

## INSPECTION REPORT

**STOW HEATH INFANTS, NURSERY AND  
RESOURCE AREAS  
for Hearing Impaired Children and Moderate  
Learning Difficulties**

Willenhall



LEA area: Wolverhampton



Unique reference number: 104323

Headteacher: Miss V. Bunce

Reporting inspector: Mrs M.E. Cooper  
15175

Dates of inspection: 3rd to 6th March 2003

Inspection number: 253773

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Vaughan Road Portobello Willenhall
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M. Fryer
Date of previous inspection:	22nd June 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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15175	Margaret Cooper	Registered inspector	English History 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?
9146	Mark Brennand	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?
14319	Michael Brown	Team inspector	Science Geography Physical Education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
23412	Alvin Jeffs	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music Special educational needs	
20655	Beryl Rimmer	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Religious education Foundation Stage	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a larger than average school located in Portobello, a long-established urban area on the outskirts of Wolverhampton. There are 316 boys and girls aged from three to seven on roll, with rather more boys than girls. Of these, 79 children attend the nursery on a part-time basis. There has been a gradual decline in the number of pupils on roll in recent years because of changes in the area the school serves. When children enter the nursery they are attaining well below average standards, particularly in their language skills. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (24.9 per cent) is above average. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage. The remaining pupils (29.8 per cent) are predominantly Asian or Asian British of Indian ethnic origin, or are of mixed white and black Caribbean parentage. The proportion of pupils whose mother tongue is not English (10.4 per cent) is high. There are 18 pupils (5.7 per cent) who are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs (11.5 per cent) is not high and reflects the policy of the school and local education authority (LEA) to recognise the class teacher's responsibility for providing for pupils with mild or short-term learning difficulties. However, the proportion of pupils who are subjects of statements of special educational need (2.5 per cent) is above average. Special educational needs are predominantly learning difficulties and hearing impairment. The school has two specialist resource areas for pupils with significant levels of special educational need. Seven pupils are supported by a resource base for pupils with hearing impairment (HI), and they are taught mostly in mainstream classes. Another resource base is provided for six pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) who spend some of their time in mainstream classes. Several of these pupils are drawn from beyond the school's catchment area. The school is in an Excellence in Cities Action Zone (EAZ), in a Surestart area, and part of a Health Action Zone. There has been a change of headteacher since the last inspection. The current headteacher was appointed in 2000.

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

It is an inclusive and effective school that provides a good quality of education for its pupils. Pupils make good progress from entering the nursery to leaving the school. Teaching is generally good. This helps pupils achieve well, although there is scope for further improvement in Years 1 and 2 and standards are below average at the age of seven. Leadership and management are good, and play a key role in achieving the caring ethos and good relationships that are a significant feature of the school. These help to promote the positive attitudes, values and personal development shown by pupils. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Children are given a very good start to their education in the nursery and reception classes
- Pupils achieve well at the infant stage in mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT)
- Moral and social development are both promoted very well and pupils relate very well to others
- There is a high level of care for pupils
- There is very good provision for pupils with a significant level of special educational need

#### **What could be improved**

- Skills in both speaking and reading are underdeveloped and could be higher
- The quality of tasks given to pupils in Years 1 and 2 to ensure that they achieve as well as they should
- Arrangements for assessment and the use of assessment information

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

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

There has been sound improvement since the previous inspection in 1998, and the rate of improvement has been good over the last two years. This is seen particularly in higher standards in writing, mathematics, ICT and aspects of science, and in clearer and more effective management responsibilities and roles. There has been substantial improvement in provision for children in the nursery

and reception years. Pupils' positive attitudes, values and personal development have been maintained. There has also been good improvement in arrangements for monitoring the school's performance, identifying educational priorities and planning development. The EAZ and other local initiatives through which the school receives additional support have not been in place long enough to judge their impact on standards.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	E	E	E	D
Writing	E	E	E	D
Mathematics	E	E	D	C

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

Pupils make good gains in their attainment whilst they are in the school, although standards remain below average at the end of Year 2. Over recent years the rate of improvement in test results at the age of seven has been in line with the national trend. Overall school results are affected by the high proportion of pupils with a significant level of special educational need. Poor attendance also limits the achievement of some pupils. Despite making very good progress in the nursery and reception years, when pupils start Year 1 the majority are still attaining standards that are below expectations, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. However, they attain the expected standards in their mathematical, physical and creative development.

Pupils currently in Year 2 attained lower standards by the end of reception than those currently in the reception classes. Inspection findings confirm below average standards at the age of seven in reading and writing, as well as underdeveloped speaking skills. Although pupils achieve satisfactorily overall in English, they could do better in their speaking and reading skills. Standards in mathematics and science remain below average, although pupils make good progress in mathematics and sound progress in science. Higher attainers achieve standards above those expected in English, mathematics and science. Pupils achieve well to attain the expected levels in ICT. In all other subjects, pupils make sound progress and most attain the expected levels by the end of Year 2 with the single exception of religious education (RE) where standards are below the expected level. Although pupils make sound progress in Years 1 and 2, they could achieve better in those subjects in which progress is no more than satisfactory.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and try hard in lessons
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils respond to the school's high expectations of them and behave well both in lessons and around the school
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils relate very well to others. They show respect to adults and to each other, including those with special educational needs. Pupils from different ethnic groups work and play in harmony together.
Attendance	Well below average. This is largely linked to poor health and a few families whose children have a poor attendance record. There are also a

few pupils who regularly arrive late in the morning.
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Pupils' positive attitudes to their school activities and their very good relationships have a beneficial effect on their learning.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Very good	Satisfactory

*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 both teaching and learning is good overall and promotes the good progress pupils make, although there is some variation between subjects and year groups. In the nursery and reception classes teaching is good in physical and creative development, and very good in all other areas of learning. Teachers and support staff work well as a team and have a good understanding of the needs of young children. This helps children settle quickly and approach their school activities with increasing confidence. In Years 1 and 2, mathematics and ICT are taught well. Teaching is satisfactory in English, science, art and design, history, music, physical education (PE) and RE. No judgement is made about geography because no lessons were seen in this subject. Teachers introduce lessons well and capture pupils' interest. They have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and manage pupils skilfully. As a result pupils work confidently and productively on their activities. However, the quality of tasks planned for pupils is very variable. In many lessons, they are not planned well enough to ensure all pupils make satisfactory gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good quality and range of learning experiences for its pupils. Provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is very good
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is very good, particularly for those supported by the resource bases. These pupils are well integrated into the main school and, through high quality support, make good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans (IEPs) and in their learning across the curriculum
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good account is taken of the needs of pupils whose mother tongue is not English, so they are able to make similar progress to others in their classes
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Pupils' moral and social development are both promoted very well. The school makes good provision for both their spiritual and cultural development, and this has improved since the last inspection
How well the school cares for its pupils	The high level of care is a strength of the school. Teaching and support staff know their pupils well. They establish a caring environment that promotes the confidence and positive attitudes of pupils of all abilities and ethnic groups to their experiences. Arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress are very good in the nursery and reception years. In Years 1 and 2 they are good in mathematics and science, sound in English, but underdeveloped in other subjects.

Pupils benefit from experiences that enrich the curriculum such as visits to places of educational interest, book weeks and opportunities to work with theatre groups. Good arrangements for personal,



social and health education (PSHE), as well as the contribution of the community and good relationships with partner institutions, all have a positive impact on pupils' achievements. There are good arrangements for promoting good behaviour and attendance. The school works hard to develop its partnership with parents. Parents have very positive views of the school and their support benefits their children's learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The very good leadership of the headteacher ensures a clear educational direction for the school. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher and senior management team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are active, well informed about the work of the school and supportive of the headteacher and staff. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities well
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has established good arrangements for monitoring teaching, standards and progress although they are not fully in place in all subjects yet. Careful analysis of test results also supports the identification of strengths and areas for development, which form the basis of a carefully-planned programme of improvement
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of its resources to improve the quality of education provided

Clear and appropriate roles and responsibilities at all levels contribute to the good management of the school. Teaching and other staff work well as a team and share a very strong commitment to the needs of their pupils and to school improvement.

The school is well provided with teaching and support staff to meet the needs of its curriculum and pupils. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. The building is well-maintained and has a dedicated ICT suite and library. There is a sufficient amount of outdoor space, including a very attractive nursery garden. There is a sound quantity and range of learning resources. The school gives due attention to seeking value for money when making spending decisions.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school</li> <li>• Children are helped to become mature and responsible</li> <li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with their concerns</li> <li>• Teaching is good</li> <li>• Children make good progress</li> <li>• Behaviour is good</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons</li> <li>• The amount of work to do at home</li> <li>• Information about how their children are getting on</li> </ul>

The inspection finds the range of extra-curricular activities to be good and the amount of homework satisfactory. However, the inspection agrees that pupils' written reports do not provide enough information about progress in subjects. The inspection agrees with the positive views of parents. As one parent wrote to the inspectors: *The teachers are always very attentive and caring. ... I would recommend Stow Heath Infants to anybody.*



## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Although there is some variation from year to year, when children enter the nursery their skills are well below expectations, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; and mathematical development. Their basic general knowledge is also well below average. Despite benefiting from good overall teaching and making good progress, standards in English and mathematics remain broadly below expectation at the age of seven.
2. In national tests in recent years pupils have performed better in mathematics than in reading and writing. In 2002, the percentage of higher attainers who achieved standards in mathematics above those expected for their age was in line with the national average. Over the last five years, the improvement in test results has been similar to the national trend, but better in mathematics. Compared to schools nationally, girls have performed significantly better than boys over the last three years. The school's own analysis of test results also shows that pupils of Indian ethnic origin have performed better than other groups. The school successfully achieved its targets for the 2002 tests although these could have been more challenging.
3. Children make very good progress at the foundation stage<sup>1</sup> as a result of very good teaching, a carefully planned curriculum and an environment that enables them to settle quickly and work confidently. They achieve particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Despite their very good progress, most children do not attain the early learning goals<sup>2</sup> by the end of the reception year in their personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; or in their knowledge and understanding of the world. However, they attain the expected standards in the mathematical, physical and creative areas of learning.
4. Satisfactory teaching in Years 1 and 2 promotes a sound rate of progress although standards remain below average at the age of seven. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 2 was particularly low when they entered the school and still below average in most areas of learning, including mathematical development, by the end of the reception year. Although the majority of pupils attain the expected levels in all subjects, overall standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are below average. This is because of the considerable proportion of lower attainers who do not attain the expected levels, and the small minority who attain higher standards, when compared to the national picture. Standards are below average in English, particularly in speaking and reading skills. Underdeveloped speaking skills limit the progress pupils make in reading and writing. Pupils listen carefully and effectively but show a limited capacity to develop and explain their ideas when talking to others. Pupils make steady progress in communicating ideas to others through writing. Despite increasing knowledge of letters and sounds, few pupils read with good levels of fluency, or show secure understanding of the books they read. There has been recent improvement in pupils' rate of progress in writing but, as the school has already identified, provision for speaking and reading requires further development. Pupils make sound progress in science to attain below average standards at the age of seven, although this shows improvement from last year. In contrast, pupils make good progress in mathematics,

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<sup>1</sup> The nursery and reception years are now known as the foundation stage

<sup>2</sup> Early learning goals are the expected standards for children by the end of reception

which is taught well. Pupils also make good progress in ICT and attain the expected standards in this subject. Despite satisfactory teaching and progress, pupils do not attain the expected standards in RE. Pupils make satisfactory progress and broadly attain the expected standards by the end of Year 2 in art and design, design and technology (DT), geography, history, music and physical education (PE).

5. In subjects where pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress, this is largely due to shortcomings in matching work closely to pupils' stages of learning to ensure they build consistently on their existing skills, knowledge and understanding. To some extent, underdeveloped speaking skills limit progress in subjects across the curriculum, and a poor record of attendance constrains the progress made by some pupils. Inspection evidence did not find any inequality of opportunity in the provision made for different groups. However, in some lessons, it was noted that pupils of Indian origin often work more productively on their tasks than others, and girls maintain their concentration better than boys. The school recognises these differences and is exploring ways of increasing the interest of boys in their learning experiences. Pupils for whom English is not their mother tongue make similar progress to others. Appropriate monitoring and support of those who are at an early stage of learning English help them approach their learning tasks with confidence and make steady gains in their English speaking and literacy skills.
6. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress, particularly those with a significant level of need. This is due to the high quality provision and teaching pupils receive in the HI and MLD resource bases and the high quality teaching support they receive when working in mainstream classes. The responsibility for a significant number of other pupils with milder learning difficulties lies firmly with the class teachers. These pupils make good progress towards the targets in their individual learning plans, and similar progress to their peers across the curriculum.

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

7. The positive attitudes, behaviour and response to school experiences have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils' attitudes are good. Nearly all parents returning the questionnaire reported that their children like coming to school. The vast majority of pupils arrive on time and the registration period, in conjunction with early morning activities designed to challenge pupils, provides a positive start to the day. Nursery children enter happily but quietly and engage in their activities with enthusiasm. In assemblies pupils sing with a sense of joy and in lessons, when working on their own, they maintain their interest and effort for prolonged periods of time.
8. Behaviour is good. Pupils demonstrate this in a variety of contexts by moving around the school in an orderly manner, waiting patiently in line to have lunch and by sitting quietly both before and during assembly. There are a number of pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties who are managed well. In the majority of lessons behaviour is good or better, particularly when teaching is good and stimulating. Conversely there are also a small minority of lessons where pupils are allowed to shout out answers without first raising their hands, thereby preventing the whole class from having an opportunity to contribute. In addition, where teaching lacks pace, pupils lose concentration and begin to fidget and talk inappropriately. No examples of bullying or racial abuse were observed and conversations with parents confirmed that such incidents are very rare. A well-integrated personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme helps pupils appreciate the impact of their actions on others. There have been no recent exclusions.
9. Pupils respond well to opportunities to use their initiative and take personal responsibility. From their early days in the nursery children find their names to register

their arrival and begin to choose some of their activities. This good early start is diluted in later years by fewer opportunities for pupils to choose their tasks or plan how they will approach them. Pupils relate very well to each other and to adults. Boys and girls and pupils of different ethnic groups, ages and abilities are very supportive of each other in lessons and around the school. Year 6 pupils, for instance, enjoy reading with Year 2 pupils on a weekly basis. Pupils value the merit awards that come in the form of stars, stickers and certificates. These are awarded at the weekly celebration assemblies and help to raise self-esteem. The diversity of cultures within the school allows pupils to appreciate and share their differing traditions, and assemblies are used to celebrate their major festivals. Respect for feelings and values is demonstrated by the extent to which staff and pupils throughout the school use sign language.

10. The school's very strong commitment to providing an inclusive education allows pupils with special educational needs to be fully included socially and educationally. Every pupil with special educational needs is a member of a class and, where appropriate, withdrawn for specialised work. This means that all pupils work and play together and are very accepting of each other's differences and difficulties. As a result, there is a secure atmosphere for learning for all pupils. The inspection team was impressed with the confidence and happiness displayed by pupils with often considerable learning and emotional difficulties.
11. Attendance is well below average despite effective monitoring and positive incentives in the form of individual and class awards. This is linked to a small number of families whose children have a poor attendance record, and also to the poor health and unfavourable social and economic circumstances of some families. There are also a small number of pupils who arrive late regularly. Their late arrival has a disruptive effect on morning lessons and both the headteacher and education welfare officer continue to work closely to address this.

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

12. The overall quality of both teaching and learning is good and promotes the good progress pupils make whilst they are in the school. All but a small minority of lessons seen were at least satisfactory, and teaching was good or better in almost two lessons in three. In about one lesson in three, teaching was either very good or excellent. This shows significant improvement since the last inspection when teaching was unsatisfactory in more than one lesson in ten.
13. Teaching is very good in the nursery and reception classes and promotes the very good rate at which children progress at the foundation stage. Teaching and support staff display a good understanding of the needs of young children. They work well together to provide a caring learning environment that helps children settle quickly into classroom routines. A strong emphasis is given to developing children's personal, social and language skills, including opportunities for them to work independently. Teachers select from a wide repertoire of teaching methods and encourage children to be curious and work in an investigative way. As a result, children are deeply engaged in their activities and this helps the very good progress they make. A bilingual nursery nurse provides effective support for children who are at an early stage of learning English. This helps them achieve well in their English knowledge and skills as well as in other areas of learning.
14. In Years 1 and 2, satisfactory teaching results in a sound quality of learning. Good teaching in mathematics and ICT promotes the good rate of progress pupils make in these subjects. This is because of teachers' good knowledge and understanding and because lessons are planned and taught well. In all other subjects, including English

and science, teaching is satisfactory and promotes sound progress. Literacy is taught satisfactorily and numeracy is taught well. No judgement has been made about teaching in geography because no lessons were seen in this subject.

15. Overall, teachers have good subject expertise to help pupils develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. They establish good relationships in classes and manage pupils skilfully so they are interested and attentive and time is not wasted in inappropriate behaviour. As a result, pupils want to do well and work productively. This is seen particularly in lesson introductions, which are generally good and prepare pupils well for their own activities. Teachers present learning in a positive way so that most pupils enjoy this part of the lesson and concentrate well. Teachers encourage pupils to share their own ideas with the class by showing, through their response, how they value their contributions. Explanations and instructions are given clearly so that pupils understand what is expected of them. Appropriate account is taken of the needs of pupils for whom English is not their mother tongue, so they are able to learn at a similar rate to their peers. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of the rate at which pupils can learn and well-chosen activities are managed at a good pace to make this possible.
16. In subjects where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, a significant shortcoming is the quality of tasks provided for pupils. These are very variable in quality, even between lessons in the same subject and year group, and frequently between groups in the same lesson. This is because lesson plans do not provide enough guidance for teachers. As a result, tasks are often not matched well enough to the planned learning to ensure pupils consolidate or build further on what they already know and can do. In literacy lessons, for instance, some tasks have the prime purpose of keeping groups busy whilst the teacher works with another group. In the best examples, tasks are closely linked to earlier learning, are meaningful for the pupils and often enjoyable because they involve practical activities and the opportunity to co-operate and make decisions with others. In subjects such as geography and history, teachers' capacity to match tasks closely to pupils' differing stages of learning is further restricted by the lack of school assessment procedures.
17. The standard of teaching for pupils with special educational needs within the HI and MLD resource bases is consistently good or very good. Specialist teachers working with HI pupils combine a very good understanding of language and communication needs with an excellent rapport with pupils. This combination creates a feeling of self-worth in the pupils and enables them to learn and develop at an accelerated rate both within the full class setting and in the very successful withdrawal sessions. Very good support staff also have a deep understanding of the communication needs of these pupils, together with a real sense of fun that assists in the learning process. In many mainstream situations, such as hymn practice, ICT and science lessons, the specialist staff provide skilled teaching not only to pupils with hearing impairment, but to others who also benefit from the fun and clarity of the teachers' presentation and support. All HI specialist teaching is underpinned by very detailed and appropriate adaptations to lesson plans, designed in collaboration with class teachers. Good planning, a wide range of teaching techniques and resources and acute observation and assessment contribute to progress, which is very good for all the pupils concerned.
18. The specialist teacher for MLD pupils provides very high quality teaching within the class and for individuals and small groups in the unit. This is characterised by good pace, close involvement of every individual pupil at an appropriate level and detailed planning and recording to ensure that lessons take good account of requirements and targets in statements and IEPs. She is assisted in this by very good support staff who

work well with groups in the mainstream class setting. They provide imaginative and informed support for a range of curricular activities and in sessions in the resource base where individual support and specific language skill development is a priority. A very good numeracy lesson typified the success of this teaching. Every child was engaged throughout a fifteen-minute session in playing number bingo to reinforce symbols to 20. The nursery nurse provided very skilled support for all pupils, working well with the teacher and sharing ideas and observations as the lesson progressed. Tasks to improve the writing of numerals and use of a computer program to develop understanding of *big* and *small* were followed by a 'shopping' session. This play activity ensured very good reinforcement and checking of pupils' skills with number bonds. The pupils made demonstrable progress within the lesson and this was reinforced during the whole class summary at the end.

19. The teaching of those with milder learning difficulties is less consistent. Most class teachers give these pupils appropriate tasks and use language and questions well to ensure understanding. They also have good strategies for managing pupils who display problem behaviour and this provides a secure and happy environment that assists learning for all pupils. Support staff demonstrate very good skills and sensitivity in meeting the needs of these pupils within class. However, teachers vary in the extent to which they take account of special educational needs in their planning. Sometimes the progress of pupils with mild learning difficulties is restricted by the lack of clear learning targets and well-structured tasks.

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

20. The school provides a good quality and range of learning opportunities which meet the needs and interests of its pupils. There has been significant development since the last inspection. There has been considerable recent improvement in the foundation stage curriculum. It is now well structured and organised and takes very good account of the areas of learning for children of this age. It gives a strong emphasis to personal and social development, literacy and numeracy and provides children with a rich and varied range of learning opportunities. It prepares children very well for their learning in Years 1 and 2.
21. The curriculum provided for pupils at the infant stage meets statutory requirements for National Curriculum subjects and RE. Mathematics and ICT are strengths within the overall curriculum, and there has been good improvement in addressing the shortcomings within these subjects found at the last inspection. The numeracy strategy has been implemented well and is having a positive impact on raising standards. The literacy strategy is in place but has been less effective in raising standards, particularly in reading. There has been recent improvement in medium and long term planning, which is sound for all subjects and takes appropriate account of national guidance. There is a carefully planned PSHE programme. The sex education policy has been agreed by parents, and is taught through science and class discussion time. Education about drug misuse is also addressed in science lessons.
22. The curriculum is extended by visits to places of educational interest, such as a museum and an art gallery, and a residential visit. The school also organises special events such as whole school art days, and opportunities provided by visitors to the school including theatre groups and representatives from local churches. A recent innovation has been the introduction of weekly activities to offer enrichment of the curriculum with a focus on creative, personal and social, and speaking and listening skills. These provide opportunities for pupils to engage in small groups in activities

such as computing, printing, signing, drama, clay work and playground games. Lunch-time football and tennis coaching classes are also provided, as well as an ocarina and newspaper club. There is a choir that meets weekly and takes part in the local music festival.

23. The school gives a very high priority to providing an inclusive education and equality of opportunity for all pupils. Whenever possible, those supported by the resource bases are integrated into mainstream activities with appropriate support provided. However, current arrangements for lessons to be interrupted for pupils to visit the library in small groups have an adverse effect on learning, as seen in a Year 2 science lesson.
24. Provision for pupils with a significant level of need supported by the HI and MLD resource bases is exemplary, with emphasis on the fullest possible inclusion. These pupils benefit both socially and educationally from working alongside their peers in mainstream classes, with specialist teaching and support in small group settings when appropriate. The close attention to meeting their curricular requirements as set out in statements of special educational need and IEPs has a positive impact on the extent to which they achieve their learning and other targets. The development of a specialised musical skills curriculum for hearing impaired pupils has been very imaginative and shown significant results in both confidence and communication development. The school meets the curricular requirements of pupils with milder levels of special educational need well.
25. There are good links with the local community, which contribute to pupils' learning. These include links with a local community centre, which runs a playgroup and an after school club. Pupils benefit from the close liaison with the adjoining junior school, and this helps prepare pupils for their transfer at the end of Year 2. There is good communication between co-ordinators of the two schools and Year 6 junior pupils support infant pupils, for example in their reading. There are links with a local beacon school, and also good links with a number of local secondary schools whereby students assist in the school on a regular basis and whilst undertaking their work experience. This is to the mutual benefit of pupils from both schools.
26. The school promotes pupils' personal development well. Provision for spiritual development is good and has improved since the last inspection. Pupils explore values and beliefs, through the RE curriculum, assemblies and celebration of religious festivals. Daily assemblies for the whole school are orderly and well managed and give pupils an appreciation of a greater being. Pupils are encouraged to sing and do so with enthusiasm. They are helped to understand human feelings and emotions through story and the topics they consider through the PSHE programme. In lessons there are occasional moments of awe as seen, for example, when nursery children showed considerable excitement over their work on space and in a Year 1 mathematics lesson where coins were made to disappear as if by magic. Reception children are helped to appreciate the wonders of the natural world when they examine snails and growth of plants in the garden. Most significantly the school seeks, with notable success, to create an environment where all pupils are valued.
27. Provision for moral development is very good. The school works hard and successfully to promote acceptable behaviour. Adults provide good role models in terms of good manners and consideration towards others. The 'Golden Rules', which are displayed throughout the school, provide a clear moral code, and assemblies and 'circle'<sup>3</sup> times are used as vehicles to discuss moral issues. The behaviour policy

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<sup>3</sup> 'Circle' times are when pupils sit in a circle and share their ideas and feelings with each other



puts a strong emphasis on reinforcing good behaviour and is effective in raising pupils' self esteem through praise and reward.

28. Provision for pupils' social development is also very good. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to work together in lessons with a partner or as part of a small group. Reception children related well to each other when they created a family role-play scenario and Year 1 pupils collaborated well in groups in an art lesson. In a Year 2 class, there is a 'Star of the week' award. This involves pupils setting themselves a challenge, such as helping them be more polite. It encourages pupils to think about themselves and their own social development. Pupils think about those less fortunate than themselves when they are encouraged to raise money for charity. Year 2 pupils also have an opportunity to attend a brief residential visit and this promotes their social skills well, building confidence in relationships and instilling a sense of citizenship.
29. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good and has improved since the last inspection. Through history, art and music pupils are given an insight into traditional Western European culture and heritage and this work is supplemented by visits to local areas of interest. RE and assemblies are used to teach pupils about the values and traditions of other cultures. All major religious festivals are celebrated and local ethnic diversity is reflected in wall displays and by the mix within pupils, staff and governors. Teachers of Asian heritage have brought in examples of the clothes they wear and, on Shrove Tuesday, nursery children cooked chapattis as well as pancakes.

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

30. The school is good at caring for its pupils. It provides a happy and secure environment in which staff know pupils and families well. The general ethos is one in which all pupils are valued and this helps promote pupils' self esteem and confidence as well as their enjoyment of school. This is seen in the celebration of pupils' birthdays and achievements and by participation by everyone in greeting others in assemblies through signing. There are good arrangements for helping children settle quickly into the nursery and reception classes. Fruit provided daily for all pupils, together with current efforts to attain the Healthy Schools Award, is another example of the school's efforts to promote their health and well-being.
31. The headteacher is the named person responsible for child protection and has good expertise in this area. Staff are well informed about the policy and procedures. Arrangements for health and safety, risk assessment and first aid are also good. Although the headteacher takes ultimate responsibility for day-to-day affairs she is supported well by the school's health and safety co-ordinator and the site manager. They carry out the necessary risk assessments including a daily visual check. The site manager also checks the fire alarms on a weekly basis. There are three fully qualified first aiders and good arrangements for reporting accidents and informing parents when pupils have received any injuries. There are also good systems in place for administering medication.
32. Good attention is given to meeting the needs of pupils for whom English is not their mother tongue, including those who are at an early stage of learning English. Additional support from a nursery nurse is targeted at pupils in the foundation stage to enable them to become fluent in English as soon as possible. The school has several bilingual classroom staff who, between them, speak the main first languages of pupils within the school. As a result, pupils benefit from having support available in their mother tongue when required.

33. The caring ethos of the school provides security for pupils who experience mild learning difficulties. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils with significant levels of need are very good. IEPs are clear and practical, they are reviewed regularly and the targets set are realistic. Assessment information is detailed and used well to plan future learning. The school makes very good use of external specialist agencies, including the educational psychology service, and pupils with behavioural, emotional and learning difficulties receive good personal support. The overall care provided is of the very highest quality, within clear boundaries that ensure that poor behaviour is noticed and good behaviour rewarded. Skilled support from a deaf tutor presents hearing impaired pupils with a very good role model.
34. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good, although they have not yet been successful in raising attendance to a satisfactory level. Attendance levels are carefully monitored. Where there is an unexplained absence the school contacts parents by telephone on the first day. Letters are sent when pupils are late more than twice in a week to remind parents to get their children to school on time. The school works closely with an educational welfare officer to follow up long-term absences. Incentives in the form of a weekly award for the best attending class, together with individual awards for 100 per cent attendance at the end of the year, encourage pupils to attend regularly.
35. Arrangements for monitoring behaviour and bullying are good. Although occurrences are rare, bullying incidents are carefully recorded and taken seriously. Dinner supervisors have been trained in behaviour management and they keep a record of any incidents that occur, as well as examples of good behaviour and consideration for others. They confirm that lunchtime behaviour is generally good.
36. In the last inspection it was reported that assessment procedures within the school were not fully effective. Procedures for assessing pupils' academic attainment and progress are now satisfactory overall. They are very good at the foundation stage, and good in English, mathematics and science with the single exception of speaking and listening. Where procedures are good, co-ordinators provide colleagues with guidance, including examples of fully annotated and assessed work. The school has not yet developed formal arrangements for assessing and recording individual standards in other subjects. This limits the extent to which progress in these subjects can be monitored and reported to parents.
37. Assessment information is used well to guide curricular planning for children at the foundation stage. However, it is not used satisfactorily to meet the differing needs of all groups within lessons in Years 1 and 2. There are efficient systems for tracking pupils' progress in English and mathematics and careful analysis of test results to identify targets for future development.
38. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good overall. They are very good in nursery and reception and for pupils with special educational needs. The school keeps records of individual progress in English and mathematics and identifies targets for future attainment. Classroom support staff fulfil an important role in promoting pupils' progress. There are sound arrangements for monitoring pupils' personal development and this is good for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

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

39. The positive views parents have about the school have been maintained since the last inspection. They find the staff welcoming and approachable and feel that their concerns are listened to and acted upon. The school operates an 'open door' policy that encourages parents to come into school at the beginning and end of the day to talk to staff and this provides a good opportunity to pass on information in an informal setting.
40. The school has developed good links with parents and has further plans to improve them through taking part in the 'Investors in Parents' initiative with other schools in the locality. Regular newsletters and information on notice boards keep parents informed about events. For parents of pupils supported by the resource bases a home-school diary is used to pass comments between home and school. Although little documentation is translated into community languages, a number of bilingual members of staff are available to translate information as and when required and, on occasion, visit parents. The school has arranged curriculum evenings in mathematics and literacy and each year there is a meeting for parents of Year 2 children about to take their national tests.
41. Parents' involvement has a positive impact on the work of the school. Between ten and fifteen parents help out in the school on a regular basis supporting ICT, reading, the running of the library and making resources. Many parents assist when children are taken on visits in the local area. Parents carried out the planting of shrubs in the new nursery garden. There is no formal parents' association but parents are very supportive of the events run by the staff. Over the last few years, substantial amounts of money have been raised for the nursery garden and school playground.
42. The information provided about pupils' progress is satisfactory. Three parent consultation evenings a year give ample opportunity for parents to discuss their children's progress. However, there are shortcomings in the quality of pupils' written reports, which do not provide satisfactory information about standards and progress in the foundation subjects.
43. Parents make a sound contribution to their children's learning at school and at home. Many help their children with their homework, particularly reading, and have been very supportive of the recent 'Books and Beyond'<sup>4</sup> initiative to raise pupils' standards and enjoyment of reading.
44. The school works effectively with the parents of children with special educational needs and keeps them informed of their children's progress. The special educational needs co-ordinator has very close contacts with parents of those with a significant level of need and devotes a considerable amount of time to supporting them and providing them with guidance to help them assist their children at home.

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

45. Both leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has a clear view of the quality of education she wants for the pupils. She has a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and good strategies for moving forward. She has already instigated developments in many key areas, including curriculum planning and arrangements for monitoring standards and progress. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher and senior management team, who contribute to key decisions about the work of the school, including the prioritisation of areas requiring development. A significant feature is the improved

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<sup>4</sup> This is a scheme which encourages pupils to read more books

clarity and effectiveness of managerial roles and responsibilities since the last inspection. There has been considerable improvement in the strategies and skills of co-ordinators to review and develop their subjects. The school has good procedures for them to monitor standards and progress although these are not yet fully in place. However, improved effectiveness at all levels of the management structure, together with the strong staff team who share a good commitment to school improvement, means the school is well placed to continue developing at a good pace.

46. The governors provide good support for the headteacher and staff and carry out their responsibilities well. There is an appropriate set of committees, and governors develop their expertise through regular training sessions. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school. They have good procedures for keeping informed about its work, including governor visits and presentations given by staff.
47. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance and taking effective action were judged to be unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. These show substantial improvement, particularly in the close analysis and response to results in national tests, and are beginning to have a positive impact on provision and achievement. Appropriate priorities for development are identified and planned for effectively through the school improvement plan. Arrangements for performance management are in place and there is a regular programme of monitoring teaching. However, greater rigour is required in monitoring lesson plans and the quality of learning when pupils work on their own tasks.
48. Special educational needs provision receives very good support from senior management and the governing body. The recently appointed special needs governor is well informed and she works closely with the co-ordinator for special educational needs. There has been recent training for staff about the new Code of Practice, and the co-ordinator has helped classroom teachers become more involved in planning for pupils within their classes. She has an appropriate timetable that enables her to carry out her responsibilities for provision for pupils with mild levels of need, as well as those supported by the MLD resource base. Management of both the HI and MLD resource bases is very good.
49. The school makes good strategic use of its resources, including specific grants, and close account is taken of the financial implications of educational priorities. A large budget surplus at the end of the last financial year occurred partly through an accounting error at a level beyond the school's control. This situation has now been successfully addressed and the expected carryover for the current financial year is moderate. Careful consideration is given to applying the principles of best value, and also to how the school will maintain a good quality of provision during a period when the number of pupils on roll is reducing. Day-to-day financial procedures are managed efficiently.
50. The school is well provided with suitably experienced teaching staff to meet the needs of the curriculum and pupils. Although the number of support staff has had to be reduced because of budgetary constraints, those currently in the school are used well and make a positive contribution to the progress made by pupils. Despite three classes in temporary classrooms, the building provides satisfactory accommodation, with an additional teaching space used as an ICT suite. There is a small library that is stocked with good quality books. A strong feature of the school is the way in which displays in classrooms and around the school are used well to celebrate and stimulate pupils' learning. Although there is adequate outdoor space, including a delightful nursery garden, pupils only have occasional access to a grassed space. However, good use is made of an environmental wooded area adjoining the junior

school field, and plans are in hand to develop and improve the playground space. The range and quality of learning resources are satisfactory overall and good in some subjects such as mathematics, science and history.

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

51. In order to continue to improve, the governors, headteacher and staff should now:

(1) Raise standards in speaking and reading skills by:

- identifying examples of good practice in promoting speaking skills and planning them more systematically
- implementing procedures for assessing and recording attainment in speaking and listening, as already planned by the school
- improving the quality of tasks planned for independent groupwork in literacy lessons
- increasing opportunities for purposeful reading and writing both in literacy lessons and in other subjects of the curriculum
- extending the range of good quality books available for pupils, including those used during guided reading times in literacy lessons

*(Paragraph numbers 4, 16, 66-67, 69-81)*

(2) Improve the quality of tasks given to pupils in Years 1 and 2 to ensure that they achieve as well as they should by:

- developing lesson planning to provide more guidance for teachers and greater consistency between classes in each year
- matching pupils' tasks more closely to the planned learning focus in each lesson
- using assessment information to ensure tasks meet the needs of pupils at differing stages of learning, to help them build steadily on their existing skills, knowledge and understanding
- monitoring planning, teaching and learning with greater rigour, particularly of pupils' individual and group tasks

*(Paragraph numbers 5, 16, 37, 47)*

(3) Improve assessment arrangements and use assessment information more effectively by:

- developing and implementing arrangements for assessing and recording attainment in art and design, DT, geography, history, ICT, music, PE and RE
- using assessment information to report on individual progress in all subjects in pupils' written reports
- making greater use of assessment information to match work to the differing needs of pupils within classes

*(Paragraph numbers 16, 36-37, 42)*

### **Other minor issues which should be considered by the school**

- a) Continue to implement the current good procedures to improve the rate of attendance and punctuality

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	57
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	17	15	19	2	0	0
Percentage	4	31	27	35	4	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)	40	237
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		50

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5	35

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	33

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	25
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.9
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.8
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	40	43	83

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	33	33
	Girls	32	36	38
	Total	59	69	71
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (69)	83 (71)	86 (84)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	30	31
	Girls	37	33	35
	Total	67	63	66
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (72)	76 (72)	80 (76)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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



**Ethnic background of pupils****Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	113	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	12	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	33	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	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)	13.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.7
Average class size	23.7

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	192.8

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	40
Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	108
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.4

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.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	756836
Total expenditure	691787
Expenditure per pupil	2365
Balance brought forward from previous year	39301
Balance carried forward to next year	65049

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	316
Number of questionnaires returned	134

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	30	1	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	62	35	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	45	2	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	41	11	3	5
The teaching is good.	69	28	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	44	9	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	27	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	32	1	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	44	50	5	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	56	38	2	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	41	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	32	13	2	23

### Other issues raised by parents

No other issues were raised by a significant number of parents

## **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**

52. The school makes very good provision for children at the foundation stage. This, together with very good teaching, promotes the very good progress children make, and this is seen particularly in their personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and knowledge and understanding of the world. Good leadership and management contribute to the quality of provision and to the enthusiasm and teamwork shown by all adults involved.

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

53. Although standards are below those expected, children make very good progress as the result of very good teaching. From their earliest days in the nursery, children are encouraged to be independent and they achieve very well in this aspect of learning. Organisation is good and routines are soon established. There are very good relationships between teachers, adults and parents, helping children to feel secure, confident and happy when they come into school. They learn to put on their own coats, find their own names to register their arrival and are given responsibility for several helpful jobs. They learn to share, look after equipment and tidy away at the end of activities. Some co-operate well during activities, although most play alongside others, showing less well-developed social skills. Teachers, nursery nurses and other adults provide very good levels of support, working very well as a team, with shared aims and purpose. They provide good role models by treating children and one another with respect and kindness. In the reception classes, clear rules and guidelines continue to be reinforced and children are well-trained in classroom routines, such as registration, changing for PE and managing their own paintings and aprons during creative activities. Children follow directions very well, as a result of teachers' high expectations of behaviour, and are mostly well behaved, polite and attentive. They are particularly good at organising and carrying out tasks without close supervision. Some, however, still have difficulty maintaining attention and good behaviour without support.

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

54. Children achieve very well in both the nursery and reception classes as a result of very good teaching. Adults are most effective at developing speaking and listening skills. They provide very good role models and make the most of frequent opportunities to engage children in conversation during their various activities. The majority of children in the nursery still use gestures and single words to communicate meaning and only the higher attainers initiate conversations or use language to negotiate activities. Children are keen to share their reading books and the system of rewards as they 'read' more books provides effective motivation. Most children read and write their own names and have a good knowledge of initial letter sounds. They have appropriate pencil control, enjoying drawing and writing for a wide variety of purposes. They write down orders in the nursery 'café', for example, and make lists of the ingredients they need to make pancakes. Children are taught accurate letter formation, building on and improving their writing skills well. Teaching in reception classes builds effectively on this good groundwork through a good variety of teacher instruction and purposeful reading and writing activities that children carry out independently.

55. The classroom is rich in opportunities to reinforce children's language skills and effectively fosters an interest and enthusiasm for reading and writing. Books, labels, wall displays and notices are bright and eye-catching and teachers and children make good use of them during lessons. Most teachers use questioning skills to good effect, promoting thinking and encouraging children, including the least confident, to talk. In the best lessons, teachers match tasks closely to children's assessed levels of understanding. This results in all children being encouraged and challenged to achieve their full potential. Good organisation and planning, enthusiasm and energy are some excellent features of teaching, leading to highly motivated children.

### **Mathematical development**

56. Children make very good progress in developing their mathematical skills due to very effective teaching of basic skills of counting and number recognition. The school has created a colourful, stimulating environment rich in numbers, to support children's knowledge of the order and formation of numerals. Children in the nursery are taught very well and encouraged to count during their play. They enjoy counting, ordering and comparing objects and numerals and accurately recognise and match numbers to five. In reception, the structure of numeracy lessons provides for systematic gains in learning. Sessions are purposeful, with lively, interesting introductions. Teachers give high priority to the development of number language and involve children well by using practical activities, number rhymes and songs, such as *Five Speckled Frogs*.
57. There are very good opportunities for children to learn about mathematics through role-play, such as the reception 'gardening shop' and the nursery 'café'. During construction activities, most children use comparative language, such as *bigger*, *smaller* and *longer*. They begin to understand the principles of addition and subtraction using vocabulary such as *more* and *less*. Higher attainers carry out simple computations, aided by good use of captivating and colourful resources, such as magnetic bees. Most can add 'one more' with ease and higher attainers add one more to numbers beyond ten. Teachers make good use of questioning to effectively involve children of all levels of attainment. They accurately assess children's understanding and adapt lesson plans accordingly to ensure children build progressively on what they already know.

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

58. Children start school with a limited general knowledge and lack curiosity and interest in the world around them. However, they achieve at a very good rate and by the end of reception, due to very good teaching, are well prepared for the subjects of the National Curriculum. A significant number of children do not readily talk about themselves, their families and where they live and recording of their growing knowledge is below the standards usually found.
59. Teachers provide a wealth of enriching experiences and opportunities to develop children's knowledge and understanding effectively. There is a clear purpose for the carefully planned activities. They guide children, with expertise and well-judged interventions, to consider shape, size, colour and texture, linking learning in different areas in a relevant and meaningful way. Nursery children are encouraged to use their senses to investigate a variety of changing materials such as sand, water and dough, in which they delight. They investigate light and movement in a sensory tent and use ICT to develop basic skills of literacy and numeracy and to create patterns and shapes. They learn to operate controls to click and drag objects on the screen to create colourful patterns. Building effectively on their computer skills, reception children learn to estimate distances and give appropriate instructions to a

programmable toy. Nursery children delight in watching snails move and feed, whilst reception children benefit from a well-designed garden area where they plant and nurture a variety of bulbs and seeds to learn about growth. They investigate small creatures and learn to care for living things.

60. Children begin to learn about a range of cultures and traditions, such as the Hindu festival of Diwali. All children in the foundation stage benefit from a good range of visits and visitors to develop their awareness of their environment and different faiths.

### **Physical development**

61. Teaching is good and children achieve well. Nursery children benefit from a very well designed outdoor area with a variety of different surfaces and contours. They have good opportunities and space for climbing, moving freely and using wheeled toys and small apparatus to develop their skills. Children push or pedal strong, sturdy cars and tricycles around paths and up and down slopes with enjoyment. They climb along, under and over challenging obstacles with confidence and imagination, negotiating difficulties with perseverance and skill. They jump from one hoop to another with concentration and good levels of control.
62. By the time they reach the end of reception they have improved their skills and techniques as a result of good teaching. They run, skip, balance on stilts with safety and learn to throw and catch different sized balls with increasing levels of co-ordination. In addition, reception children have regular hall time to use large apparatus. They make very good progress in well-planned lessons with high levels of support. Teachers manage children very well. In lessons they give clear and explicit instructions so children behave well, concentrate hard and respond quickly. Children move confidently with good levels of co-ordination and control and make imaginative use of apparatus, trying very hard to improve their skills. They show good progress in their awareness of their own bodies. A small number of children lack confidence and co-ordination but, because of the very high level of adult support, they make very good progress and take pride in their achievements. Children use basic tools appropriately in the nursery and by the end of reception, a minority show dexterity in manipulating scissors, tools and small, fine objects, such as tiny seeds for planting.

### **Creative development**

63. Teaching is good and children achieve well because of the wide range of stimulating experiences available to them on a regular basis. There are particularly good opportunities for children to express themselves with imagination and creativity through drama and role-play in the home corner, shop or café. Adults make well-judged interventions to involve themselves in children's role-play and contribute effectively to the development of children's imagination. Teachers carefully plan for children to have very good opportunities to explore colour, texture and shape using a wide range of media and materials.
64. Children are confident to experiment with paint and glue, as seen when they used their fingers, brushes and various tools to represent some of the mini-beasts they found in the garden. They paint vibrant pictures of butterflies and make models of snails and spiders using their imaginations to a good extent. There are good opportunities for children to experiment with sounds and percussion instruments. Reception children develop an appropriate sense of rhythm and learn to discriminate between *fast* and *slow* sounds through clapping, tapping and stamping at different speeds. They listen and move spontaneously to music with different tempos. They sing well and build up a good repertoire of songs.

### **ENGLISH**

65. Standards in this subject are below average, particularly in speaking and reading skills. However, pupils make sound progress overall and show recent improvement in their skills in writing.
66. Pupils speak courteously to adults and each other, try hard to listen attentively during lessons and show their developing listening skills by answering questions appropriately. However, many are reticent about sharing their ideas in a large group and few develop and explain their ideas when speaking to others. Good examples were seen of teachers promoting speaking skills well. These included pupils working with 'talking partners' in a whole class introduction, working on their tasks in small co-operative groups, and skilful guidance to help pupils formulate their own questions. However, many teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils responding to questions with more than a brief spoken response. Insufficient attention is also paid to encouraging those pupils who lack confidence in putting their hands up to contribute their ideas.
67. Reading is taught largely through literacy lessons and encouragement to read at home with parents. Close attention to teaching spelling and knowledge about the relationships between sounds and letters results in pupils making steady progress in reading familiar books accurately. The recent 'Books and Beyond' reading initiative is a positive feature, although it is too early to assess the impact on standards. Pupils develop appropriate strategies for reading unfamiliar words, although many lack confidence in using them. By the age of seven, they understand the difference between information and fiction books and know how to use contents and index pages to locate information. Levels of understanding are not well developed. Pupils are not familiar with authors, and only a small minority discuss major events and ideas in what they read. This is largely because of undue emphasis on one reading scheme, which limits the range of their reading experiences.
68. Pupils make steady progress in their writing. By the age of seven they write letters, instructions, poems and re-tell familiar tales. Most develop their ideas in a sequence of sentences, with increasing use of capital letters and full stops. They make sound progress in the accuracy of their spelling. Only a small minority develop and extend their ideas, making clear links between events. Handwriting is increasingly formed accurately and is consistent in size, but higher attainers do not use a consistently joined style.
69. The quality of both teaching and learning is satisfactory. Lesson introductions are usually good. Teachers manage pupils skilfully so they are interested and maintain their concentration well. Activities are matched well to what pupils are intended to learn. In contrast, tasks given to pupils during the independent group element of literacy lessons are very variable in quality and often unsatisfactory. This is because some of the activities are intended to keep pupils occupied rather than reinforce or extend their learning. In a good example seen, a low attaining group enjoyed working together to identify and paste words beginning with 's' consonant clusters onto a large sheet. This reinforced the focus of their learning earlier in the lesson. With good support from a classroom assistant, they remained on task well, worked productively and consolidated their learning. This was because they were clear about what they were doing, enjoyed the practical activity and received support from each other and from the classroom assistant. In an unsatisfactory example, two pupils used the computer for writing but only to copy the text from their reading book on to the screen. This activity did not satisfactorily promote either ICT or literacy skills. The pupils did not find this a purposeful task and soon closed the book and stopped working altogether.

70. The literacy strategy has been implemented, with medium term planning linked closely to recommended guidance. However, improvement is needed in lesson planning to ensure all pupils make steady progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding in all elements of the lesson. Insufficient attention is given to planning purposeful reading and writing activities both in literacy lessons and in subjects across the curriculum. However, meaningful links are beginning to be made with learning in other subjects such as history. Provision for speaking and listening is not planned systematically and the quality of provision varies between classes. The curriculum is extended through visits from theatre groups, provision of a drama club and opportunities for some Year 2 pupils to read regularly with Year 6 pupils from the adjoining school.
71. English is managed satisfactorily and there has been sound improvement since the last inspection. Recent development has raised standards in writing and given a stronger emphasis to providing speaking opportunities. The school recognises the need to improve reading and is planning to work with the LEA to raise standards. There are appropriate arrangements for tracking standards and progress in reading and writing and for monitoring teaching. Arrangements for assessing and recording progress in speaking and listening are underdeveloped, but plans are in hand to address this.

## **MATHEMATICS**

72. Over the past four years, standards in mathematics have been gradually climbing. This has resulted from the very successful introduction and monitoring of the numeracy strategy. In addition, good resourcing, assessment and generally good teaching has seen progress for most pupils move from satisfactory to good. The work seen during the inspection indicated that standards overall remain below average. The majority of pupils attain the expected standards at seven and higher attainers attain above average standards. However, the proportion of pupils who do not attain the expected standards at seven is larger than that normally seen. There has been good improvement since the last inspection
73. Pupils make good progress throughout the school in number work and the application of mathematics, and generally achieve well. They make satisfactory progress in understanding and knowledge of shapes and their properties. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 count on and back using multiples of five. They have a good knowledge of money, addition, subtraction and equivalent value of coins up to one pound and can use this in practical settings. They also understand doubling and halving of numbers up to and beyond ten. There is a good knowledge of shapes in two and three dimensions and pupils can group them according to two and three attributes. Knowledge of the angle of turn and right angles is developing. In most instances, pupils can use these skills in both desktop and everyday settings. Lower attainers can also count in multiples of five to fifty, are beginning to remember the five, three and ten times tables and are developing a good understanding of *larger*, *smaller* and a range of vocabulary related to addition and subtraction. They measure lines accurately up to ten centimetres and recognise a small range of shapes in two dimensions.
74. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan well for lessons, have a good level of subject knowledge, use mathematical vocabulary accurately and develop questioning to good effect to improve learning. The numeracy strategy has been implemented well and has contributed to a significant improvement in teaching overall. Lessons are a good mix of whole class teaching and individual, paired or group work, and usually end with a good review and explanation of the work carried out by different groups. Whole class teaching at the start of each lesson is usually



good. The development and group work that builds on this is more varied in quality and indicates both strengths and weaknesses in teaching. In a very good Year 1 lesson, the teacher planned for pupils to understand addition and begin to learn addition facts to ten. The opening of the lesson had pace, humour and very focused questions that challenged different pupils at their own levels. A wide range of resources was used imaginatively. Thus, paper plates with dots on triggered a matching activity where pupils had to find their partner (the pupil with the plate that added up to ten). This was done with enjoyment and accuracy. Group work followed and was very well matched to individual pupils. The work and responses of pupils indicated clearly that all were making at least good progress, including higher attainers who were asked challenging questions by the teacher.

75. However, in a few lessons teaching did not have this pace, focus and rigour. Introductory sessions were sometimes slow and some pupils lost interest. Group work was not so accurately matched to consolidate and challenge the skills of the lower attaining pupils. This meant that progress was only satisfactory and opportunities were missed to build on pupils' contributions and needs. There was also a tendency to choose only pupils who put up their hands to answer questions and share their ideas with the group, which meant that some of the more reticent pupils did not show what they could do.
76. The quality of marking is variable. All work is marked regularly, sometimes with comments and ideas for development, but often only with a tick or cross. The procedures for assessing and monitoring pupil progress are good and this assists most teachers in planning future lessons. However, in a few instances marking and observation are not used to signal the need to adapt work for individuals or groups.
77. The coordinator provides very good leadership. She is a 'lead teacher' within the LEA and this skill and broader view has contributed well both to her monitoring of teaching and the overall improvement in standards. Training has been given to all staff and there are opportunities for both teachers and assistants to attend courses. There is a good system for tracking the progress of individual pupils. The co-ordinator has a clear idea of the next steps to take in the development of the subject which include finding ways to share good practice between teachers, develop further the aspects of data handling and space and assisting staff in the use of ICT to support all areas of mathematics. The role of teaching assistants in mathematics is a strength and often contributes noticeably to the application and achievement of pupils.

## **SCIENCE**

78. Pupils make satisfactory progress in this subject and the current Year 2 pupils are attaining a higher standard than those who were assessed in 2002. This is because of improvements in teachers' subject expertise, and in planning. By the end of Year 2, most average attainers broadly achieve the expected levels and higher attainers achieve above average standards. The rate of progress for many pupils is adversely affected by underdeveloped speaking skills. These constrain pupils' capacity to discuss ideas with others and volunteer to answer questions in a large group.
79. Year 1 pupils learn about forces and motion when investigating how pushes and pulls change the shape and movement of objects. They make steady progress in their investigative skills and learn to predict, experiment and compare what happened with what they expected would happen. During their experimental work, they record their observations well, using drawings and tables although, for a number of pupils, the standard of recorded work is low. Pupils also study green plants and learn how plants

grow from seed. They know about the conditions necessary for seeds to grow. They demonstrate good observation skills and make correct use of a microscope when they examine seeds and other parts of a plant. Most pupils are able to classify common vegetables, and can identify the parts that are edible. However, a significant minority are unable to name some of them.

80. Year 2 pupils compile lists and make drawings to show they understand the differences between healthy and unhealthy foods. Higher attainers write clear explanations about why certain foods are unhealthy. When studying electricity, all pupils draw illustrations of everyday electrical appliances. They show good awareness of the dangers of electricity and how to avoid them. Most pupils understand how to make a simple circuit and clearly describe its constituent parts and how they are put together. When learning about materials and their properties, pupils recognise and name common types of materials and distinguish between those which are natural and those that are man-made. They make predictions about how materials might change when heated, and conduct experiments to test their predictions. They show a developing competence in undertaking practical investigations.
81. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and on occasions it is very good. A significant shortcoming in lessons where teaching is otherwise satisfactory is insufficient attention to matching tasks to the differing needs of pupils. Where teaching is good, teachers have good knowledge and understanding of science. They are able to explain ideas with clarity and use well targeted questioning to stimulate and enlighten their pupils. Their planning and organisation are thorough, with clear learning objectives, which they share with the pupils. They manage pupils well, sustaining their interest and ensuring that the pace of learning is brisk and challenging. Marking of pupils' work provides clear feedback on standards and offers guidance on how work could be improved, with specific reference to scientific learning. In a very good Year 2 lesson, the teacher had an excellent rapport with the pupils and challenged them with carefully structured questions. She used well-chosen scientific vocabulary and ensured that pupils' work was well matched to meet the full range of their learning needs. As a result, they applied themselves with energy, put considerable effort into their learning and achieved well.
82. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator is efficient and enthusiastic, and is keen to see the subject develop. Although there is no formal monitoring of teaching at present, the coordinator regularly examines samples of pupils' work across the school and offers informal feedback to colleagues on standards. She has compiled a useful portfolio of samples of pupils' work, with helpful advice on assessment techniques. The subject policy and the scheme of work, which is based on national guidelines, were revised about two years ago and are working well. The latter is thorough and detailed, and identifies clearly key learning objectives, vocabulary and expectations of pupil attainment. Provision for assessment is good, and useful records are kept of pupils' progress. Resources for the teaching of science are good, easily accessible and efficiently stored. There are conveniently located environmental areas and a school garden, providing pupils with good opportunities to study living organisms. Pupils also make a number of useful visits out of school, such as to a local nature reserve.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

83. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards in line with national expectations. A well-planned programme of work provides for a wide range of opportunities to experiment and explore ideas with a rich and interesting variety of materials, tools and

techniques. Pupils experiment with different types of paper to practise paper sculpture with strong links with DT. They use pencils, chalks and pastels to draw from observation and use shading techniques effectively to represent familiar objects, such as shoes, bicycles and flowers. They learn to mix colours, gaining knowledge of tonal variation and learn printing techniques on paper and fabric. Pupils work with clay to create well-designed tiles on a school theme. The results are impressive. Pupils show confident use of line and form when they paint Tudor style houses as part of their work in history. They combine materials, such as sand and glue to create interesting texture in their collage pictures of seasons, festivals and traditional tales. Year 2 pupils consider line, shape and texture when they create imaginative designs with natural materials, including leaves, twigs, moss, holly and flowers based on the work of the artist Andy Goldsworthy. Their efforts reflect an appropriate awareness of pattern and symmetry. They work co-operatively in pairs to create and improve their designs. Although teachers base many lessons on the work of artists, such as Goldsworthy and William Morris, pupils have difficulty in recalling their names or respective styles. This aspect of their knowledge and understanding of art and design is weaker than their investigative skills.

84. Teaching is variable but satisfactory overall. Teachers provide many good opportunities for investigation and expression of ideas. Planning identifies a clear purpose for lessons. Teachers encourage pupils to think about line, colour, shape and texture and demonstrate various techniques appropriately. They make good use of resources during some lively introductions to lessons. In a small minority of lessons, pupils make less progress because of significant shortcomings in teaching. These include directions that are confusing and insufficient guidance and support given during lessons. As a result, pupils are not sure what they have to do, behaviour is inappropriate and some groups achieve little. Pupils' work is prominently displayed to good effect in classrooms and around the school, showing that their efforts are valued.
85. The expertise and enthusiasm of the co-ordinator results in art and design maintaining a high profile in the curriculum. She has worked very hard to produce a very detailed and comprehensive collection of planning, lesson ideas, prints and examples of pupils' work. This provides good guidance for the non-specialist teacher. Portfolios of pupils' work are being developed but there is little evidence of evaluation or a sense of progression in skills or techniques. Assessment procedures require further development to enable teachers to match learning more closely to what pupils have already experienced or achieved. Arrangements for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching have not yet been implemented.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (DT)**

86. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards in line with national expectations. No lessons were seen during the inspection and judgements are made from examination of displayed work, documentation and discussions with teachers and pupils. Planned opportunities to develop skills and design and make things for a particular purpose suggest that the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and that pupils achieve appropriately.
87. A group of Year 2 pupils took pride in showing their finger puppets based on the insects pictured in one of the books used in the literacy hour. They had used their imaginations to produce their chosen designs and appropriately planned the materials and tools they would need to carry out their plans. Pupils described how they had used scissors, glue, needles and thread to cut, stick and sew the components together to create models of spiders, butterflies and bees. They showed suitable skills

of evaluation by talking about the difficulties they encountered and how they could have improved the process. One boy, for example, believed his puppet would have been stronger if he had sewn it instead of sticking it with glue. On another occasion, pupils designed and made notebooks for making Christmas lists. They had chosen the size, shape and type of paper and the number of pages the book would contain and gone on to create a template. Photographs show a good standard of finishing. Pupils also plan and make simple models with a basic mechanism for moving wheels. Following a visit to the Black Country museum, pupils made hinged doors and windows from independent designs. They learn techniques and skills of folding, cutting and sticking and use paper fasteners, string, pipe cleaners, glue and sticky tape to demonstrate how to join different types of paper together.

88. The subject is managed satisfactorily and, in an improvement since the last inspection, food technology has been added to the programme of work. Resources are still rather limited but sufficient to fulfil the basic curriculum needs. The co-ordinator has developed confidence in the role and supports staff appropriately. A portfolio of examples of work and ideas provides guidelines for teachers but gives little evidence of what pupils are able to do and what they need to learn next. There is still no agreed system for assessing pupils' strengths and weaknesses. This limits the extent to which teachers plan effectively to develop pupils' existing knowledge and skills.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

89. Standards achieved by the majority of pupils by the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectations and have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils make better progress in Year 2 than in Year 1. Judgements are based on scrutiny of curriculum documentation and pupils' work in their books, examples of work displayed around the school, and interviews with teachers and pupils. No judgements were made on teaching as no lessons were seen during the inspection.
90. Year 1 pupils engage in geographical enquiry and develop their geographical skills and knowledge of places through studying the school and its locality. They learn about maps and plans when they add information to outline plans of the classroom, showing the position of major items of furniture. Much of this work is unfinished, however, and of poor quality. Pupils follow a route around the school grounds to observe their main features, and record them by colouring a map with a simple key. They use maps and photographs of the area to locate the school buildings and the homes of their friends. Pupils' knowledge of the world develops as they study a world map and the globe, and they learn about distant locations when they follow the journeys of Barnaby Bear and read post cards from the places he visits around the world. Pupils talk confidently about hot and cold countries and know that geography is concerned with the study of places. They know what life is like in cold countries, especially in the polar regions. However, the standard of recorded work for the majority of pupils is low, and there is limited evidence of tasks being adapted to match differing abilities.
91. Year 2 pupils study land use and follow a route around the local area. They recognise that land and buildings have different uses and make pictures of the local area showing the school, playing field, flats, houses and factories. They also learn about an environment with physical and human features different from their own through learning about the fictitious island of Struay. They use an atlas to locate Scotland and the Western Isles and demonstrate good skills in drawing a pictorial map of the island, showing places mentioned in the story. They use pictorial symbols effectively to show features such as mountains, woodland, a village, a river and the sea. Pupils draw pictures of the main types of transport on the island and know that to get there

they would have to go by boat. Pupils also make a study visit to the centre of a nearby town, and apply their mapwork skills well when they construct a map showing the main buildings, shops and public buildings. They describe their functions correctly.

92. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The scheme of work is thorough and provides a sound basis for planning and teaching. However, monitoring of standards is insufficiently rigorous to ensure all pupils make good gains in their knowledge and skills. Lack of agreed assessment arrangements limits teachers' capacity to match work to individual stages of learning. Resources are satisfactory overall, although there are insufficient atlases suitable for use in Year 2 and the range of video resources is inadequate to support the needs of the curriculum. Pupils' learning is enriched by an overnight visit to an environmental education centre.

## **HISTORY**

93. Pupils make satisfactory progress and most attain the standards expected by the age of seven. Year 1 pupils recognise the distinction between present and past and ways in which their own lives differ from those of people in the past. These include differences in laundry arrangements, and in school experiences. Year 2 pupils show knowledge about the 'space race' and understand the sequence of events that led to the first man landing on the moon. Pupils' rate of progress is impeded to some extent by underdeveloped speaking skills. As a result, many lack confidence in contributing to whole class discussion, and show a limited capacity to discuss new ideas.
94. The quality of both teaching and learning is satisfactory. As a result pupils make sound progress in their developing sense of chronology, use of evidence, and understanding of events, prominent characters and how people lived in the past. The use of artefacts, for example Victorian washing items, and visits to places of historical interest, such as the Black Country Museum, helps bring the past alive to pupils and secure their progress. Although lesson introductions are planned and managed well, the quality of tasks provided for individuals and groups is very variable. As a result, the rate of progress and quality of learning differs between classes and lessons. This restricts the extent to which pupils build steadily on their skills, knowledge and understanding over time.
95. Planning, based partly on nationally recommended guidance, has been improved recently. The subject is well resourced, partly through books and artefacts owned by the school and partly through arrangements for borrowing them from other local sources. Recent improvement in access to the Internet also promotes progress. Attractive displays in classrooms further stimulate learning in history. The subject is currently being managed by the headteacher in the long term absence of the co-ordinator. However, the school has continued to develop its provision during this period and there has been sound improvement since the last inspection. The school has not yet developed agreed arrangements for assessing and recording individual attainment and progress. This has an adverse effect on teachers' capacity to match work to the differing needs of pupils.

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

96. There has been good improvement since the last inspection which found provision to be unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching has improved significantly. Hardware resources have substantially increased and standards have risen from below expectations to securely in line with those expected of seven-year-olds. The two co-ordinators, together with the senior staff and the governing body, have made stringent efforts to achieve this considerable progress.

97. Pupils use computers confidently and have a good range of skills in opening the programs they know and saving and retrieving their work. They use the mouse to select from screen menus and choose appropriate buttons and icons. Above all, they are developing understanding that computers are to be used as a tool rather than an activity in themselves. This was apparent during a good Year 2 lesson where pupils used menus and showed confidence in using icons to access space sites on the Internet. They showed good control in terms of using the correct procedures and their skills to access the information they wanted. They had been asked to investigate the NASA website and find their favourite page on astronauts. Most pupils had no difficulty reaching the correct home page and all pupils showed good discrimination in selecting their favourite page. Considerable wonder was shown when one pupil accessed and demonstrated a video of an astronaut space walking.
98. The quality of both teaching and learning is good. In lessons where teaching was good or very good, teachers gave clear instructions, used resources that motivated pupils well such as books and photographs, and set clear boundaries concerning behaviour and procedures to reduce movement and maximise the time spent on task. In a very good Year 1 lesson, pupils used a paint program to create their own pieces of abstract art. The pace and methodical demonstration by the teacher were followed by the pupils and the results were stunning in the use of shape, colour and contrast. In other lessons, where directions were not so clear and 'ground rules' had not been set, time was wasted and pupils tended to get in one another's way.
99. An appropriate curriculum has been developed and this is now beginning to be implemented by all staff. The coverage is good over a three-year cycle and is beginning to highlight topics as the basis for developing key ICT skills. The coverage of word processing, art work and control, in the form of guiding robots and using tape recorders and cameras, are developing well. There is only just enough data work and use of CD-ROM to meet requirements, but co-ordinators' plans indicate the ways in which these are beginning to develop.
100. There are some good links with other subjects but this area is underdeveloped at present. A number of programs already support literacy and numeracy. The two painting programs provide a useful addition to the art curriculum, and floor-based 'turtles' introduce the control element of ICT well. Evidence was seen of ICT use in DT to make Christmas and Easter cards. In science, a new branching programme has been used well to classify animals. However, there is not enough software to support many subjects and subject co-ordinators are not yet purchasing resources and using appropriate ICT skills within their own work. Equally, the use of computers in the classroom is not as great as it could be and the resources are not being used to maximum effect.
101. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinators have moved the subject on significantly over the past two years. Their planning has been detailed in terms of lessons and the current action plan identifies priorities and deadlines for further development. They have set up a good ICT suite with regular access for all classes. The expenditure of time, money and effort has been effective in terms of pupil progress. The work on development of Internet usage has been very effective.

## **MUSIC**

102. Pupils make satisfactory progress and attain the expected standards by the age of seven. Standards in singing are good. Most pupils have a good sense of rhythm, they shape tunes and songs effectively and their listening skills are developing well.

Performance skills in general are good and all pupils make the most of the many opportunities to listen to recorded and live music in a wide range of forms. Weaker elements include composition and the use of basic musical notation.

103. During lessons and assemblies, pupils sing enthusiastically. The singing is in tune and pupils are beginning to understand how to express the mood of a person or place in the way they sing and play. During a very effective hymn practice, a member of the support staff took the whole school and demonstrated the verses of the hymns. The pupils followed this and sang well. There was noticeable progress even within the space of twenty minutes.
104. The quality of both teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but with considerable variation. The range of confidence and competence in teaching music was evident during the inspection. Where teaching was good or very good, there was a pace to the lesson. The teacher or support assistant taught skills well and pupils' attempts were improved through practice and advice from adults and pupils alike. Other lessons had no real momentum or excitement and some of the potential for enthusing the pupils was lost. There is not enough opportunity to share good practice and assist each class teacher to develop the requisite skills and confidence.
105. There are good opportunities to listen to visiting musicians and experience a wide range of different types of songs and music. Pupils are introduced to music ranging from Vivaldi to Bob Marley and Beethoven to Stravinsky. This is a rich mixture, further supplemented by visits to music festivals. Additionally, there are plans to become involved with local orchestral projects. Attention and involvement within lessons testify to pupils' enjoyment of singing and music. Two clubs for choir and ocarina are well attended and contribute well to overall standards in the school. Plans are in hand for the subject to be reviewed in the coming term. Currently, there are no formal arrangements for assessing and recording standards in the subject. This limits the extent to which lessons are planned to build progressively on the existing knowledge and skills of all pupils.

#### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)**

106. Most pupils attain the expected standards by the end of Year 2 in dance, the aspect of PE taught during the inspection. The school timetables games activities for the summer term and gymnastics for the autumn term, so these were not observed. The progress made by most pupils is satisfactory.
107. In Year 1, pupils participate eagerly as they explore movement ideas and learn to respond imaginatively to music. They learn the importance of warming up before exercise and its effects upon the body. They listen carefully to the teacher and to the music and then apply themselves well as they practise different ways of moving to it. Their control and co-ordination improve as they learn to skip, gallop and turn, both when moving individually and with partners. With help from the teacher, they learn how to combine movements successfully into a dance sequence, which they perform with increasing confidence. They learn to observe, describe and copy the actions of others and develop basic skills in evaluating their performance, and that of others, as a means to improvement.
108. In Year 2, pupils learn to compose and perform dance phrases to communicate ideas on a theme. They show increasing understanding of dance activities and are able to use appropriate vocabulary to describe their movements. Most pupils can make changes in rhythm, speed, direction and level, and are able to incorporate a variety of movements such as travelling, hopping, skipping, turning and jumping into their

performances. They perform creative and imaginative actions with confidence, for example when they enact characters from a story, and become increasingly adept at evaluating their performance as a means to improvement. They behave well and are enthusiastic about their work.

109. Teaching is satisfactory overall and it is sometimes good. Teachers generally have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and manage their pupils well. Teaching is effective when lessons are planned thoroughly, with clear learning objectives, and proceed at a brisk pace with a good balance of praise and firm control. In such lessons, teachers join in the activities with the pupils, and allow time at the end of the lesson for evaluation and a cooling down activity. In a very good lesson, the teacher stimulated pupils' ideas through a lively discussion about different ways of moving and made effective use of a tambourine to create an appropriate atmosphere and co-ordinate the timing of activities. Selected pupils were chosen to demonstrate their movements to the rest of the class, and were effectively advised and supported by the teacher. Shortcomings in a lesson that was overall satisfactory included unclear learning objectives, and weaknesses in strategies for managing pupils. The result was limited enthusiasm and effort from the pupils and a slower rate of progress.
110. The management and leadership of the subject have been affected by the recent resignation of the co-ordinator. The newly appointed co-ordinator currently works in conjunction with the headteacher, and there are plans for development of the subject. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching are currently underdeveloped, although planning for dance is now secure. The subject policy and scheme of work are currently being reviewed as part of the school development plan. A large hall contains a satisfactory range of large and small apparatus, although arrangements for storage of small equipment are unsatisfactory. Opportunities are provided for pupils to extend their experiences through the Friday afternoon clubs and through regular tennis and football coaching by outside organisations.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)**

111. The school provides a well-balanced programme that meets statutory requirements and accurately reflects the requirements of the current locally agreed syllabus. Progress in this subject is satisfactory overall although, by the end of Year 2, pupils' standards are below those expected. Pupils are familiar with stories from the Bible and the Qur'an, such as Noah's Ark and Rama and Sita. Higher attainers write lively and independent stories based on the Nativity. However, discussions with pupils show they have a poor knowledge of the significance of such stories, or to which religion they belong. Pupils participate in role-play activities of a Christian baptism and wedding, gaining some understanding of the symbolism of such occasions. They develop respect and understanding of different cultures and traditions. Pupils, teachers and other adults share first hand experiences of the temple and the clothing worn at a Sikh wedding, for example. Pupils learn about the life of Jesus through stories of the New Testament. They have difficulty, however, in recalling or comparing the beliefs of different faiths and struggle to understand the idea of religion.
112. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and results in sound learning. Lessons are well planned to take account of pupils' knowledge and experiences, which are often very limited. Teachers make very good use of local resources and learning is well supported by regular visits from local ministers and faith leaders. In an excellent lesson in Year 1, the teacher made good use of role-play in the 'Good Samaritan' Bible story, ensuring keen participation and involvement. Challenging questioning



encouraged pupils to think more deeply about issues and they began to explore principles of tolerance and prejudice. They gained real insights into why people behave in the way they do. The teacher listened carefully to pupils' responses, accurately assessing their levels of understanding and correcting misconceptions.

113. In most lessons there are good opportunities for discussion but these are not always productive. Pupils in Year 2 learn most effectively about places of worship as a result of very good questioning skills and discussion about photographs of churches and temples. In these well-taught lessons, pupils show very good levels of co-operation and thoughtful responses. There are suitable links with other subjects. For example, pupils examine what it is like to belong to a family and make comparisons between a Mexican town and the local community of Portobello.
114. A new and well-qualified co-ordinator is bringing good organisational skills and expertise to ensure the subject maintains a high profile in the curriculum. Learning resources are adequate and readily accessible, representing good improvement since the last inspection. Arrangements for assessing standards and progress are not yet in place. As a result, assessment information is not available to help teachers match learning to pupils' existing knowledge and understanding. Consequently, misconceptions about religion remain and this contributes to the below average standards. The school is aware of the need to develop the co-ordinator's role to monitor teaching and learning, as at the time of the last inspection, and this aspect does not show sufficient improvement.