset or hurt in the playground. Pupils are given many opportunities to engage in positive corporate experiences, through shared class assemblies, extra-curricular activities, music, dance and dramatic performances, both in school and with pupils from other schools. These occasions enrich pupils' experiences and allow them to develop as members of the school and wider community. Pupils are also made aware of the need to contribute to the wider community through collecting for charities such as Guide Dogs for the Blind and Children in Need, and for the victims of the Indian Earthquake, as well as delivering food parcels to the elderly in the community.
36. The school recognises and nurtures pupils' particular gifts and talents through a very wide range of good quality learning opportunities. Pupils are given many opportunities to take part in a rich range of cultural events. Visits from artists, drama and theatre groups, story-book days, visits to castles and museums, as well as exhibiting work at the local art gallery, do much to enrich pupils' cultural experiences. Multicultural Weeks, visits from dancers from a range of cultures, celebrations of festivals and the religious education programme give pupils a sound insight into the attitudes, values and traditions of diverse cultures, and successfully promote their early understanding of the need for race equality. Art, literature and music from other cultures are well represented to help pupils explore the cultural traditions of a range of people across the world.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. Procedures for child protection are satisfactory. The headteacher has designated responsibilities for these matters and she has received appropriate training to assist her in this task. Other staff, including those in a non-teaching role, are aware of their responsibilities and the procedures to be followed in cases of suspected abuse.

38. Procedures for ensuring the health and safety of pupils and adults are sound. The school has adopted a health and safety policy which details responsibilities and the various procedures in place. However, not all members of staff are aware of this policy and its significance to them personally. Annual health and safety audits are carried out and satisfactory procedures are in place for first aid and reporting of accidents. Risk assessments have been carried out in accordance with legal requirements, and many are of good quality, including those related to trips organised for pupils to places of interest and functions organised by the parent teachers' association. Health and safety factors are appropriately stressed in the lessons. Although health and safety practice is sound overall, governors are not sufficiently involved to be able to offer constructive criticism and help the school to improve its work in this area.
39. Arrangements for monitoring good attendance are broadly satisfactory. Unexplained absence is followed up and parents are discouraged from taking their children out of school for holiday purposes. Effective support is provided by the Education Welfare Officer who works closely with the school to assist in the implementation of a joint action plan which includes a half-termly meeting in which problem cases are identified and an appropriate strategy adopted. Despite this, some parents are not ensuring that their children attend school regularly and more needs to be done to promote good attendance.
40. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are good in English and science and very good in mathematics. In the main, consistent use is made of assessment data for setting individual targets and teachers use the information gained to improve their planning to meet the needs of individual pupils. Assessment of other subjects is never less than satisfactory and sometimes it is good, as for example, in music. Baseline assessment is carried out for children in the nursery shortly after joining and ongoing tracking is made of their progress. This is developed in the reception classes so that by the time children are ready to enter the National Curriculum programme of learning, teachers have a clear understanding of their strengths and areas for development. The staff are well placed to develop this practice in light of the new national guidance given for assessing children in the Foundation Stage. All these features help to ensure that pupils work at an appropriate level and consequently make good progress.
41. The school cares very well for pupils with special educational needs, including those with a statement. Pupils with special needs are quickly identified and their progress is monitored and supported thoroughly. Assessment procedures for a wide range of complex conditions is detailed and comprehensive. The school has strong links with outside agencies which ensure that pupils receive good levels of support. Careful consideration is taken of the needs of all pupils. This is demonstrated through the use of understandable and practical targets set for pupils, modifying activities or providing support to meet their needs.
42. Procedures for the monitoring and promoting of behaviour are very good. The behaviour policy clearly states the school's aims and the strategies used in behaviour management. The school encourages high standards of behaviour very effectively by using positive incentives, including stickers, certificates and an achievement board. Celebration assemblies are used very well to reward and acknowledge positive behaviour. School and classroom rules are simple, well understood and are kept to a minimum. Sanctions used in case of inappropriate behaviour are applied consistently and effectively.
43. The school operates a very effective anti-bullying policy which is based on careful vigilance and thorough investigation when concerns are raised. Both teaching and support staff display a high level of awareness as to the potentially damaging effects of oppressive behaviour and consequently react quickly and effectively when problems arise.
44. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are generally very good and are strongly based on the very good relationships which exist between pupils and members of staff. Teachers, assistants and midday supervisors all display a close knowledge of individual pupils and are prepared to devote time and effort in providing them with close personal support. This help and guidance is reciprocated by pupils, who display a positive attitude to school in general, and learning in particular. Too little work is planned systematically, however, to encourage pupils to work independently.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The parents' meeting and questionnaire replies show that parents think that this is a good school. Leadership and management are thought to be good, as are the quality of teaching and pupils' behaviour. Parents find the school warm and inviting. They feel well informed about school activities in general and their children's progress in particular. Evidence collected during the inspection strongly supports these opinions.
46. Teachers make themselves available to parents at the beginning and end of the school day so that any concerns parents may have can be easily discussed and resolved. Similarly, concerns which the teachers may have are quickly discussed with parents so that pupils' needs are met effectively. This aspect of the school's work is particularly strong in the Foundation Stage.
47. Parents make a sound contribution to the work of the school. A small number of parents help in the classroom and a larger number assist with school visits and other school activities. The parent teacher's association (PTA) has been effective in financing new information and communication technology resources and nursery equipment. The PTA is currently promoting an imaginative and effective initiative which involves parents meeting regularly on weekday mornings to discuss specific facets of school life. A recent example was a long discussion concerning the transitional arrangements for pupils transferring to the junior school. This is a good example of how the school consults with parents and involves them in their children's learning and the work of the school.
48. The quality of information provided by the school for parents is good. The school prospectus contains useful information about organisational arrangements and activities. The annual report by the governors provides a good summary of achievement and activities associated with the previous academic year and fully complies with legal requirements. Parents are also issued with regular newsletters which keep them fully informed about current and future developments.
49. Information to parents concerning their children's progress at school is good. Opportunities to meet the classroom teachers are provided on a termly basis and on periodic afternoons. This allows parents to view their children's work and to gain an insight into school life in general. The annual written reports to parents are of a good standard and provide a detailed summary of their child's academic and personal development during the previous academic year. These are reader-friendly and provide detailed information concerning progress in individual subjects, in addition to personal and social development. An opportunity is provided for parents to make their own comments.
50. The school encourages parents to be actively involved in their child's education through helping with work at home. Many do so and this contributes significantly to the progress made and the standards attained by pupils. Parents sometimes give valuable assistance with reading, numeracy and in some cases with data collection. The use of a contact book, which is kept in the children's reading folder, provides an effective channel of communication between the school and parents. The school/home link is effectively formalised through the use of a home-school agreement which details the respective responsibilities of the school itself, parents and pupils.
51. Parents are regularly involved in discussions with the class teachers where children have special educational needs and are kept fully informed of the support that their children are receiving. The co-ordinator conscientiously ensures that parents are involved in regular reviews of the targets set in pupils' individual education plans and this enables parents to help their children with their learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The leadership and management of the school are good. The newly appointed headteacher has quickly gained the confidence of parents, staff and governors and developed a team of professionals who are keen to improve the quality of education they provide. She works well with the newly appointed deputy headteacher who is developing her role and providing key support

through her own example of very good teaching. Between them, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have a good range of skills and experiences which ensures that issues are discussed knowledgeably and appropriate strategies are developed to aid school improvement. The role of subject co-ordinators has developed well and, they share a clear understanding of what should be achieved. Co-ordinators are well informed and effective in promoting their subjects although they lack experience of managing a budget. Senior managers have a clear view of the school's strengths and priorities for development.

53. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and her leadership provides the school with clear educational direction. The staff share the aims and values of the school so that each individual is recognised, valued and encouraged to work hard. This vision is to be seen in the positive relationships that are shared between most staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves. The headteacher, together with her staff, have a good understanding of how young children learn and this is reflected in the school's practice, which encourages learning through a good range of activities. These features are well demonstrated in the school, where an ethos of care and concern together with high expectations are evident. There is a good degree of mutual tolerance and respect, and racial harmony is self-evident. By the time they leave the school, most pupils are confident in their abilities and are aware of their own needs and the needs of others.
54. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well managed and support staff are very well trained. The special needs' co-ordinator is knowledgeable and confident, and has a very secure understanding of the needs of the pupils. Appropriate meetings are arranged for her to liaise with the governor designated to monitor special educational needs for the governing body. Special educational needs learning materials are appropriate and well maintained and efficiently organised. Statutory requirements are fully met and the inclusion of all pupils with special educational needs is very good.
55. Since her appointment, the headteacher has continued to develop strategies which support the school's aims of raising standards and improving the quality of education. Since the last inspection, systems have been developed to monitor pupils' progress and to evaluate the quality of teaching. These have brought about significant improvements.
56. Staff and governors show a strong commitment to school improvement and the school has successfully addressed the key issues arising from the last inspection. Governors, although relatively inexperienced, give full support to the school and are working hard to develop their own knowledge and understanding. They are well informed and take up opportunities to attend training courses. This helps them to be fully involved in discussions and developments. They undertake their duties diligently and are developing their roles appropriately. There is clear direction for the school and a culture of monitoring and target setting that keeps the school moving forward towards achieving its aims. The school development plan sets a clear agenda for improvement and is the result of a satisfactory consultation process. For the future, governors have a clear strategy of how they intend to further develop their strategic management role. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. In line with performance management procedures, the governing body has set targets for the headteacher.
57. Staffing levels are good. There are sufficient and appropriately qualified teaching staff to ensure that classes are not too large and that the curriculum is taught well. The need to address shortages of skill and experience is fully understood when new staff are being recruited and consequently a good balance has now been achieved between staffing resources and the needs of the curriculum. Well-trained and dedicated support staff are deployed efficiently throughout the school and their work positively contributes to the pupils' learning and the standards they achieve. They make a particularly good contribution to the attainment, progress and self-esteem of the pupils with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language. Arrangements for the induction of new staff are good. The school's performance management policy is in place and is being used effectively as a tool for bringing about school improvement. Staff training needs are identified appropriately in consultation with the headteacher and this helps staff to give of their best.

58. Accommodation is satisfactory. Classrooms are generally of good size and in reasonable decorative repair. However, outside play areas are restricted in size and there exists a shortage of grassed areas which can be used for physical education or for when pupils are playing.
59. Learning resources are satisfactory overall, but good for English and ICT. Although there are sufficient religious education books in general there is a specific shortage of big books. Resources are correctly stored and effectively utilised to support learning.
60. Financial planning is generally secure, with funding used appropriately to support the school's priorities for improvement. Specific funds, such as those allocated for staff training and for pupils with special educational needs are used well for their intended purpose. Extra funding has been wisely allocated from the school's budget to contribute to the cost of the support for pupils with special educational needs. As a result, these pupils receive very good provision and make good progress. Funding has been used effectively in recent years to improve the school's accommodation and resources. For example, the building extension programme has provided space for a new ICT suite, a staff room and toilets for pupils with easy access. Money has also been reserved to improve outdoor provision for the reception children and the playground for pupils in Years 1 and 2.
61. Although the headteacher, senior management and governing body have limited experience in financial management, budgeting and strategic planning are carried out to a satisfactory standard. The headteacher and the school's newly appointed bursar have received appropriate training. However, the inspection team strongly endorses the decision to arrange more training in this particular area. Sufficient information is made available to all governors. The full governing body agrees the budget allocations annually and governors monitor expenditure regularly in order to check that expenditure is in line with the agreed budget. The headteacher and governing body take care to apply the principles of best value when obtaining goods and services; competitive quotes and tenders are sought. This ensures prudent spending. They are also beginning to evaluate the cost effectiveness of their spending decisions in relation to the standards achieved and compare how well they are doing with similar schools. The school's administration is efficient and routines are suitably established.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. Staff and governors should work together on the following areas to improve the quality of provision further and raise standards.
- (1) *Improve pupils' rate of attendance by:
- ensuring that parents are fully aware of the positive impact of good attendance and punctuality on standards of attainment and progress;
 - systematically analysing attendance data on a regular basis and taking appropriate action.
(Paragraphs 14, 39)
- (2) Improve standards in ICT further by:
- giving pupils more opportunities to develop their computer skills through the effective use of the new computer suite;
 - ensuring that ICT skills are developed across all areas of the curriculum.
(Paragraphs 6, 22, 29, 80, 88, 92, 102, 104, 123, 133)
- (3) Improve pupils' library skills and their ability to work independently by making greater use of the library and computer suite.
(Paragraphs 12, 20, 26, 44, 81, 83, 117, 133)

Other aspects which governors should consider for inclusion in the action plan:

- *Increase the governors' involvement in the organisation and monitoring of health and safety issues. (Paragraph 38)
- *Raise the headteacher's, bursar's and governors' awareness and understanding of financial management, budgeting and strategic planning. (Paragraph 60)

Staff have already identified these issues * through the school's development planning process.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

62

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

34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	23	22	12	0	0	0
Percentage	8	37	36	19	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 more than one percentage point.

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)	39	154
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	42

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR- Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	38

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.7
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	31	36	67

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	28	29
	Girls	31	33	35
	Total	54	61	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (88)	91 (76)	96 (90)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	29	28
	Girls	32	35	32
	Total	61	64	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (83)	96 (90)	90 (92)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
146	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0

No ethnic group recorded

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)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Average class size	22

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	206

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	39
Total number of education support staff	1.7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	599,843
Total expenditure	539,856
Expenditure per pupil	2,620
Balance brought forward from previous year	40,971
Balance carried forward to next year	59,988

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5.5

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	193
Number of questionnaires returned	23

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	39	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	52	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	57	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	48	4	4	4
The teaching is good.	70	30	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	43	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	17	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	39	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	48	48	4	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	57	39	4	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	48	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	26	17	0	9

Other issues raised by parents

- Parents were very positive about the school and identified several improvements since the last inspection. These included the nursery, the computer suite, links with parents, improvements to the school building, and changes to the curriculum which had made it more varied and interesting.

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

63. Provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is a strength of the school. Since the last inspection, there have been significant improvements made with the opening of the nursery. Staff have also responded well to national developments for children in the Foundation Stage of learning. The quality of teaching is very good overall in the nursery and reception classes because it is based on a good understanding of how young children learn together with high expectations of what children can achieve. Staff work well as a team. They plan work well and use assessments of the children's attainment to inform their planning. Appropriate records are kept to monitor the progress that children make in all areas of learning. The rich, exciting curriculum takes into consideration the national guidance for the Foundation Stage and staff adapt it to meet the needs of the children. There is a consistent approach to teaching and learning and this helps children to settle into school life. Support staff play an important role in developing the children's learning and in supporting their achievements. The quality of teaching is consistently very good over all areas of learning but particularly when developing the children's personal, social and emotional education. This ensures that children develop good attitudes to learning and very good behaviour by the time they start Year 1. Staff work hard to improve the environment by displaying pupils' work. This supports the children's sense of self-esteem and encourages them to work harder.
64. Children make good progress from a well below average level of attainment on entry to school. Children with special educational needs have clear targets for improvement and are helped to reach these through the provision of appropriate activities and very good support. Those who are learning English as an additional language also receive very good support which helps them to increase their range of vocabulary and develop confidence when speaking. By the time they start in Year 1, children currently in the reception classes are likely to reach national standards in creative and physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Standards are likely to be below those seen for children of the same age nationally in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development but above those for personal, social and emotional development.

Personal, social and emotional development

65. Staff develop good relationships with parents, who are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. This, together with a good induction programme, helps children to settle in the nursery on a part-time basis and then settle quickly into school routines full time in the reception classes. A very good learning environment is created where children understand the structure of the day and by the time they enter Year 1, most have very good attitudes to learning. The tasks provided ensure a good balance between teacher-directed activities and times when children are able to work without direct adult supervision. This develops the children's confidence and a growing independence and initiative when they are presented with choices.
66. Staff have high expectations of how children should behave so that they can gain the most from their time in the nursery and reception classes. Through their own working relationships, staff show good examples and the children's skills are continually developed through the positive interactions between staff and children. The children are also encouraged to play and work with each other and consequently are helped to develop good relationships. They were observed working well together in the nursery 'office' when they shared resources and acted out a range of roles, and in a reception class when they shared materials when using shapes in a mathematics session. Teachers and support staff make appropriate comments to encourage co-operation and children learn how to share and take turns. Children are encouraged to recognise the importance of keeping healthy and are aware of personal hygiene issues. This was demonstrated during snack time and when children made sandwiches in the reception classes.

Communication, language and literacy

67. A significant number of children show low levels of speech and communication on entry to school. Some find it difficult to talk about what they are doing and others are difficult to understand. Staff recognise this and provide an environment which encourages children's speaking and listening skills and supports their developing use of vocabulary. Some good examples were observed, for example, when a teacher was encouraging nursery children to act out the story of the *Three Little Pigs* or retell it in their own words, and in the reception classes when children were encouraged to talk about the materials they were using when making collages. Children are also encouraged to develop their speaking and listening skills in the imaginative play areas such as the garden shop, where they act out the roles of customer and shop keeper. Most pupils make good progress and have the confidence to speak with adults and each other.
68. Most children are interested in books, handle them carefully and show enjoyment in a range of stories. Children have regular opportunities to listen to stories and they respond very well. Children were seen responding well in the nursery as the teacher used puppets to tell a story before reading it to them from the book. Children in a reception class also responded well when listening to *The Owl Babies* and were able to retell the story in their own words. In both these lessons, the children listened well and were keen to put forward their views. Regular sessions support children in their recognition of letters and the sounds that they make but standards in reading remain below those seen nationally. Some children lack regular practice of sharing books at home so do not readily consolidate their skills. However, some children in the nursery can name their favourite stories and say that they read books at home and one higher-attainer in a reception class read his books fluently with good understanding. All children are encouraged to read regularly with their parents at home, which has a significant effect on the progress that they make and the standards that they achieve.
69. On entry to the nursery, children develop their writing skills by learning how to hold the pencil correctly and recognising and writing their own names. They become aware of writing for different purposes through, for example, playing in the 'office' when they write letters, place them in envelopes and take them home to their parents. These skills are developed in the reception classes when children are encouraged, for example, to write about snails using words like 'slowly', 'bumpy' and 'slimy' to describe their movements. Children also listened to poems and then wrote their own about pancakes. In formal literacy sessions, children are encouraged to work independently using alphabet cards as they write a list of the things needed to build houses.

Mathematical development

70. The children's mathematical skills and understanding are taught during specific sessions, and consolidated through daily play activities. Most children enjoy their work and respond well to the activities provided. In the nursery, children take turns in using a computer mathematics program to match numbers to 10 to shapes on the screen. Outside, others develop their colour matching as they throw coloured beanbags, matching numbers to six as well as developing hand-eye co-ordination and throwing skills. Daily mathematics lessons, which follow the structure advised in the National Numeracy Strategy, help children in the reception classes to prepare for work in Year 1. Due to the high expectations of the teacher and teaching assistant in one lesson observed, children made good progress in developing their understanding of two and three-dimensional shapes. Effective questioning by the teacher resulted in the children identifying and naming shapes such as a circle, square and triangle and by the end of the session they realised that these shapes are two-dimensional. Higher-attainers use the number of sides and edges to describe the shape, for example, claiming that a circle had one side. Average-attainers could explain the difference between a square and a rectangle by making reference to the length of the sides. Children learnt much by being given the opportunity to make models with two-dimensional recycled materials. Children get regular opportunities to count and match numbers and to develop their understanding of capacity through playing with sand and water. Children were also observed thoroughly enjoying their time using money as they acted out roles in the imaginative play area.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

71. Children in the nursery and reception classes develop their knowledge and understanding of the world through taking part in a range of play activities and during specific sessions led by the teachers. In one very good lesson observed, children in the nursery developed an understanding of different textures and how to describe them as they were encouraged to feel a range of objects. They also begin to develop the understanding of how to use a map after listening to the story of Spot going to the farm. They are encouraged to act out roles, for example, those of working in an office or a shop. The outside environment offers them a range of good opportunities to climb trees, see how things grow and experience playing in the snow. In the reception classes, children further develop their understanding of texture through the use of the 'What Does It Feel Like?' table, where they touch a range of objects and decide whether they are rough, smooth, bumpy or soft. Children also develop an understanding of what plants need to grow as they plant and water pansies. They understand about how babies and children grow and bring in photographs to see their own development. They thoroughly enjoyed making sandwiches for the nursery children who were joining them after the holiday and staff took this opportunity to consolidate their understanding of shapes as they cut up their sandwiches. Opportunities are provided for children to assemble and take apart simple models, using a variety of construction kits. Their skills in using the computer are also developed through the use of a range of programs which also help to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Children celebrate key festivals such as Eid, Diwali, Chinese New Year and Christmas and are beginning to understand the activities associated with them.

Physical development

72. Children in the nursery receive regular opportunities to climb, balance, run and ride bikes in the enclosed area adjoining the nursery. Staff encourage all children to play outside and a good range of activities are provided throughout the week. This ensures that children have opportunities to develop their physical and other skills. Children were seen thoroughly enjoying themselves climbing a tree and moving around a circuit made of a range of equipment. The very good support given by staff ensured that children developed confidence in what they could do and achieve. This was because the activities were appropriately challenging and consequently, most children felt they wanted to 'have a go'. The oldest children in the nursery are well prepared for transfer to the reception classes as they work in small groups in the hall taking part in a more formal physical education lesson. In one very good lesson observed, the high but realistic expectations of the teacher ensured that all made good progress and were pleased with what they had achieved. Children in the reception classes also have opportunities to ride bikes and play outside and have regular formal physical education lessons. They follow instructions well and are clear about the effect that exercise has on their bodies. The very effective questioning in one lesson observed, when the teacher asked which parts of the body were used in physical education lessons, resulted in children replying 'the arms, legs, heart and blood'. Because staff are very clear about what they want the children to do and learn and are able to manage their behaviour well, children make good progress in these lessons as they move in a variety of ways and use small equipment to develop their skills.

Creative development

73. The children's creative development is successfully fostered through a range of activities. In the nursery, the children's work on display celebrated their learning and enhanced the environment. Children had completed work on snails in the style of Matisse and decorated Elmer the Elephant using a range of bright colours. In one very good lesson observed, children developed their printing skills well. They were encouraged to choose their own paper and could give sensible reasons for their choice. A good range of objects was available to make shapes and children developed in confidence as they responded to the support given. They were encouraged to feel the paint and 'get messy' and developed their speaking skills whilst trying to describe how it felt. In the reception classes, children follow the story of the *Three Little Pigs* by making collages using straw, sticks and bricks whilst being encouraged to talk about the story. A good display of their work shows that they use a good range of media, colour mixing paint, making masks and creating a beach. They also talk enthusiastically about the moving vehicles they made.

74. The children's responses are also developed through specific music sessions and through singing rhymes and songs. An excellent lesson was observed in the nursery when the whole group of adults and children settled to sing a range of songs and play instruments. The quality of teaching here is rarely seen at this level, and significantly raised the standard of singing. The teacher used her good expertise and musical skills to accompany the children on a keyboard, first playing a few bars of the song so that children could guess what they would sing next. All adults helped the children to learn the words so that all were able to feel successful and join in. The children took turns to play the musical instruments, handling them with care and were beginning to know their names. All children sustained good levels of concentration and behaviour because they were interested in what they were doing. The role-play areas in the nursery and reception classes provide opportunities for children to play co-operatively and develop their imagination and creativity. They extend their language skills by re-enacting familiar situations or making up their own.

ENGLISH

75. Standards in English are improving and test results are higher than the previous year. Teachers have worked hard to address weaknesses in the subject. The present inspection findings show that although the majority of pupils in Year 2 are working at the required standard for their age, few pupils are reaching higher levels (Level 3). In addition, there is a high proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs and many who join the school other than at the start of the year. Although these pupils are making good progress, they are not likely to reach the required standard. Consequently, overall standards are below average. However, pupils achieve well and make good progress in all aspects of English.
76. Improving standards in all aspects of English, particularly in speaking and listening, have been a major focus of the school, with the strategies introduced meeting with much success. Pupils enter the school with well below average attainment in English. Very good use is made of initiatives such as the Early Literacy Support (ELS) in Year 1 and Talking Partners, role-play and specific speaking and listening lessons across the school. For example, a small group of pupils from Year 1 is effectively encouraged to listen to each other's news and ask questions on what has been said. Pupils of all ages are encouraged to listen attentively to instructions, to stories and to the contributions of others. For example, pupils in a Year 1/2 lesson usefully talked to their partner about their weekend news and then, with varying degrees of success, reported back to the class. This extra support is targeted effectively to boost pupils' progress in the acquisition of basic skills in literacy.
77. All teachers use technical language well in all subjects across the curriculum to extend the pupils' knowledge and vocabulary. For example, in Year 2, pupils are introduced to words such as 'tone', 'sculpture', 'three-dimensional' and 'torso' when observing their body form, after effectively comparing their own body shape to sculptures and pictures by famous artists. This makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Teaching and learning support assistants in the classrooms make a significant contribution to the good progress of all pupils. They clarify questions, explain new vocabulary and encourage pupils to offer answers in their group activity. For example, pupils effectively described the sounds of the wind in a Year 1 science lesson. All these measures are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' attainment in speaking and listening and overall achievements across the school, although this is still below average by Year 2.
78. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well organised. It ensures early identification and very good teaching of a well-structured literacy programme with realistic short-term targets. Most teachers are skilful in planning and teaching the basic skills in English and have high expectations of all pupils. From a low starting point, pupils including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, achieve well as a result and make good progress from nursery to Year 2.
79. The strong focus on the teaching of phonics across the school helps the pupils to effectively learn letter-sounds. Although the standard in reading is below that expected for their age in the current

Year 2, the pupils make good attempts at sounding out unfamiliar words. The majority of pupils enjoy reading and have positive attitudes towards it. They read well enough to make sense of simple texts and retell well-known stories. The strategy known as reading partners effectively builds up the pupils' confidence in reading and clearly develops their social skills through discussion and collaboration. For example, pupils in Year 2 listen to a partner read from Year 1 and vice versa. This provides the pupils with very worthwhile opportunities to select a book they find interesting, to share with their partner. Lower-attaining pupils in Year 1 recognise some words in familiar text but are reluctant to try unknown words and avoid them or wait for help. A scrutiny of pupils' work on display shows that good opportunities are provided for them to focus on different authors by writing simple book reviews. For example, "*I liked it because it had a happy ending,*" and "*Nelson's pig is funny and silly.*" By the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils have good knowledge of the structure of books and know about the contents page, the index and the difference between the author and the illustrator. Overall, pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress as reading is suitably organised and supported.

80. Standards in writing at the end of Year 2 are below those expected for pupils of this age and few are achieving the higher Level 3. The school has placed a considerable emphasis on improving the pupils' writing, which was a weakness identified in the last inspection report. Good progress has been made in dealing with this issue. There are now well-planned opportunities for the systematic development of different kinds of writing in, for example, extension writing lessons in Year 2. In a lesson seen, skilful questioning enabled pupils to improve their work. When asked why it was important to read back over their work, one pupil said, "*We might have a word like nice and we really want to get a better word like excellent.*" Scrutiny of past work shows that pupils write for a range of different purposes. They appropriately sequence stories through pictures, for example, of Guy Fawkes, and write sentences underneath. Higher-attaining pupils make good use of a story frame to retell a well-known story. They write about the owl babies' feelings when their mother flew away. For example, "*They are scared because they thought their mummy won't come back.*" They show an increasing understanding of punctuation and spelling skills and write independently. Many pupils hesitantly read back what they have written and they are encouraged to find words they are not sure about by themselves, using word banks and dictionaries designed for their age group. Regular handwriting practice provides useful opportunities for pupils to build on their ability to join their letters. However, scrutiny of pupils' past work in books shows that many are insecure in their formation of letters and do not take sufficient care in the presentation of their work. This is a different judgement from that at the last inspection, when handwriting was judged to be good.
81. Pupils are encouraged to apply the skills they have acquired in the literacy hour when writing about other subjects. Pupils in Year 1/2 identify materials they need to make a marble run and what changes they needed to make when designing a buzzer game. For example, "*We changed the hanger. It needed to be metal – we used a paper clip.*" This has a good link with the design and technology and science curriculum. In some classes good use is made of ICT to support their English work. For example, pupils in Year 1 identify the sequence of nursery rhymes through looking at the rhythm and effectively use a computer program to support their learning, while in Year 2, pupils accessed the Internet to find out about a famous author. However, the use of computers is under-developed. Teachers now need to plan more effectively to develop pupils' skills through using the computers in the suite and those in the classrooms.
82. Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Over three quarters of the teaching seen was good or better, with just under a half being very good, with an instance of excellent teaching. The overall good quality teaching has a significant impact on pupils' learning. In addition, the scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that there is much good teaching. The lessons are well planned, indicating very secure subject knowledge. A strong feature in many lessons is that teachers use skilful questioning to draw on the pupils' previous learning and give clear explanations to ensure that pupils understand their work. Very effective teaching of phonics was seen in Year 1, where pupils learnt to hear the different letter sounds in various words. The pupils responded to this with enthusiasm and consolidated their learning in the lesson. Personal development is fostered well in most respects. For example, each pupil has literacy and reading targets recorded on his/her target card and attention is appropriately drawn to them during the

lesson and at the beginning of the writing tasks. This positive practice contributes to the good progress pupils make. However, pupils are not systematically encouraged to develop their skills of working independently, for example by using the library. Relationships are very good and teachers manage behaviour very well. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are given very good support that enables them to make good progress in relation to their previous learning. Homework is set regularly and effectively supports and reinforces pupils' learning in the classroom.

83. The subject is well managed. Areas for development have been identified well and strong leadership and commitment to success have led to improved standards. Learning is monitored effectively in English, helping pupils to make good progress by the end of Year 2. The co-ordinator has scrutinised samples of work in each year group and monitored teaching and learning through classroom observations. There are well-chosen resources for work in all aspects of literacy. These, together with the good quality planning, have contributed well to the standards observed during the inspection.
84. The library is small, easily accessible, but under-used. Consequently, pupils are not systematically developing their library and research skills. Each classroom has a mini library to supplement the books in the library. There is a good system of contact books, which fosters positive links between home and school and helps to give parents information about their children's progress.

MATHEMATICS

85. Standards attained by pupils currently in Year 2 are below those expected for their age. However, the school's data, and all other inspection evidence show that pupils are now achieving better in national tests than they were at the time of the last inspection. Standards have risen and are now closer to the national average. The school is strongly committed to raising achievement and is very well placed to succeed. This commitment is exemplified by the ambitious targets that have been set and by the rigorous analysis of its test results. The National Numeracy Strategy is now firmly embedded and is well used to guide teachers' planning. Very good assessment procedures are in place to measure the attainment and track the progress of individual pupils. The subject is very well led and managed by the deputy headteacher who monitors teaching and helps teachers with their planning. All of these initiatives, including the setting of pupils in Year 2 and improved teaching, have resulted in better achievement. Pupils enter the school with well below average attainment in basic numeracy. A significant number have special educational needs, or join the school other than at the normal time. Pupils' weak communication skills mean that many find it difficult to explain their thinking or to give extended answers. The school is aware of the importance of challenging pupils to explain their work and this is a special feature in all lessons. There is a strong commitment to educational inclusion, and boys and girls of all backgrounds and abilities are effectively supported to achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Brisk keep fit sessions before lessons are effective in getting all pupils ready to learn and to participate in mental challenges at the start of lessons.
86. Work seen in lessons and in the pupils books, shows that all aspects of the subject are given due attention. There is a strong emphasis on basic numeracy and using and applying mathematics, which are central to the National Curriculum and the National Numeracy Strategy. All pupils benefit from regular practice at the start of lessons in which all are fully included. Teachers use a good range of resources, including number lines, 100 squares and digit cards, to allow all pupils to answer, checking their answers quickly. As a result, by the end of Year 2, most pupils have a sound understanding of the place value of digits to 50 when adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. Higher attaining pupils work comfortably to 100 and beyond, counting in 3s from 3 to 199, for example, and are challenged to work out whole number problems involving multiplication and division, including those with remainders. A special feature of the teaching is the way teachers increasingly make links between using and applying mathematics, number and algebra, shape, space and measure, and data handling, so that all can be taught to sufficient depth.

87. The overall quality of teaching is good. Of the five lessons seen, teaching was very good in two, good in two, and satisfactory in one. Where teaching is very good, it has a brisk pace, and pupils benefit from a high level of direct teaching at all stages of the lesson. As a result, they make very good progress in their learning because the teacher and classroom support staff challenge them to explain their thinking as they work. The difference between the very good lessons and those that are satisfactory or good, is in the pace and structure of the lessons. In the most successful lessons, time is well used to allow for a very good balance between direct teaching and independent learning. The pace of learning slows when teachers, after a stimulating mental mathematics session, keep the whole class sitting on the carpet for too long while they explain the different tasks, rather than challenging them at appropriate levels as they work in groups. This was not the case in a very good Year 2 lesson in which pupils with special educational needs were being taught simple addition strategies. The pace of teaching was very brisk as the teacher made use of an interesting range of methods to motivate and challenge pupils' thinking throughout the lesson. As a result, by the end of the lesson most could quickly add 9 and 4 by taking one from the 4 and adding it to the 9 to make 10+3, which they could add more easily.
88. Parents have said that members of staff are warm, friendly and approachable, and this was evident in all lessons. These warm relationships result in pupils behaving well and having the confidence to approach adults for help with their work. These very good relationships between staff and pupils guide pupils' relationships with each other. They work well together and appreciate each other's efforts. An example of the very good relationships supporting learning was seen in a Year 2 lesson, where pupils were very effectively led to understand and use inputs and outputs using simple function machines. Very good interaction between the teacher and the teaching assistant resulted in pupils working productively and happily, seeking advice which was always available when needed. Adults moved from group to group very effectively not just praising pupils for their work, but also offering new challenges so that the pace of learning was maintained.
89. All teachers plan their lessons well with clear objectives which they share with pupils so that they know what they are to learn. Basic numeracy skills are well taught within mathematics itself and in other subjects such as science, geography and design and technology. An increasing use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning. Year 2 pupils were seen using the computers in the newly developed suite, to organise and classify information they had gathered on favourite toys. They worked with great concentration, benefiting from very good support from the class teacher and her knowledgeable teaching assistant, so that by the end of the lesson they had printed out their graphs and went on to interpret the information they contained. However, teachers need to plan more precisely how the computers can be used more regularly so that pupils are given the maximum opportunity to develop and practise their skills.
90. The co-ordinator has forged good curricular links with the junior school to which pupils transfer. This helps to ensure that the transition from one stage of education to the next does not cause disruptions to pupils' learning. Homework is well used by teachers to consolidate what pupils' have been taught in school and to develop their independent learning skills. Good advice is given to parents on how to support their children's learning at home. Annual questionnaires provide parents with opportunities to comment on the effectiveness of homework tasks. They are also invited to a termly mathematics games afternoon so that they can have a better understanding of the work their children do in school.

SCIENCE

91. The school is effective in that pupils are working at the level appropriate for their age (National Curriculum Level 2). However, few pupils are achieving the higher levels. A significant minority of Special Educational Needs pupils, although making good progress, are not likely to reach the national average, consequently overall standards are below average.
92. The National Curriculum teacher assessments for 2002 indicated that pupils' attainment was below the national average when compared with other schools. Lesson observations, a scrutiny of pupils' work and talking to pupils and teachers confirm that standards are currently below the national average.

93. Most pupils make good progress in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. They learn effectively as they develop a sound knowledge and understanding and a satisfactory range of skills in each strand of the subject. Higher attaining pupils can observe, discuss and record their findings with growing confidence. For example, in Year 1, pupils talk about what plants need to survive, what conditions are needed for healthy growth, what happens when seeds are planted and then go on to predict what might happen to seeds planted as an experiment. With support from the teacher, pupils make suggestions on how to carry out the experiment. Careful questioning by the teacher results in pupils stating that 'both pots need water to make it fair.' Other groups work at a less challenging level but still recall, and with the help of the teacher, decide what they will give their seeds and where they will be sited. Pupils in Year 2 investigate the variety of sounds in and out of school, recording them with tape recorders and later in the week discuss how they can classify different types of sound and present the information as graphs using the school's computer suite. This is an appropriate use of information and communication technology. However, it is not clear through the teachers' overall planning how pupils' ICT skills will be systematically developed through the teaching of science.
94. The subject makes a good contribution to the development of speaking and listening skills when pupils are encouraged to discuss the setting up of an investigation and reporting their results. The written recording of work, coupled with counting and noting their results, helps to provide a purposeful focus for developing skills in literacy and numeracy. The subject is less effective in encouraging pupils to work on their own and to develop their skills of enquiry, for example by using the library to gain additional information.
95. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Lessons are well planned to cover all aspects of the curriculum. They are well organised and encourage pupils to work at a good pace. Teachers make good use of questions to make pupils think. Opportunities to experiment and investigate are popular aspects of the science programme, encouraging pupils to think scientifically. Pupils in Year 2 were at times a little noisy, due to over-exuberance when they discovered that a number of bottles filled with different amounts of water and placed in order could be used to make a simple xylophone. Pupils show great interest in the activities and are very keen to answer the teachers' questions, replying with confidence as their scientific knowledge grows. Pupils enjoy their lessons, which are interesting and challenging because of the teachers' skills in planning. The good relationships between all pupils are especially apparent in group work when boys and girls work together and teachers encourage the higher attaining pupils to work with lower attaining pupils. Classroom assistants know the pupils well and make a good contribution to their learning, especially those with special educational needs.
96. The good improvements since the last inspection include making better use of pupils' assessments to inform future planning. The science co-ordinator now has regular opportunities to monitor and evaluate the quality of science teaching across the school, resulting in a review of the most effective teaching and learning strategies. The school has successfully adopted and adapted the nationally recommended scheme of work for the subject.
97. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and is working hard to improve all aspects of the subject. She makes good use of the information gained from monitoring teaching and learning and her analysis of pupils' performance in the National Curriculum science tests. The science action plan outlines suitable areas for development, including the need to make more use of ICT to support the raising of pupils' scientific knowledge and skills. However, over the last two years the subject has received little funding to purchase resources, and whilst they are adequate, improved funding is vital to maintain and improve them.

ART AND DESIGN

98. The last inspection reported that pupils met national expectations by Year 2. This position has not changed. There is, however, improvement in the standard of teaching seen since the last inspection. Most pupils make good progress, and those with special educational needs often make good progress because of the individual attention that they receive. No significant

differences were seen in the progress and attainment of boys and girls or for those speaking English as an additional language.

99. The quality of teaching is good overall. In addition to lesson observations, evidence was gained from an examination of pupils' work on display, scrutiny of photographic evidence, from teachers' planning and other documentation and discussion with the co-ordinator. From all this it is clear that a wide range of experiences, use of a good variety of materials and introduction to

different techniques support learning in the subject. Also, pupils' artistic skills are effectively built on each year. Opportunities are used well to enable pupils to develop skills of careful observation for example, of wood sculptures in the environment seen on a visit to a local estate.

100. Of the lessons seen, one was excellent. It inspired a very positive response from the pupils, where they were willing to attempt to meet the challenges set for them. For example, pupils have very worthwhile opportunities to observe body shapes, either sculpted or drawn by famous artists, draw a body shape and then transfer their knowledge and learning to successfully create the shape in clay. In Year 1, pupils select from a good range of media to show colour and texture in their drawings of flowers, in the style of the artist Georgia O'Keefe. Good use is made of a digital camera to record individual fresh flowers from the previous lesson, to support the pupils' learning. Pupils are given an appropriate amount of individual support; at the same time, the teachers encourage the pupils to be independent and to use their skill in, for example, making weaving looms. They use colours of materials well to create the effect of the sea.
101. Working with visiting local artists and having their work displayed in various local buildings, further enhance pupils' work in art. There are some very good displays reflecting the use of art to support learning in other areas of the curriculum. These include a display of a visit undertaken to a museum in relation to history. There are also pictures reflecting how pupils respond to music, such as the Arabian Dance, and books made in the shape of a pumpkin in English. A very effective after-school art club makes a significant contribution to the pupils' learning and appreciation of art in Year 2. For example, pupils use mod-roc (a form of plaster of Paris) to create large, well-constructed models of creatures, such as a dragon, leopard and pony.
102. The subject is very well managed. There is a good scheme of work that appropriately supports teachers' planning and builds on pupils' skills and techniques from year to year. This has been maintained since the last inspection. There are some opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching and learning through observing lessons, looking at displays of pupils' work, examination of teachers' planning and feeding back to teachers. This year is art initiative year on the school's rolling programme of Curriculum Development. The subject has been identified as an area for further development so that standards can be raised in all areas of the curriculum. Useful individual assessments are kept that clearly show the pupils' progress in the subject. The use of sketchbooks, introduced prior to the last inspection, is no longer a feature of work in art. This limits the school in its ability to track pupils' progress and the build up of skills and continuity in learning throughout the school.
103. Art and design makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The display of pupils' work has a positive impact on the school environment and it is clear that teachers value the pupils' work. Resources to support the subject are adequate and accessible and the co-ordinator is developing a portfolio, which provides useful examples of techniques and the expectations for pupils' attainment in the subject. Computer-aided art and design is developing appropriately, and this is likely to be boosted by the use of the new computer suite.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

104. Attainment in design and technology for pupils at the end of Year 2 is in line with that expected nationally. Teaching is satisfactory and enables pupils to demonstrate sound achievement and

progress as they move through the school. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

105. By the end of Year 2, pupils are able to construct a range of models and artefacts using a variety of materials including cardboard and textiles. Teachers use effective stimuli for generating interest in design and technology projects, and manage pupils well in the ensuing practical activities. In a Year 1 class, for example, stick puppets were effectively used to introduce the pupils to the idea of giving character, by using different materials. The teacher held the pupils' interest by using a good range of different puppets to support their learning. In a Year 2 class, the pupils designed a paper pattern to draw round on material to make a glove puppet. Appropriate skills were built into this activity. For example, pupils selected suitable material: they cut, glued and joined two pieces together. A scrutiny of the pupils' work on display shows that they have had good opportunities to design, make and give simple evaluations of their work, saying how it might be improved. For example, pupils in Year 2 designed buildings for a street display; they worked out the materials needed, made and changed them during the process. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when it was judged that pupils had less idea of how to improve a product. Good links were made with science in this topic when the pupils added lights to the buildings. There is limited evidence of teachers using ICT to support learning in design and technology, for example by using computers to develop their designs.
106. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory with some good aspects. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Appropriate attention is given to developing ideas and to the processes of designing, making and evaluating products. Throughout the school, pupils are appropriately taught to work with a variety of materials including for example, paper, card, wood, textiles and food. They develop adequate skills of cutting and joining. Clear instructions and explanations ensure that the pupils know what they have to do. They are given useful opportunities to ask questions and select appropriate tools and materials, which create interest and excitement. Skilful encouragement motivates the pupils to try harder. Teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make the same progress as other pupils in the class. This is achieved through either focused support from the teacher or the teaching assistants in the class.
107. Design and technology is satisfactorily managed. There is a suitable policy and scheme of work that reflects national guidance. Useful termly assessments are made that clearly show the pupils' progress in the subject. Resources are adequate and accessible to support learning. An after school cookery club effectively supports the subject. For example, the pupils have good opportunities to make pizzas. The activity links well to their learning in science on changing materials through cooking.

GEOGRAPHY

108. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress and in Year 2 they are working at levels appropriate for their age. Evidence also indicates that all pupils have access to an appropriate curriculum so that those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. No differences were noted between the progress and attainment of girls and boys. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.
109. Although only two lessons were observed, both in Year 1, the overall quality of teaching and learning is judged to be satisfactory. The focus in both these lessons was to develop the pupils' understanding of differences in climates across the world. Although, by the end of each lesson, pupils had made satisfactory progress, the pace of learning slowed either because they spent too much time sitting on the carpet listening or waiting for books to be given out before they could move on with their work. Both teachers had a clear understanding of what they wanted pupils to learn and had planned and prepared the lessons well. For example, pupils were asked which things would be needed to take on holiday to a hot country. The teacher had packed a suitcase with appropriate artefacts which gained the pupils' interest well. Unfortunately, insufficient time was available so the full impact of this part of the lesson was not realised. Staff have not clearly reviewed the amount and use of time for geography and there is evidence to suggest that

standards are being affected by this. For example, pupils in Year 2 had not studied geography for a while and found it difficult to remember what they knew and understood about aspects of geography beyond their immediate location, unless they were prompted by the inspector. Pupils would benefit from more regular opportunities to practise their geographical skills and consolidate their learning.

110. Pupils in Year 1 develop their mapping skills by drawing maps of where they live with features in the locality and aspects they like and dislike. They also develop an understanding of a 'birds-eye' view by drawing maps of the class. They use the book *Handa's Surprise* to develop their understanding of a different country and way of life.

111. Pupils show interest in the subject. Those in Year 2 were keen to speak about the local area. They had a sound understanding of features such as the sports centre, local shops and play areas and could identify things they liked to do. They could explain where they lived in relation to other areas and were aware of the need to travel by bus or car in order to buy clothes and shoes. They compared the local shops with bigger stores well. Others were aware of differences between where they lived and local seaside towns and could identify the features of such areas which would attract visitors. Pupils were also aware of how the environment could be spoilt by people, for example, by painting on walls, dropping litter and breaking play equipment. They used appropriate vocabulary, for example, when describing their journey from home to school.
112. A scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that they extract information from secondary sources such as books and the Internet and develop their literacy skills by writing about, for example the rainforest. Links with art and design are also evident when they create a collage depicting the creatures camouflaged in the rainforest. Clear progression in pupils' learning can be seen between the two year groups. All these aspects indicate that teachers relate pupils' learning well to their experiences, whilst also encouraging them to develop an understanding of countries beyond their own.
113. The pupils enjoy geography and the subject makes a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their knowledge of the world and its peoples. The outline of topics to be studied ensures continuity and progression of the skills and work to be taught and reflects those suggested in the National Curriculum guidance. The subject is well co-ordinated with appropriate support provided such as subject profile comments, which are used to indicate what pupils can, and can not, do. The subject has been maintained during a time when school priorities have focused on raising standards in other curriculum areas.

HISTORY

114. Pupils in Years 2 are working at a level similar to others of the same age nationally. Most pupils achieve well because they are interested in what they do and the quality of teaching is good. This shows satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers as the work set is appropriate and they receive good support when needed. Similarly, pupils from minority ethnic groups are well supported and make good progress. No significant differences were noted in the abilities and contributions made by girls and boys. Teachers ensure that all are included in the activities and take equal part in class discussions.
115. In Year 1, pupils develop their understanding of chronology to a satisfactory level through the use of first and second-hand evidence. Pupils are helped to understand how things have changed and how people's lives have been affected by changes in technology by, for example, looking at pictures or scrutinising artefacts used for bathing, cooking or for travel. In Year 2, pupils' skills are further developed when they compare teddy bears and write about them being 'older than' and 'younger than' others. They, too, develop an understanding of changes in technology as they discover dolls made out of wax, plastic, rubber and wood. They also use timelines well to understand the passing of time.
116. In a good lesson in Year 1, pupils developed an understanding of key events and famous people from the past as they studied Samuel Pepys and the Great Fire of London. The teacher planned the lesson well and used a good range of teaching methods to maintain the pupils' attention. They were very interested when watching a video and showed by their answers to the teacher's questions that they had listened well and understood. For example, they knew that the fire took place in London, why it spread so quickly and that Samuel Pepys wrote a diary. Pupils behaved well and demonstrated very good attitudes when working because they were clear about what they should do and were interested. Pupils had knowledge and understanding at a level appropriate for their age in this class but their ability to record their ideas was at a lower level in some cases.

117. Pupils in Year 2 extended their knowledge of famous people by studying Queen Victoria and key aspects of her life. In one lesson observed, the teacher quickly gained the pupils' attention by the good use of resources, most of which she had brought from home, and by the way she introduced the topic. Her good subject knowledge and high expectations resulted in most pupils listening well as she told of her visit to one of the queen's houses. One higher-attaining pupil was particularly interested in this topic and by the end of the lesson had good knowledge of the queen's rule and her life and family. In another lesson, the pupils' interest was maintained by the teacher acting in the role of Queen Victoria and several were keen to talk about this after the lesson.
118. Discussions with pupils indicate that they gain a lot from visits to places of historical interest, such as that to a local museum. Many pupils were keen to talk about the visit and the resulting display. Good use had been made of the digital camera to capture moments during the visit and the pupils' literacy and artistic skills were developed as they wrote stories about some of the artefacts seen and made drawings of toys 'then' and 'now'. Pupils' numeracy skills were also developed as they produced a timeline from 1900 to 'the future'. Good links were made with design and technology as pupils made dolls from pegs during their study of toys. These were of a good standard. There was no evidence of older pupils using the library to gain additional information, in order to develop their enquiry skills and ability to work alone.
119. Pupils are aware that historical evidence can be gained from a range of sources and they identify the use of computers, books, posters and magazines to find out about the past. The school's commitment to include all pupils is reflected in its teaching of history where all are encouraged to take part and achieve. Relationships are good and this helps teachers to manage the pupils well. Most pupils have good attitudes to their learning.
120. The development of history has been maintained satisfactorily during a period when school priorities have been placed on raising standards in other subjects such as English, mathematics and science. The co-ordinator has ensured that the curriculum has been appropriately developed in the light of national guidance and an appropriate action plan is in place to ensure further development. Pupils are provided with a good range of learning opportunities and the work set matches the variety of abilities within each class.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

121. Standards of attainment are in line with what is expected for pupils at the end of Year 2, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Improvements in provision have been very recent and, as a result, pupils' achievement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, whereas their learning in lessons is now good. Improvements in pupils' learning have been achieved through a combination of factors. The school has installed a well-designed computer suite and provided training so that teachers and support staff are confident in its use. All classes have timetabled sessions in the suite when skills are taught and applied. Although these skills are well used to support learning in English and mathematics, the co-ordinator is now seeking ways of making greater use of the suite during the school day so that pupils can consolidate these skills, and use them more regularly to support learning across a range of subjects. This would also help pupils to develop better keyboard skills so that they can work at a quicker pace. Many still spend too much time searching for keys, and tend to poke the keys, rather than using a good key-stroke style. The school has recently, and wisely appointed a knowledgeable co-ordinator who gives good advice and support to staff. She is well supported in her work by a technician who sets up the computers and sees that they are in working order, so that no learning time is lost. There is a good scheme of work, linked to national guidance, which is well used by teachers to guide their planning. As a result of these initiatives, the quality of teaching and learning is now good. This shows a significant improvement compared to the sound teaching reported in the last inspection.
122. The quality of teaching and learning seen during the inspection was invariably good or better. Teachers plan effectively and evaluate their lessons well so as to identify any areas that need to be considered in the next lessons. Explanations are clear and, consequently, pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, are fully

included in lessons and know what they are to do. In lessons, pupils' enthusiasm, their good behaviour and willingness to discuss their work, made a very positive contribution to their learning. The very good all-round relationships in the school give pupils the confidence to seek

help from adults and each other. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 make good progress in learning to save, retrieve and print their work. Although a significant number of pupils have little experience of computers outside the school, they readily describe what they have been doing in school.

123. Work on display shows that pupils have been taught to access information on favourite authors, such as Martin Waddell and Jill Murphy. The school has plans to exchange information with others and hopes to forge links with a school in Canada, which will further support pupils' cultural development as well as their understanding of the use of ICT. Data handling skills are being suitably developed across the school. Year 2 pupils were being very well taught to organise and classify information they had collected about the favourite toys in the classroom. Pupils in Year 1 were being well taught by a confident teaching assistant to enter the data they had collected on a 'sound' walk', and to use the digital camera to photograph various sources of sound as they walked round the school. The use of the digital camera to record a range of pupils' work across the curriculum, shows the value that is placed on what pupils achieve, and helps to raise their self esteem.
124. Pupils save their work onto their own files so that teachers can use this information to assess pupils' work and to provide extra support where necessary. Teachers moderate the work and are aware of the levels at which pupils are working. Greater use now needs to be made of this information as pupils are starting to progress at different rates. This will help to further ensure the systematic development of skills as pupils move through the school. The school is now well placed to continue to raise standards and to make increasing use of ICT to support pupils' learning in other subjects of the curriculum.

MUSIC

125. Pupils achieve standards in line with national expectations. This indicates that the findings of the last inspection have been maintained and there have been satisfactory improvements, especially in the organisation of the curriculum and the introduction of lesson observations by the music co-ordinator to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.
126. Pupils sing with confidence, participating enthusiastically and with considerable enjoyment. They sing in tune, understand dynamics and have a good sense of rhythm. They learn a range of songs from different cultures and enjoy the opportunities to move to music during dance lessons. Children from the reception classes and pupils from Year 1 make very good progress in their rehearsals for the school's spring concert, many instantly recognising songs from a short extract. They enjoy the action songs, which they accompany with a variety of movements including clapping.
127. By Year 2, pupils use a range of percussion instruments to accompany their work, and readily offer ideas as to which instruments will be the most appropriate. They listen carefully to music played in assembly and lessons. Pupils understand the importance of practice to develop their individual and group skills, which some choose to extend further by joining the school choir. Year 2 pupils stimulated by listening to music associated with toys, work in groups to link instruments to toys and use symbols to compose a piece of music. Each group then perform their own 'Toy Symphony' using a variety of toys and instruments to reflect the symbols chosen to represent sounds and effects as they perform their piece of music. Pupils with special educational needs are catered for well, often by being asked to work alongside others in small group work. Teachers ensure that pupils with English as an additional language take a full part in the lesson by including them in question and answer sessions and in playing instruments in practical situations.
128. The quality of teaching during the period of the inspection was very good. It was never less than satisfactory and on one occasion during the inspection it was excellent. The music specialist

has very good subject knowledge, which is reflected in pupils' learning and the very good support she gives to the teaching of music from the nursery to Year 2. Lessons generally are lively and move at a good pace with clear objectives showing a balance between performance and discussion. Pupils behave well in lessons and show a real interest due to the teachers' choice of topics and their very good class management. The good use of recorded music on tape or CD-ROM provides pupils with experiences that contribute well to their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. A range of strategies is used to involve all pupils, with good use made of voice, instruments, pupils' performances and discussions to draw out the best of each individual. Pupils are encouraged to offer ideas and take part on an equal basis. The National Curriculum attainment targets are covered through careful planning by year group teams, supported by a detailed scheme of work. Pupils make good progress during their time at the school and their achievements are reported in detail in their annual reports. The subject makes a very good contribution to developing pupils' skills in listening and speaking.

129. Leadership is good. The co-ordinator works hard to ensure that all members of staff know enough to teach the different strands of the curriculum, from singing to playing, composing and listening to music for particular purposes such as dance or lullaby. Resources are adequate and the need to renew available resources and restock as necessary is part of the subject's development plan to improve the range and quality of musical opportunities for all pupils. There are good links with dance and the school offers pupils the opportunity to be involved in extra-curricular activities such as a choir and the local schools' music festival.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

130. Pupils achieve standards in line with national expectations, and there are a few examples of pupils performing at a higher level in dance in the interpretation of music and in games skills lessons, developing good co-ordination and ball control. Inspection evidence indicates that the school has maintained the average standards observed in the previous inspection. No significant differences were seen in relation to the progress and attainment of boys and girls, pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs.
131. Pupils in Year 1 practise game skills involving sending and receiving a ball in different ways. They work alone and with a partner and are developing an understanding of different speeds, directions and use of space. Pupils work together to bounce and catch. They are beginning to develop evaluative skills and watch carefully when another pupil is asked to demonstrate their catching skills. They also show an awareness of their body through finding creative ways to balance on different body parts, curling and stretching as they concentrate on the balancing position. This element of creativity is particularly evident in Year 2 where they show an ability to perform short sequences in dance, depicting inflating and deflating balloons whilst listening to music specifically produced for this sequence. Pupils are aware of the safety issues when handling equipment and using spaces inside and outside the school. All lessons begin with a warm up activity although teachers do not always explain why, with the result that pupils may lack an understanding of the purpose of this activity. Pupils' behaviour during lessons is very good and they follow rules and instructions very well. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress due to the support provided for pupils of all abilities.
132. Across the school, teaching is good overall and some lessons observed were very good. Teachers are generally secure in their subject knowledge and link lessons to the agreed long and medium-term plans. They build on previous lessons and develop skills systematically. Lessons are generally well structured and pupils respond well to the teachers' questions and challenges. Pupils enjoy the freedom to work with others and perform the activities suggested. Regular short keep-fit sessions introduced as part of a 'health week' have become a welcome addition to pupils' timetables. Teachers manage pupils very well with a consistent emphasis on safety both before and after lessons. Most lessons move at a good pace and pupils make good progress. Teachers constantly encourage pupils and offer praise to raise pupils' confidence in their own ability. Pupils enjoy the lessons because of the very good relationship that they have with their teachers and the good way that they are managed. Teachers use pupils' work effectively to demonstrate good practice and involve them in the evaluation of their own performance. Teachers run a popular folk

dancing club and enter pupils in the annual North East Essex Country Dance Festival, which was held this year at the school. This contributes positively to the pupils' learning and offers them additional experiences.

133. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The school has reflected on the judgements made and initiated a number of improvements. A new scheme of work has recently been introduced in line with national guidelines and the school has improved storage facilities for physical education equipment. Assessment is in place and pupils' progress is reported to parents. From next term, the subject co-ordinator is being given time to observe and evaluate the teaching and learning of physical education across the school. The use of technology to record the achievements of pupils, for example in dance, is limited. Links with the adjacent junior school are developing through extra-curricular activities and use of their facilities for the school's annual sports day.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

134. Standards in religious education match those expected by the locally Agreed Syllabus for pupils at Year 2. These sound standards have been well maintained since the last inspection. Because of the good support received, pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers and attain in line with their abilities. Teachers feel well supported in their planning by the content of the local authority's Agreed Syllabus and there is good coverage of topics. Two lessons were seen during the inspection in which teaching was good in one and satisfactory in the other. Very good quality assemblies and circle times were also seen which give strong support to learning in religious education. All inspection evidence indicates that the overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils achieve well from a low starting point. No significant differences were seen in relation to the attainment and progress of girls and boys. Pupils are taught about Christianity and aspects of other major faiths, such as Judaism, Hinduism and Sikhism, which gives them an understanding of the nature of religious belief. Teachers are making an increasing use of links between key figures in a range of faiths to help pupils remember facts taught and to deepen their understanding. There is a need for a greater range of big books and simple research materials so that pupils can find out some information for themselves, which they can discuss and record. This would also further help to develop their literacy skills. The lack of these resources results in pupils having to spend a lot of time on the carpet listening to the teacher and consequently, some lose concentration. Due to recent improvements in provision for ICT, the school is well placed to use this resource to support pupils' learning more effectively. However, it is not clear in the teachers' planning how this will be achieved. Teachers choose interesting stories from the life of Jesus and other key figures to teach moral values. They use expression and intonation well when reading aloud which ensures that all pupils can follow the plot and are appropriately engrossed in the story.
135. Through visits to their local church, pupils are able to recognise and understand the purpose of different parts of the building and are gaining an understanding of the significance of baptism as a sign of belonging. The school is planning visits to other places of worship to further support the curriculum and pupils' cultural development. Pupils are well taught that a major element in different faiths is that of caring for one another and the environment. Spiritual, moral and social development is a very strong feature of the school and pupils are given a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. This is promoted, not only in religious education lessons, but also throughout the school day. In this respect, teachers ensure that pupils not only learn *about* religion, but also *from* religion. Throughout the year, they gain an understanding that different religions share some common features through celebrating festivals such as Christmas, Holi, Easter, Harvest, St David's Day, St Patrick's Day and Eid. The use of literacy lessons during Multicultural Week, for example, is effectively used to broaden pupils' horizons, and to deepen their understanding of the richness and diversity of a range of cultures. Assemblies are well used to set the weekly theme for religious education. During the week of inspection the theme 'Jesus the Healer' was introduced during Monday's assembly and developed in lessons and assemblies through the week, using the life of other healers such as Mother Teresa, to deepen pupils' understanding.

136. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who is able to offer good practical support to colleagues. Resources have been audited and organised in topic boxes so that they are more readily available to teachers. The co-ordinator has a clear action plan for development, which includes a meeting with staff after she has attended a course on the new Agreed Syllabus which has recently been introduced, and increased resources to support teaching and learning.