

INSPECTION REPORT

MARSDEN INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Marsden, Huddersfield

LEA area: Kirklees

Unique reference number: 107644

Headteacher: Mrs Judith Holdsworth

Reporting inspector: Mr David Cann
20009

Dates of inspection: 8th – 11th May 2000

Inspection number: 190340

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Brougham Road Marsden Huddersfield HD7 6BL
Telephone number:	01484 222583
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Gail Moorhouse
Date of previous inspection:	18 th – 22 nd November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
D J Cann	Registered inspector	English History Music Equal opportunities	What sort of a school is it? How high are standards? How well is the school led and managed?
J Mynett	Lay inspector		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?
A Clark	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
R Battey	Team inspector	Religious education Art Geography Physical education Provision for children under five years old	How well are pupils taught?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Marsden Infant and Nursery School is a school for pupils aged four to seven years with 151 pupils (75 boys and 76 girls). Pupils live in the village and immediate countryside and are drawn from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. Their attainment on entry is broadly average but this varies significantly from year to year. Currently 24 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals which is in line with the national average. The number of pupils on the special educational needs register is average at 20 per cent but the number with statements is above average at three per cent. There are no pupils for whom English is a second language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Marsden Infant and Nursery school gives pupils a sound quality of education and is well supported by parents and the community it serves. The headteacher and staff create a very caring and supportive environment where good teaching encourages pupils to take a real interest in their work. Pupils' reading and writing skills are not developed to the full by the age of seven but in mathematics and science they are attaining the nationally expected levels. The school has recently introduced improvements in the curriculum which are having a positive impact on raising attainment but are not yet fully implemented throughout the school. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- By the age of seven pupils attain a good knowledge of religious education and information and communication technology and their work in art is good.
- The quality of teaching is good for children under five and at Key Stage 1. Teachers manage classes well and encourage pupils to become involved in their learning, concentrate and work independently.
- Pupils' attitudes towards their work are very positive and they play very well together.
- The school is very good at introducing pupils to their own culture and that of other countries.
- The school provides pupils with clear moral and spiritual guidance which helps them to relate well and learn to care for each other.
- The school is good at promoting parents' role in their children's education and fosters strong links with the community.

What could be improved

- Pupils' attainment in reading
- Pupils' writing skills especially through undertaking more written activities across the curriculum
- Systems for co-ordinating and developing consistent good practice in planning and assessment.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1996. Although staff changes and illness have delayed some developments the school has made steady progress since the last inspection and has addressed the key recommendations of the last report. Classroom organisation effectively matches the work taking place and the needs of pupils. Pupils' number skills are developed more systematically. In order to improve reading skills the school developed a new approach which has been replaced by the introduction of the literacy strategy. The school has reviewed assessment systems effectively and uses the information to inform planning, which also includes teaching methods. Over the last year the pace of developments has accelerated with particular attention being paid to improving the teaching of literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology. The school has also made improvements in identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs and in strengthening links with parents and the community.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
Reading	C	D	E	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	D	B	E	C	
Mathematics	C	C	C	B	

At the age of seven pupils' attainment in reading and writing is currently lower than that expected nationally while in mathematics and science attainment is in line with that expected. In the 1999 tests and assessments pupils achieved levels that were well below average in reading and writing, average in mathematics and well below average in science. The 1999 cohort had an above average number of pupils with special educational needs and in comparison with similar schools, attainment was above average in mathematics, average in writing and below average in reading. Improvements which the school has made in the teaching of writing and in assessing pupils' progress have raised attainment but the progress which they make in literacy skills is still unsatisfactory. At the age of five pupils attain levels which are in line with the levels expected nationally.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are enthusiastic about school and well motivated
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils relate well to staff and are very caring in their approach to each other.
Attendance	Pupils enjoy school and are eager to attend

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years
38 lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall both at Key Stage 1 and for children under five. Forty-five per cent of the lessons seen were good and 13 per cent were very good. No teaching was judged to be less than satisfactory. This is above the average for schools of this type and shows an improvement since the last inspection when 12 per cent of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. The good quality of teaching develops the very good attitudes that pupils have towards their work and their appetite for learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is stimulating and meets statutory requirements in all subjects. There is an interesting range of learning opportunities for children under five in the nursery and reception.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils are well supported and make good progress. Pupils are very well integrated into the life of the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school is very good at developing pupils' social and cultural understanding which is reflected in their positive attitudes to one another and to learning. Spiritual and moral awareness is well developed.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for pupils well and is particularly effective at promoting good and thoughtful behaviour.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher works effectively with the deputy to give the school clear direction. She provides sensitive support to her colleagues with whom she has created a safe and happy learning environment. The school has improved the systems by which it evaluates its performance but it has not established its priorities clearly in planning the areas for development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very supportive of the school and fulfil their responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is aware of its strengths and weaknesses but has not yet established effective systems for exchanging and developing good practice in all subjects.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of its resources.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Sixteen parents attended a meeting prior to the inspection and 38 questionnaires (29 per cent of those distributed) were received.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children like school. Teaching is good and children make good progress. The school is approachable and deals with queries well. The school is well led and managed. Behaviour is good and children are helped to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> none

Inspectors agree with parents' positive comments.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The attainment of pupils at the age of seven is below national expectations in reading and slightly below expectations in writing. In mathematics and science pupils attain levels which are in line with national expectations. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology and religious education is above expectations. Pupils attain standards which are above expectations in art. In all other subjects they attain the standards expected from pupils of their age.
2. The trend over the last four years has seen an improvement in pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, although the levels attained in 1999 showed a downturn. In the 1999 tests and assessments pupils achieved levels that were well below average in reading and writing, average in mathematics and well below average in science. The 1999 cohort of Year 2 pupils had an above average number of pupils with special educational needs and in comparison with similar schools, attainment was above average in mathematics, average in writing and below average in reading.
3. Standards at Key Stage 1 have improved over the last four years but are still below expectations in reading. In mathematics the improvement has been slightly better than the national trend. In writing standards improved significantly from 1996 to 1998, when they exceeded the national average, but fell last year. In reading standards have improved but have remained below or well below the national average. With a relatively small cohort comparisons with national figures are not always statistically reliable. The difference between average and below average attainment is often dependent on the attainment of five pupils. However, observation of the current cohort confirms that while pupils achieve satisfactory levels in writing, mathematics and science the overall attainment in reading is unsatisfactory. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls.
4. At the age of five children attain the levels expected of them in all areas of learning and exceed them in their personal and social development where they make very good progress. They relate well to one another and adults and adapt quickly to school routines. They speak well, explaining their activities and interests and are generally good at listening. Children generally achieve the levels expected of them in reading and writing although lower attainers do not always have a clear understanding of basic sounds to help them recognise and sound out letters in reading. In number work children progress at a satisfactory level, counting and recognising common shapes.
5. Children enter the school with skills which are broadly average but there are significant variations between cohorts. While the overall number of pupils on the special educational needs register is in line with the national average, the number of pupils with statements is above average. The school is good at identifying and supporting these pupils who are fully integrated into the work of classes and make good progress. Pupils of average and above average ability make sound progress in all subjects. Higher attaining pupils generally achieve the levels expected of them and gifted pupils progress well. Over the last four years the number of pupils achieving Level 3 in Key Stage 1 tests and assessments has been in line with the national average and often above the level achieved in similar schools. Pupils of low average ability make good progress in mathematics and are attaining satisfactory standards in writing. However, their progress in reading is often hampered by the lack of a clear and consistent programme for introducing them to sounds.

6. Since the last inspection the school has made improvements in the teaching of numeracy and science which have raised attainment. In mathematics teachers are good at developing pupils' skills in mental and oral work which is increasing their confidence in tackling all aspects of the subject. There is a good emphasis on investigative and problem solving activities and teachers use computer programs well to develop learning. Teachers also extend pupils' number skills by their work in other subjects such as science and design and technology, although teachers do not yet plan this in sufficient detail. In science teachers plan learning more systematically than before, making good use of new guidelines. In mathematics and science there have also been improvements in the way teachers assess pupils' progress. This is helping them to advance their learning and is raising both expectations and learning. In literacy teachers are refining their assessment procedures in order to measure more precisely how well pupils are developing skills. This is having a positive effect on pupils' attainment in writing but has not yet been implemented in reading. Although teachers set writing tasks in subjects other than English, they do not exploit all opportunities nor plan them with the clear intention of reinforcing and developing appropriate literacy skills.
7. In information and communication technology pupils' attainment exceeds national expectations. They are confident in using computers. They have good keyboard and mouse skills and know how to print and save items. Most pupils recognise and select icons and are competent at finding their way round a variety of software. Pupils write stories and articles using word processing packages and change the size of print and font style to suit their needs. Younger pupils use computers to extend their learning in mathematics and make good use of a number of learning programs which they enjoy. They employ graphic programs to illustrate their work. Older pupils compose at the computer, working individually and in pairs and also know how to redraft their work effectively. Teachers use computers well in mathematics to help pupils handle data and present their work in graphs and tables. In history pupils have researched the fire of London and toys from around the world using the Internet and other resources. They send and receive e-mails to obtain information and have a sound knowledge of both control technology and the way computers are used in the world.
8. By the end of Key Stage 1 attainment in religious education is above the expectation of the local education authority's agreed syllabus. Pupils effectively learn about Christianity and other major religions, including Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. They learn about major Bible stories and traditional stories from other faiths. During the time of the inspection in a Year 1 class pupils showed a good understanding of why and how Christians and other religions pray. Their experiences are heightened by visits to local churches and a close study of the books and symbols which different faiths revere.
9. Pupils' attainment in art is high and they make good progress. They use a good range of media such as paint, pastels, charcoal and pencil. They observe daffodils closely and mix colour well to obtain exactly the tones they want. They create good clay models and collages and create prints using string and polystyrene. They take a keen and informed interest in the work of different artists and capture their styles of painting very effectively.
10. In other subjects pupils attain levels which are in line with national expectations and benefit from a wide range of activities which are well interlinked. In history they develop a sound understanding of events in the past by studying their own locality which also extends their understanding of local geography. They exchange postcards with a variety of people around the world which develops their understanding of location and different cultures. In music they sing a number of songs from memory both in class and in assembly. They understand how to phrase the words of a song to maintain the rhythm and are developing a reasonable sense of pitch. In physical education pupils, including

those with special educational needs, make good progress and the attainment of older pupils is good in both games skills and dance.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to school and their learning. This was also noted during the previous inspection and is a strength of the school. Parents commented that pupils are enthusiastic and well behaved, reflecting the way they are valued as individuals. Pupils enjoy school and are eager to attend. They are well motivated and keen to participate both in lessons and other activities in and around school. Even the youngest children were observed concentrating on their tasks and activities for extended periods. In over 87 per cent of lessons pupils were judged to demonstrate attitudes and behaviour that were good or better. However, in the small number of lessons where the pace is slow with over-extended sessions on the carpet, or where the lesson and teaching does not match the needs of the pupils, a small minority become bored and distracted. Children under five show a confident approach to work and in their relationships with each other. They are developing good social skills and are eager to investigate, exploring new learning opportunities. The children work and play well together, sharing their resources.
12. The standards of behaviour in and around the school are very good. Pupils are aware of the school rules and ways of going on. Ninety-seven per cent of parents who responded to the questionnaire thought the school promoted good standards of behaviour. Pupils are courteous and friendly, speak well of their school and take care of it. They are happy to talk about what they are doing and show their work to visitors. Pupils reported no evidence of oppressive behaviour or bullying in the school. They felt it was a safe school and knew who to go to if any incident were to occur. There have been no exclusions from the school.
13. Opportunities to develop pupils' personal development are good. In the nursery and reception classes pupils are encouraged to make choices and take responsibility for their own learning, helping them to develop their initiative and investigative skills. Pupils are very willing to undertake positions of responsibility. They phone through to the staff room to inform teachers when it is the end of break-times or undertake monitor functions in classroom, taking the registers back and helping to clear up without much prompting.
14. Relationships in the school are good both between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves. Pupils show a very caring approach to those with special educational needs. Where the opportunities are offered pupils work well together in both pair and group situations and this harmonious atmosphere promotes a good working environment and makes a positive impact on learning. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 collaborated well to create a scary story then recorded it on tape and nursery children were undertaking role play activities and working together sensitively in the library corner.
15. The circle time promotes opportunities for pupils' personal development. They listen to each other and are happy to talk about their feelings, with pupils respecting others' opinions, values and beliefs. Pupils have a good knowledge of other religions, their ways and understandings. Even the very young children in the nursery are developing a good moral code, knowing how their unfortunate actions impact upon and affect others. The clear aims and ethos of the school promote value and respect for each other and are reinforced by the good role models of the staff.
16. The levels of attendance in the school are good and generally in line with the national figures with few unauthorised absences. This is also broadly similar to the last inspection. There has been a steady increase in attendance levels over the last three

years. Recent outbreaks of chickenpox and stomach upsets have, however, brought current attendance levels in some classes to below 95 per cent. Pupils are generally prompt into school in the mornings. The introduction of the breakfast club and the new security arrangements where the doors are closed at 9.10 am have contributed significantly to improved punctuality. The opportunity for pupils to come into the classrooms at 8.45 am and read first thing in the morning leads to an orderly start to the day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching is good. Forty-five per cent of the lessons seen were good and 13 per cent were very good. No teaching was judged to be less than satisfactory. This is above the average for schools of this type and shows an improvement since the last inspection when 12 per cent of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory.
18. The quality of teaching for the under fives in the nursery and reception classes is good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and plan and manage lessons well. Teachers, the nursery nurse and support staff work well together and have high expectations based on a good understanding of the needs of the children. Relationships with children are very good and teachers are good at encouraging children to develop very positive attitudes to their work. Children work well on their own and with others at a range of relevant tasks.
19. At Key Stage 1 the good quality of teaching develops pupils' high levels of concentration and enthusiasm for learning. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects to be taught including information and communication technology. They manage pupils very well and in nearly all lessons learning takes place in a purposeful and orderly environment. They plan the overall teaching programme effectively but there are shortcomings in the quality of planning of individual lessons. Teachers do not always use day-to-day assessment precisely enough to ensure pupils develop skills securely in literacy.
20. Teachers are very good at organising their classes. They create a very positive atmosphere for learning by their caring and sensitive approach to pupils. They expect and obtain high standards of good behaviour in class and readily reward pupils with encouragement and praise. They value pupils' ideas and contributions and encourage them to ask questions and comment both in assemblies and in class discussions. In an assembly with the local community policeman pupils willingly recalled what they had learnt on his last visit and described events in detail. In a class discussion of the most suitable equipment for a playground the teacher ensured all pupils had a chance to become involved. They thought up their ideas in small groups and then related their suggestions to the whole class. Pupils' listening skills are well developed by the way teachers choose discussion topics which they link closely to pupils' own personal interests. In many lessons they remind pupils of appropriate technical terms to help them communicate their ideas accurately. Teachers are good at questioning pupils, as in a religious education lesson where probing questions extended pupils' previous learning of the Muslim faith
21. Teachers maintain a brisk pace throughout the day. They start lessons punctually, take registers without fuss and waste no time in moving pupils from one task to another. Occasionally, introductory sessions are over-prolonged, as in the literacy hour so that pupils lose concentration. Concluding plenary sessions are well organised and provide valuable opportunities for pupils to describe and evaluate their work. Teachers also use support staff and volunteers effectively. They give them well defined areas of responsibility, usually assisting pupils with special educational needs, and agree the

specific skills which they want pupils to develop. In a cookery session a parent volunteer emphasised the importance of safe and hygienic working and effectively involved pupils in the whole process. Teachers use resources well in lessons. Pupils' good knowledge of religious education is significantly helped by the excellent range of artefacts which the school has purchased to illustrate different faiths. Here pupils show a good, secure knowledge of the Muslim as well as Christian faiths.

22. Recent reviews of planning have improved the effectiveness and balance of teaching particularly in subjects like mathematics, science, information and communication technology and religious education. This is having a significant impact on pupils' attainment in these subjects. However, the overall learning objectives are not always translated into precise outcomes for individual lessons in literacy. The school is introducing new assessment procedures into a number of subjects and developing them in English. As teachers become accustomed to using these the focus of assessment is improving but currently teachers are not using them fully to measure how well pupils progress and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching. Plans do not always identify how extension work should be provided for higher attaining pupils. Very good teaching takes place in physical education where pupils quickly learn ball skills and dance routines and teachers carefully evaluate pupils' progress.
23. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good. It enables them to participate fully and confidently in all activities. Trained and very experienced support staff are deployed effectively and make a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. They know the targets agreed in pupils' individual education plans and focus on these in sessions with the result that pupils make good progress.
24. Considering the ages of the pupils teachers provide an appropriate amount of homework. Most parents are satisfied with both the nature of the tasks and the amount given. Since there are close links between parents and the school teachers can easily discuss pupils' homework needs as need arises.

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

25. The curriculum is stimulating and meets statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and religious education. The school has effectively introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and these are beginning to raise standards. The school provides an interesting range of learning opportunities for children under five in the nursery and reception classes. Although the curriculum is satisfactory overall, there are some weaknesses in the planning of reading which restricts pupils' progress.
26. The curriculum for children under five provides them with good opportunities to develop their learning through first hand experience. Teaching in the nursery provides attractive and interesting activities for all areas of learning. In group activities teaching introduces children to specific skills such as learning the names of letters. Play activities are purposeful and helpful guidance is provided for adults working with children. For example, there is a vocabulary list and a good range of questions displayed near the outdoor play equipment to help children in their physical development. In the role-play library children have to check in their books and pay *pretend* fines on overdue books. Children develop their observational skills through art and science and this provides a good springboard for future learning. Teachers monitor what children do but since they select their own activities there are times when they do not pursue a range of different learning experiences. In the reception classes teachers draw on the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to extend children's skills and lead them into the early stages of

the National Curriculum. However, approaches to teaching letter sounds are not consistent in all classes and this impairs the progress of some children.

27. At Key Stage 1 the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies provide a sound basis for learning. However, the school does not systematically implement the processes by which reading is taught to ensure that all pupils make the best possible progress in all classes. While the teaching of writing has been recently reviewed and improved, some pupils spend too much time writing their news in a way which lacks insufficient structure to develop their skills satisfactorily. Opportunities to extend pupils' skills in reading and writing in religious education, science and design and technology are not fully developed. However, when they study the Great Fire of London pupils' writing is of a high standard. The National Numeracy Strategy is improving pupils' achievements in mathematics. This is evident in the speed and accuracy of pupils in reception and Year 1 and in their mental mathematics. The teachers provide satisfactory opportunities for pupils to extend their learning of basic skills through all subjects. For example, pupils accurately measure distances in centimetres in their work on gradients and use their understanding of shape and forces in design and technology.
28. The school is making good use of government led initiatives in planning for all subjects. This is leading to an improvement in standards in science and helping teachers assess pupils' achievement in the National Curriculum more accurately. The new planning schemes ensure that there is a suitable balance between subjects, although there was little teaching of science during the week of the inspection. Planning for information technology is good as skills are developed through both direct teaching and opportunities in other subjects, such as research on the Internet for history and geography. Religious education is well planned to the local agreed syllabus and leads to high standards. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular opportunities which include learning the recorder.
29. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and pupils make good progress. The school welcomes pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties and parents appreciate the high quality of care and teaching they receive. The staff who support pupils with statements of special educational need are well trained and receive good guidance on teaching them through appropriate individual education plans. Work is well matched to their needs and levels of ability. A particular strength of the provision is the way in which all pupils are taught to respect each other and to support their friends. The parents are kept closely informed of their child's progress and work closely with the school. Links with the local education support services are good. The result is very happy and fulfilled pupils who are well prepared for their next stage of education. The pupils with special educational needs have full access to all learning situations and equal opportunities are good throughout the school.
30. Personal, health and social education is good and supports the pupils' personal development. Children under five are encouraged to be independent and confident in their learning. Through the school pupils learn to care for their health and to understand how they grow and change both physically and emotionally. Teachers plan lessons for personal development effectively so that they draw on the pupils' understanding in a range of subjects. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 discussed their favourite climbing equipment they have studied in science and the teacher stressed the importance of listening to each other and valuing everyone's contribution. Sex and drug education is effectively developed through science teaching.
31. Pupils' personal development is good overall. Spiritual development is good. Acts of worship are carefully planned and build on a constant theme during the week. Pupils and staff gather for daily assemblies which are conducted in a way which makes the occasion

special. Teachers include an interesting range of music and make good use of displays to focus pupils' attention. They encourage pupils' comments and respond sensitively to their ideas in an unhurried way which helps to develop their confidence and understanding. Both in assemblies and class discussions pupils reflect on the richness of the world, the beauty of natural objects and the importance of caring personal relationships. Provision for moral development is good. Pupils are taught right from wrong through informal ways and there are clear classroom rules for behaviour. Teachers are particularly good at encouraging pupils to express their feelings and listen to each other's ideas. This provision makes an important contribution to the tolerant and thoughtful way in which staff and pupils support each other.

32. The provision for pupils' social and cultural development is very good and makes a significant contribution to their attitudes to learning. The school encourages pupils of all ages and ability, including those with special educational needs, to mix and work together. Pupils work well in small and large groups and also individually. They are very used to working with many different adults including parents, volunteers and residential artists. This helps to develop pupils' maturity and gives them confidence in relating to adults. Pupils experience a wide range of stimulating cultural activities. They develop a good understanding of their own locality and explore local traditional events by participating in village carnivals and festivals. Teachers bring their first hand experience of Australia and America into lessons and assemblies. A week of musical activities and a visit from a Zulu dance troupe have helped to make school life rich and exciting.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The school provides a caring and supportive environment. Provision for pupils' health, welfare and guidance makes a significant contribution to their personal and academic development. This area has been maintained since the last inspection and is a strength of the school. Teachers know their pupils well and will act quickly when they see a need. The school seeks to ensure that pupils have equal opportunities. There are effective systems in place to support the academic and personal development needs of pupils with special educational needs. The entry process into the nursery and the transfer to the main school and later transition to the junior school are well planned for and handled sensitively.
34. Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are very effective and reflected in the orderly atmosphere in the school. The policy aims to develop personal responsibility by providing guidelines and procedures for promoting good behaviour and a systematic approach for dealing with any bullying. The headteacher commented that the school does not need to offer incentives to reward good attitudes and behaviour since pupils respond well because they want to and wish to please their teachers. Parents report that any incidents of bullying which do occur are handled sensitively and effectively.
35. Although teachers are developing sound systems for assessing pupils' progress, many of the procedures are new or have recently been refined in the light of curricular changes. The school has developed good practice in mathematics and science and is using information well to plan teaching. In English it makes good use of new local education authority guidance on assessing progress in writing and work is carefully matched to levels of attainment in the National Curriculum. In a similar way procedures for assessing reading have improved but they are not detailed enough to measure pupils' progress in the nuts and bolts of learning letter sounds and early words. In the nursery and reception classes detailed assessments are made of achievement in each area of learning on a daily basis. This helps the teachers and other staff to set new targets for learning. This process is not established in Key Stage 1 and individual targets are not regularly set.

However, there is good practice leading towards this in the use of 'reading reviews' where the teacher 'interviews' the pupil to find out their general strengths and weaknesses in reading and to talk about the books they could read next.

36. Assessment in mathematics is well structured and contributes to raising pupils' attainment by ensuring that skills are built on as pupils go through school. In science teachers' assessments now accurately match national expectations through the use of the assessment guidelines of the Qualifications and Assessment Authority. Teachers are developing the good practice of assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding at the end of a unit of teaching. These give a clear picture of pupils who are not achieving what is expected of them and those who do very well. This is then used to make certain they are given the right experiences at a later stage. In information and communication technology there are clear procedures for assessing pupils' progress but not all teachers are yet confident about using them effectively. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is accurate and good use is made of a computerised record keeping system to monitor their progress. The good quality individual education plans arise directly from the needs identified in the assessments and procedures are in place to make sure progress is regularly reviewed.
37. There are good procedures for promoting prompt and regular attendance which are effective in raising attendance levels. The large number of pupils registered at the breakfast club are brought to school promptly in the mornings. This has helped to ensure a good start to the day. The school secretary effectively monitors the registers and attendance figures, contacting parents promptly when pupils are away. There are appropriate links with the education social worker who follows up cases as required.
38. The school has good systems for child protection and ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare. The school follows the local authority procedures and guidelines for child protection and the headteacher is the designated teacher. She has received basic training and has experience of the procedures involved. The school is aware that regular updating training is required for all members of staff to ensure that they are appraised of changes to procedures. There are appropriate links with the relevant outside agencies. The school nurse visits regularly and will undertake home visits if necessary. Well-established systems are in place to take care of pupils who may fall ill during the day. Two members of staff have received first aid training and there are effective procedures to meet the medical needs of pupils.
39. The comprehensive health and safety policy is currently being reviewed in light of new local authority arrangements. There are appropriate procedures in place to address the issues of safety and security of pupils in the school and regular health and safety checks and risk assessments are undertaken. New security arrangements have recently been implemented. Parents do not have the same easy access to the school, but are pleased at the more secure arrangements now in place. Governors take an active role in fulfilling their responsibilities for health and safety. They recently undertook a comprehensive risk assessment and are addressing the issues identified.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS?

40. The school has worked hard to foster strong links with parents, establishing effective liaison between home and school and promoting the active role parents can play in their children's education. There have been considerable developments in this area since the last inspection and this is now one of the strengths of the school. Parents are very supportive of the school and feel that their children are making good progress. Ninety-five percent of parents who responded to the questionnaire commented that they thought

the school and staff are open and very approachable and they appreciate the caring attitude of staff.

41. Detailed information about the school and its activities is provided in the school prospectus and the very attractive governors' annual report to parents. Regular contact is maintained through newsletters and reminder letters to parents. The school operates an open door policy. With parents invited into the school at the start and finish of each day much of the information about what is happening and how children are progressing is covered on a personal basis. This means that parents who do not personally collect their children are not always as well informed as others. Curriculum information regarding details of projects and topics to be covered is discussed at consultation evenings alongside reviews of pupils' progress and achievements. Occasional workshops are held to keep parents updated and suitably informed about new initiatives such as the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed and are involved in the review processes. Parents have good opportunities to visit the school and meet with staff before their children join the school and home visits are undertaken to meet new nursery children. The quality of information provided about pupils in their annual reports is currently being reviewed. This will ensure that in future teachers consistently provide information about what is being covered and details regarding pupils' progress and attainment, and indicate targets for improvement.
42. The school offers every opportunity for parents to become involved in their child's learning. A home activities policy identifies many different areas and ways in which parents can promote learning and complement what their child is doing at school. This includes informal activities around the home or whilst out shopping, encouraging speaking and listening, counting and learning spellings. Reading books go home daily and where adults are able to spend time listening to their child read this is making a significant contribution to the standards of reading. A small number of committed adults are regularly volunteering to help in the classroom or getting involved in other aspects of the curriculum and the day-to-day activities in the school. This includes taking groups for baking or art and craftwork. A large number of parents attend school events such as the sharing assemblies. Parents have been effectively involved in consultations regarding the home/school agreement. The infant and nursery friends association makes a valuable contribution to the life of the school. It runs a number of successful fund-raising and social events, which generate up to £2,000 a year. This money has been targeted to help fund additional school resources such as large toys in the nursery, a cooker, television and computer and has provided carpets in the classrooms. Parents also offer valuable practical support through helping to redecorate parts of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. The headteacher works closely with all members of staff to promote the school's aims and provides a sound quality of leadership. She is very supportive of staff and together they achieve a high quality of care for pupils which creates a safe and happy learning environment. The school also aims to provide a high quality education. While the school offers a broad and interesting curriculum, it has not been so successful in promoting high standards in basic literacy skills. The headteacher and her deputy have a clear view of what they want to achieve. The school effectively evaluates its overall performance but it has not yet effectively implemented its procedures for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching across all subjects.
44. Although staff changes and illness have delayed some developments, the school has made steady progress since the last inspection and has addressed the key recommendations of the last report. Classroom organisation effectively matches the work taking place and the needs of pupils. Pupils' number skills are developed more

systematically. In order to improve reading skills the school developed a new approach which has been replaced by the introduction of the literacy strategy. Assessment systems were reviewed and used to inform planning which also included teaching methods. Over the last year the pace of developments has accelerated with particular attention being paid to improving the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The school has also made improvements in identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs and in establishing stronger links with parents and the community.

45. The school's processes for monitoring and evaluating its overall effectiveness are good. It is making good use of performance data to analyse its strengths and weaknesses and analyses results by gender. Teachers are also setting realistic attainment targets based on their assessment of pupils' progress. They are developing improved systems for identifying learning objectives for each pupil with a view to helping pupils raise their skills. These have been effectively introduced into science and are being developed for mathematics and English. The school needs to ensure that these are used on a consistent basis throughout all classes
46. Co-ordinators monitor planning in detail and this is followed up by reports and interviews as well as whole staff discussion. However, the impact of this, as in the monitoring of teaching is not yet sufficiently effective. Areas for development are identified but are not developed throughout the school to ensure consistent good practice. Management does not always establish clear priorities on a manageable time-scale to ensure that improvements are introduced. As in the literacy action plan the many areas included for the current year have not all been achievable and do not reflect changing priorities as new information has become available. The responsibilities for subject co-ordination are evenly and appropriately distributed across all curriculum areas except early years where there is no co-ordinator at present. The school has made significant improvements in the planning and assessment of science. The effectiveness of management in religious education and information and communication technology is reflected in pupils' good standards of attainment. Special educational needs provision is well managed.
47. School development planning is comprehensive but does not highlight priorities among the many areas identified. The plan is drawn up with the involvement of all staff and governors, which encourages a high level of participation and awareness of the school's performance. While the plan includes costs and timings, it does not always define success criteria with sufficient precision to help the school measure how well developments are moving towards the intended target. Plans are regularly reviewed by senior management and governors but without precise terms of reference the speed and effectiveness of change is impaired. In all other respects the governors fulfil their responsibilities well. Financial planning makes good use of the school's limited resources and spending is monitored closely. Financial administration is of high quality and the school properly administers specific budgets for pupils with special educational needs and for staff training. The school applies best value principles to all areas of spending.
48. The school has an appropriate number of well qualified and experienced teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum for all children under five and for pupils at Key Stage 1, including those with special educational needs. Co-ordinators have been appointed for all subjects and for special educational needs. However, there is no overall co-ordinator for the under fives provision. Support staff are well qualified and experienced. They work well with teachers and give good support to pupils with special educational needs and within classes. Teamwork in the nursery is particularly effective where there is a very good working relationship between the teacher, nursery nurse and support staff. Staff development is linked both to the needs of the curriculum and to personal development. The procedures for the induction of new staff to the school and support for teachers in training is good.

49. Learning resources are good. The school makes good and prudent use of limited funds and is very well supported by parents in raising further funds, which it spends well to enhance resource provision. Resources are sufficient in quantity for English, design and technology, history, geography, special educational needs and music. They are good for children under five, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, art and physical education. They are very good for religious education, well supported by the excellent range of artefacts to illustrate a range of world religions and faiths. Most resources are up to date, well kept and managed and are easily accessible. The school makes good use of its accommodation which is maintained to a high standard. However, the limitations of the small hall and space for outside games limits pupils' experience of physical education.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

50. In order to raise standards in the school the governors, headteacher and staff should:

improve pupils' attainment in reading by:

- establishing consistent systems for developing pupils' understanding of phonics especially in reception and among younger pupils at Key Stage 1;
- defining in weekly plans exactly what language skills are to be developed in order to focus teaching;
- introducing more structured reading material which reinforces pupils' learning;
- identifying pupils' strengths and weaknesses on a more regular basis in order to improve the learning of all pupils but especially those of lower than average ability;
(Paragraphs 1 - 6, 54, 59, 60, 62 and 65)

improve pupils' writing skills by:

- providing more structured written activities which extend pupils' use of vocabulary and styles;
- developing appropriate written tasks in subjects other than English which broaden pupils' experience of writing for different purposes;
(Paragraphs 1 - 3, 6, 63 and 65)

improve the systems for exchanging and developing consistent good practice in planning and assessment by:

- using information obtained from the monitoring of planning and teaching to establish consistent systems across the school with specific attention to planning and assessment;
- identifying key priorities within the school development plan and allocating sufficient resources to achieve the agreed goals;
- establishing clearer procedures for measuring the effectiveness of developments.
(Paragraphs 19 - 22, 26, 27, 35, 36, 43 - 47, 59 and 65)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	13	45	42	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

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)	20	131
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	32

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	22

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	29	19	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	20	24
	Girls	14	16	16
	Total	34	36	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (82)	75 (89)	83 (84)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	25	23
	Girls	16	16	14
	Total	41	41	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (84)	85 (82)	77 (84)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	151
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	100

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	58

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998-1999
	£
Total income	272,502
Total expenditure	273,349
Expenditure per pupil	1,667
Balance brought forward from previous year	2,461
Balance carried forward to next year	1,614

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 29%

Number of questionnaires sent out	131
Number of questionnaires returned	38

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	18	3	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	68	26	3	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	68	29	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	31	9	3	13
The teaching is good.	79	21	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	34	5	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	11	3	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	32	0	3	3
The school works closely with parents.	57	32	3	3	5
The school is well led and managed.	66	26	0	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	29	0	3	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	33	6	8	17

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

51. Children under five are taught in both nursery and reception classes according to their ages. The majority of children begin their schooling in the nursery which they enter in the term in which they are four years of age. Many have previous playgroup experience. They transfer to the reception class in September or January depending on their birthdays. On entry to the school children have a wide range of abilities but the overall profile is average. The school welcomes pupils of all abilities and at the time of the inspection there were two children with statements of special educational needs in the nursery. Children under five receive good teaching and make good progress overall. They are on target to meet the desirable learning outcomes¹ by the time they transfer to Key Stage 1.

Personal and social development

52. Children make very good progress in their personal and social development. They adapt quickly to the day-to-day life of the school. Children come into the nursery happily and readily settle down to their learning activities. They work very well together, either co-operatively or independently. Children are highly motivated by the learning experiences they are offered. They show high levels of maturity when working together to solve problems and present their ideas clearly. They develop their imagination and social skills through very well developed play activities. For example, when using large toys children play harmoniously for a relevant period of time and move on to further play experiences, making very good, positive, constructive relationships. Teachers, the nursery nurse in the nursery and support staff relate very well to the children and this has a significant impact on the children's sense of security and their quality of learning. On transfer to reception, when they attend full-time, children adapt very well to their new classes and take part in the life of the main school, including attending assemblies and dinner time, when they socialise very well. They are secure, confident and happy, showing very good attitudes to their learning and make good progress.

Language and literacy

53. Children attain good standards in speaking and listening. In the nursery children listened with increasing interest to a description of different books and suggested the characters they might meet in the stories. When spoken to pupils respond readily and most describe what they are doing successfully. Pupils in reception described what happens when colour is mixed and how colours varied when applied with a flat brush. Some children enter school with below average skills in speaking and articulation. Staff meet the needs of these pupils well. Where necessary children are assisted by skilled school support staff and outside specialist staff such as speech therapists. This quickly develops children's confidence to use language. Standards in reading and writing are satisfactory. In reading they know about that illustrations and pictures can help them to build stories. Many are sounding letters and recognise learnt words. They know that books are read from left to right and convey meaning. More able children take great pride in their reading skills, some reading simple passages, usually accurately. Most talk with good levels of

¹ Desirable learning outcomes – these are goals for learning for children by the time they enter compulsory education at the age of five. They mainly refer to literacy (*speaking, listening, reading (recognising their own names and common words, enjoyment of stories, books and pictures) and writing, e.g. writing their names and recognising UPPER and lower case*), numeracy (*recognising the meaning of numbers, beginning to add and subtract small numbers, sorting and matching objects and numbers and recognising common shapes and patterns*) and personal and social skills (*showing confidence, self-respect, ability to work with other children and adults, concentrating, offering ideas, taking turns and sharing*). These will be replaced with the Early Learning Goals in September 2000.

understanding about stories and books they have read, showing good levels of enthusiasm and comprehension. Many are successfully writing their names and letters. Some pupils in reception are confident enough to write phrases and sentences unaided, reading them back with meaning.

54. Formal literacy teaching is not consistently organised across the classes for under-fives. In the nursery many children have made sufficient progress with their attitudes to learning and their love of books to benefit from a regular structured input. Their interest is seen in the library corner where children talk about and show each other the books they have read. When encouraged to do so children sound letters and write them with a good degree of accuracy. In reception children have daily sessions to develop literacy skills which pupils enjoy and follow with interest. However, the way in which letter sounds are taught varies from class to class and is not consistently developed across the early years and into Year 1. Literacy sessions in reception develop pupils' interest and understanding of books but activities are not always well linked to the learning objectives. In a literacy session younger pupils learned about different types of books, worked with their teacher to categorise them and then some sequenced a story. While the elements were valid experiences for children they did not extend their learning effectively. In addition the timing of activities for older children does not always extend their learning productively. After learning a new letter and sound some pupils moved on to number work or structured play rather than reinforced their learning by focused activities.

Mathematics

55. Children are satisfactorily developing their abilities to read, write and order numbers up to five and beyond in the nursery. By the time they are five many successfully order, add and subtract numbers up to 10. They identify common two-dimensional shapes. In the nursery about half the children match and name common two-dimensional shapes, such as a square and a rectangle and some recognise and name triangular shapes. Children are developing a satisfactory understanding of words such as 'same' and 'add to' and are starting to explain their mental strategies using phrases such as 'it comes before' and 'it comes after'.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

56. Children develop a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the world across a wide area of activities. They recount visits to local churches and museums and what they saw. They show a satisfactory understanding of living things, the purpose of a skeleton in a body and the lives of animals, plants and flowers. Children are confident in using the computer, use the keyboard to respond to the messages on the screen and use the mouse successfully to 'click' and 'drag'. Their awareness of how things change when mixed is well developed. For example, some children playing with sand were pretending to be builders, showing a good awareness of terms such as 'cement' and how to join bricks together by spreading the 'cement' with a trowel. They know how to bake biscuits. They mixed, shaped and cut out play-dough models, rolling and shaping them appropriately. Historical skills are suitably developed and children readily sequence events in stories and have an awareness of lives from the past such as their grandparents and how they lived. In geography they identify types of weather, filling in weather charts and explaining the effects of heat. Some children, when making a kit, explained what was needed to make it fly successfully.

Creative development

57. Creative skills are well developed in the nursery and very well developed in reception. There are many examples of good quality drawings and paintings in both classes. Children have good powers of observation as shown in accurate pictures of daffodils. They mix colour accurately to achieve the shades which they want and many achieve a good standard of composition. These are well displayed and celebrate children's work. Children paint and draw very well from observation and imagination. They make collages and illustrate stories and nursery rhymes they have heard. A particular feature of how high children's standards are developed and their very positive attitudes towards their work was seen in an art lesson in reception. Here all children successfully painted in a background for a painting using a sequence of carefully mixed colours. They showed a good awareness of colour mixing and what happens if you add too much of a dark colour. Their brush control, understanding of the sequences of colour mixing and care in application of the paint in a given sequence were very well developed.

Physical development

58. Physical development is satisfactory overall. Work is suitably planned and children get good play opportunities to enhance their physical development in the nursery. The reception classes use the nursery play and reception area on occasions. Children imaginatively use the good range of wheeled toys, climbing and tunnelling apparatus and show good powers of imagination and physical dexterity. In physical education lessons gross and fine motor skills, such as jumping in and out of a rope circle and using and catching a small ball to bounce and catch, are suitably developed.

Teaching

59. The quality of teaching for the under fives in both nursery and reception is good overall. The school has made satisfactory progress in its provision for the under fives since the last inspection. It puts great emphasis on developing the children's social and speaking and listening skills. In the nursery the teacher, nursery nurse and support staff work and plan together. Assessment is of a good standard and used well to guide the planning of learning and activities. There is a good range of planned activities allowing children to choose for themselves, as well as for more teacher-structured learning. However, there are occasions where too much freedom of choice is given to the children and they are not guided to a variety of experiences. In reception teachers and support staff have a good awareness of children's needs. They maintain detailed notes of pupils' progress and activities, involving pupils in their own record keeping. The nursery teacher, nursery nurse and teachers in reception plan together, addressing the areas of learning and/or National Curriculum programme of study effectively. Children are introduced to key literacy and mathematics skills but activity sessions for older children do not always build successfully on teacher's input. There is no one person who has the responsibility for co-ordinating the work of the under fives across both the nursery and reception classes and who monitors the quality of teaching according to defined goals for how standards can be improved further.

ENGLISH

60. Pupils' attainment by the age of seven is below expectations in reading and writing. In the 1999 tests at the end of Key Stage 1 pupils attained levels which were well below average. In comparison with similar schools attainment in reading was below average and attainment in writing was in line with the average. The results of Key Stage 1 tests in reading have varied widely over the last four years, but while there has been a slight improvement over time the underlying trend indicates that pupils' attainment is below average. There have also been considerable variations in the results of writing tests and whilst pupils' attainment is just below the national average it has improved since 1996.
61. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is above expectations. Pupils speak clearly and are eager to take part in discussions in class lessons and assemblies. In an assembly on sharing memories pupils confidently described their own memories of family members. They appreciated that memories could be prompted by photographs, keepsakes and flowers. They listen with interest to their teachers and respond well with comments. In a religious education lesson pupils made sensitive observations on why prayer was important to individuals. In another discussion pupils compared how Christians and Muslims prayed and the differences in their places of worship. Good questioning by teachers ensures that pupils are drawn into the subjects being studied and are given good opportunities to contribute their own ideas. They express their thoughts with a good range of vocabulary and benefit from the friendly and encouraging atmosphere which teachers create.
62. The school has effective guidelines for literacy based on the National Literacy Strategy which are now having a positive effect on pupils' language skills. However, the development of early reading skills is still not consistently organised especially for pupils at the end of reception and as they move into Key Stage 1. Teachers currently introduce pupils to a range of reading material and only use a reading scheme to support pupils with special educational needs. All pupils enjoy looking at books and discuss the contents with enthusiasm. Pupils with above average and average ability develop satisfactorily but lower attainers do not make sufficient progress. They are good at remembering stories and often recall the text from looking at pictures. However, their knowledge of letter sounds is limited and they do not all have the confidence to use them when they meet unfamiliar words. Most pupils take books home regularly and there is a good level of communication between home and school through the reading diaries. Older pupils know the difference between fiction and non-fiction and know how to find information using the contents and index. Pupils know how to find books in the school library but since it is sited well away from the classrooms they do not have regular access to it for research.
63. Although pupils' attainment is below national expectations in writing the majority achieve the levels expected of them in the light of their prior attainment. Pupils of above average and average ability write with a good breadth of vocabulary and expression. They produce sensitive and imaginative pieces in creating stories and poems. They describe events in the Great Fire of London with a good balance between recounting events and explaining the sources of their information. In science and religious education older pupils explain work they have done in well-structured sentences with a good level of spelling and punctuation. Pupils with lower than average ability, however, do not have sufficient knowledge of letter sounds and shapes to express themselves satisfactorily and are often hampered by weaker reading skills. The standard of spelling is below average for younger pupils but appropriate for older pupils. Similarly handwriting is generally sound among older pupils but is often less well formed than expected among younger pupils. Teachers give good support to pupils with special educational needs and make effective use of classroom assistants and volunteers to help them. Lower ability pupils

often work with these assistants and generally benefit from the individual help offered. However, there are instances where lower attaining pupils are not stimulated by working in such circumstances and this depresses their progress.

64. The quality of teaching is generally good. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and create a positive working atmosphere to which they respond well. Class management is consistently good and pupils need few reminders to get down to work and try their best. Pupils are good speakers and listen well. When asked to work together in pairs and groups pupils are enthusiastic, sensible and relate very well to each other. In a very well managed session a small group of pupils with special educational needs worked together very co-operatively to create a story which they recorded and afterwards recounted confidently to the class. In nearly all classes pupils show a zest and willingness to discover things and often settle to read books on their own or in pairs.
65. Teachers set overall weekly objectives which arise out of the agreed literacy strategy. However, in daily planning they do not always define the specific skills which they want pupils to develop in order to focus learning and provide criteria for assessing pupils' progress and the effectiveness of teaching. In discussing texts with their pupils teachers sometimes spend too long explaining the meaning of the writing and place insufficient emphasis on the structure of language. For example, they do not focus on similar spellings or reinforce the sounds currently being learned. In some classes there are good displays to help pupils spell common words but this is not consistently available in all rooms and the use of word-books for reference is not widespread. Teachers assess pupils' progress on a half-termly basis and are developing improved procedures by which they can identify how pupils are developing key skills in all aspects of the subject. They apply this effectively to writing for older pupils who are developing confidence by writing up science experiments and aspects of history. However, they miss opportunities in other subjects where pupils could extend their skills. For younger pupils writing tasks often focus on their weekly news which is insufficiently structured to develop specific skills. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology, especially among older pupils.

MATHEMATICS

66. Pupils progress well and standards are in line with the national average by the age of seven. The pupils have good attitudes to learning and the quality of teaching is good. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
67. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 results have been consistently close to the average for the last three years and have improved each year. Standards are above those of schools with similar characteristics. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels is also close to the average and indicates that more able pupils make suitable progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them.
68. A strength of the learning in mathematics is in the quality of mental and oral mathematics work. For example, pupils in Year 1 are quick to estimate the number of coins in the teacher's hand and then calculate the value by early multiplication. In Year 2 they place numbers in order picked at random from a hundred square from their knowledge of number patterns. In a very good lesson in Year 1 pupils were answering questions involving with some very high numbers, such as 3 more than 898, quickly and accurately. This aspect of the National Numeracy Strategy is raising teachers' expectations and helping to push standards higher.
69. Pupils' progress in learning to calculate and to record their mathematics is good. They experience a wide range of approaches to make sure they thoroughly understand how to

add, subtract, multiply and divide to a sound standard. They count in tens, twos and fifties accurately. They use menus to calculate sums involving three or more numbers and set problems for each other. They develop a sound understanding of place value and round numbers up or down accurately to the nearest 10. By Year 2 they calculate the change from a pound and over by adding on from the goods they are buying or by subtraction. They set out their addition and subtraction both vertically and horizontally. Written work is carefully presented so that pupils are encouraged to be accurate.

70. Another good feature of the pupils' work in mathematics is the importance given to investigative and problem solving tasks. For example, they have to find out how many different subtraction sums they can make from 18. Years 1 and 2 pupils set their own written problems for the rest of the class to answer on items from the shopping menu. They investigate patterns in a 'magic square' where all the lines add up to the same number and have a go at writing their own.
71. Understanding of shape and measure and data handling is sound. There is some very good use of graph work including tally charts and using computer generated graphs in a Year 2 project on local transport. Pupils recognise the properties of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Progress in understanding time and measure is satisfactory. They estimate and measure accurately to the nearest centimetre. The work is made more interesting by asking the pupils to draw lines for other pupils to measure.
72. The pupils are enthusiastic but orderly in lessons. They are keen to try harder work and enjoy using large numbers. They take a pride in setting down their work. Mathematics skills are used in other subjects, for example making measurements in science and design and technology, although this is not yet significantly planned for.
73. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons start with a quick paced mental session which motivates the pupils. Teachers match questions to different abilities to keep all pupils involved. This was particularly effective in Year 1 when questions ranged from calculations with one digit numbers through to three digits. A common weakness in the satisfactory teaching was that the pace of teaching at this stage was not as rigorous in other lessons. This led to the few occasions when some pupils lost interest in lessons. Teachers explain to the pupils exactly what they are expected to learn during the lesson and assess this carefully afterwards. Teachers generally use a suitable vocabulary and make the work interesting to the pupils through novel descriptions of operations. For example, the more than sign is related to a monster gobbling up numbers. Good use is made of computer programs to develop mathematical learning. They play simulations of shopping activities to complement their work on money. Counting programs are used to improve the pace of counting in ones, twos and tens. Graphs and charts are produced on the computer.

SCIENCE

74. Standards of attainment for the current Year 2 pupils are close to national expectations and progress through the school is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make suitable progress in the subject. These standards contrast with the reported assessments last year that were well below the national average. There are two main reasons for this. There has been a radical improvement to the planning procedures through the systematic use of government guidance. This was introduced by the new co-ordinator over the last two years and has not had an effect on published standards yet but means that the current Year 2 pupils have followed the scheme for this time. Before this teachers taught to the programmes of study in the National Curriculum and there was not enough guidance to ensure all aspects of science were studied in a progressive way. Secondly, teachers' assessments were made to very loose criteria and this is now

significantly improved. Overall standards are similar to those at the time of the last inspection.

75. By the age of seven pupils' skills in investigating and experimenting are satisfactory and they make sound progress through school. They know that their tests on vehicles are not fair because they push them with different forces. They make sensible suggestions for improving the experiment such as letting them drop down a slope. They use measures with reasonable accuracy to record the outcome of the experiments. Younger pupils in reception know that they have to make regular observations of their cress seeds to see which grow the best. They are very enthusiastic about this work and enjoyed growing seeds at home. They make sensible suggestions for making improvements to experiments. Observational skills are very successfully developed through the school. In reception and Year 1 they build on work in the nursery by making carefully observed drawings of different plants and learning and labelling the names of parts of the plants. They study plants under a magnifying glass and accurately record their growth.
76. Pupils' understanding of materials and physical processes is satisfactory. Year 2 pupils know that magnets attract and repel other magnets, although they could not recall the terms. They sort objects by different properties including magnetism. They know that magnets do not attract all metals. For example, one child said that the magnet would not attract brass 'because it's a mixture of metals.' They describe forces such as push and pull appropriately. A strength in the teachers' planning is that the vocabulary to be used is clearly identified and used in questions with the pupils. There are close links to work in design and technology and this reinforces pupils' progress. For example, pupils discussed the consistency of materials in their biscuit making and the changes that occur.
77. Pupils' attitudes are good. They tackle experiments thoughtfully and are developing a logical approach. Pupils with special educational needs develop good observational skills and take pride in their achievement. They are involved in selecting their material for experiments and are increasingly independent.
78. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection and the quality of teaching was good. There was a clear purpose to the lesson and planning states clearly what is expected of the pupils. There is good teamwork between support staff, students and the teacher which makes sure that the expectations are consistent. The pace of lesson is appropriate to the task and pupils are involved in whole class discussions followed by group work.

ART

79. The school has maintained the high standards and good progress that were present at the last inspection. A wide variety of pupils' work is well displayed around the school which enlivens the environment and there are also good displays of materials to stimulate their interest further.
80. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' standards are high and they make good progress throughout the school. Pupils use a variety of media with confidence. They mix paint well to achieve the shades they want and in reception they practise adding white to colours to observe how to make colours paler. They use pencil, crayons and pastels in observational drawings of plants and achieve very good results. In their pictures of daffodils pupils captured the colours and shading well. They have a good understanding of composition and use available space effectively. They successfully draw and paint faces with a well-developed sense of proportion. They show a good confidence in their use of both two- and three-dimensional media. They use clay well to make models of houses during the Great Fire of London as well as models of local houses. They examine

the work of other artists, such as Van Gogh and interpret his style well in developing their own versions of sunflower drawings and paintings. Similarly, their pastel drawings in the style of Georgia O'Keefe showed a very good interpretation.

81. Pupils extend their learning in other areas of the curriculum through their artwork. For example, the excellent interpretations in picture format of the Great Fire of London form part of their history studies. Symmetrical paintings and drawings of butterflies are associated with their studies for science and mathematics. The very well executed silhouettes of buildings further their understanding of their surroundings for geography and history. There are good examples of pattern work and pupils have made their own polystyrene and string blocks for monoprinting. Pupils show great enthusiasm for the subject, work purposefully and are confident in the way they tackle tasks. They take pride in discussing their work and are well aware of the techniques which they have acquired.
82. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations and extend pupils' skills. They have a good knowledge of the subject and how they want pupils to learn and practise. They emphasise the importance of observing, selecting and mixing the right colour. Pupils accurately describe how a range of colours can be obtained and understand their application. Teachers make good use of the wide range of resources available and stimulate pupils' interest by displays and discussions which open their eyes to the world around them. The headteacher is a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator and supports her colleagues very well. The quality of work is further enhanced through involvement with the local community with pupils frequently putting on exhibitions in local halls in conjunction with the local junior school. At the time of inspection a visiting artist was in school which provided a highly relevant and stimulating experience. Pupils were highly involved in making a three-dimensional sculpture, supplementing his work with their own ideas.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

83. By the age of seven pupils' attainment is in line with expected levels and pupils make sound progress. They finish models and other items with good levels of care and decoration. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and pupils have good attitudes to the subject. Standards are beginning to rise further through the systematic introduction of effective planning guidelines.
84. Pupils' design skills are satisfactory. In their project on play equipment the Year 2 pupils make careful observations in the local park and are beginning to show some awareness of different perspectives in their drawings. However, there are wide variations in the quality and depth of the diagrams. They have a suitable understanding of the strengths of the different materials they can use and persevere to find solutions to their modelling problems. For example, a toy figure kept falling off the string and wood model swing and the pupils kept making adjustments to the width of the base until it hung on. Pupils hold good discussions about their planning ideas with teachers and other adults and this helps them to develop a clear understanding. They are beginning to select the most suitable materials for the task and use catalogues and books as suitable resources. A strength of the work is that it is based on real situations such as the park project or a geography linked project on how pupils could improve the village. The Year 2 pupils are making exciting textile pictures using sewing techniques and the pupils' finger puppet dragons are well made and finished. In their baking activities with a parent the pupils explore the quality of the ingredients using an appropriate vocabulary. Pupils evaluate the quality of their work and improvements they could make through regular discussions but they do not often write down their evaluations.

85. Pupils enjoy design and technology. They persevere with tasks and this helps their skills in sewing and similar techniques. They are largely organised in their work and approach designs in a logical way. They use their mathematics skills effectively in making measurements.
86. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers' subject knowledge is sound and there is a strong art and craft basis to their work. A good contribution is made by a support assistant with professional expertise in design. The pace of lessons is satisfactory and good use is made of parents to support small groups in their learning. The resources are of good quality and readily available. The new co-ordinator is supporting the staff in implementing new national planning guidance but monitoring procedures are not yet in place to ensure the highest standards are being reached. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

87. No lessons were taught during the period of inspection. Evidence was gained from samples of pupils' work and teachers' planning, discussions with teachers, the subject co-ordinator and pupils and from photographs and displays.
88. Pupils' attainment is appropriate for their age and they make satisfactory progress. In all years pupils are given a satisfactory range of opportunities to study the subject. They study their local area and a variety of locations around the world. Younger pupils at the start of Key Stage 1 have completed work on the weather, successfully recording data on weather charts. They have made relevant comparisons in the locality between different types of housing and a farm visit was linked successfully to geographical themes. Year 1 pupils have examined features of their local area and made visits to local places to examine their geography. They have completed observations on weather and its effect on people and their surroundings. They have identified some of the main features of the area using maps in a variety of scales. Year 2 pupils successfully build on their work in Year 1. As a result of local studies and walks around the area they have suggested ways in which the environment can be improved. Traffic surveys and the collected data are well represented in graphical form to support their work in mathematics.
89. Pupils are enthusiastic and highly motivated learners. They follow the movements of a puppet called Molly with great interest. To extend their understanding of locality and maps this is taken on visits to the local area and was recently taken to Australia. A display in the hall shows records the locations visited with the aid of postcards and a world map. The subject is suitably co-ordinated by a recently appointed co-ordinator who also co-ordinates history. The school has adopted the recently published government scheme of work which gives appropriate guidance to teachers. The newly appointed co-ordinator is involved in monitoring planning but teaching is not yet effectively monitored to see how the scheme is delivered by all teachers in class. At present there is too much dependence on teachers saying what they are doing rather than them being effectively evaluated and monitored as teaching is taking place. The use of pupils' writing skills in the subject is under-developed. The subject will need to be given a higher priority when the new National Curriculum is implemented with effect from September 2000.

HISTORY

90. Pupils develop a sound understanding of the subject by studying their own locality and events in the past. As a result of observing their own school, buildings in the village and items from the past they have developed a sense of chronology and how things change over time. They have looked at and compared the toys used by their grandparents, parents and themselves. They have carried out simple research by taking home a questionnaire in which they asked parents and grandparents about their favourite toys and how they played with them. Pupils were able to make their own simple toys and appreciated that in the past toys were not made of plastic. Pupils also understand that their grandparents played outside unsupervised more than they do today. One class gathered a range of artefacts which they set up as a museum in which all pupils could observe toys old and new. Good use was made of video and the Internet to introduce pupils to toys around the world and how they are made.
91. Through their study of the Great Fire of London pupils develop a good understanding of the way history is recorded. Older pupils know that they can find information about the past from diaries and pictures and are learning to use modern research tools such as video and computers. Pupils of all ages benefit from talking to visitors who recount their personal experiences of their childhood and life at Marsden School in the past.
92. Although only one lesson took place during the inspection, the quality of teaching is effective. Good use is made of visits and visitors and pupils acquire a good knowledge of the history of their own community through participating in events such as the Marsden cuckoo festival. The school has amassed a good range of artefacts and videos which it uses well to give pupils an experience of times past.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

93. Pupils' attainment is above expectations by the time they are seven years of age. Progress by pupils of all ability is good. They benefit from regular opportunities to use computers in lessons and from a wide range of activities. Standards have improved since the last inspection.
94. By the age of seven pupils have a good understanding of the use of computers for gathering information. They explore the Internet for facts on the Great Fire of London in history and for information on other countries in geography. Many of the pupils in Year 2 are able to access the Internet with little support. They also know how to compose an e-mail message and transmit it to other schools. They see the value in the computer as a useful tool for learning.
95. Pupils make good progress in word processing. They develop better than average skills and use the keyboard with accuracy and confidence. Computers are used for writing activities in most subjects. For example, two Year 1 pupils wrote successfully about why Christians pray in the religious education lesson. They write about their studies in science and history and poems on the springtime. The importance the school places on word processing is reflected in the displays of pupils' work in all classes. They make labels for their design and technology models using 'cut and paste' techniques and fitting borders around their work.
96. Pupils make good progress in data handling and control. The youngest pupils use a 'floor turtle' to follow routes around courses and create simple programs. Older pupils collect first hand information on transport in the village and produce computer generated graphs which they interpret accurately. Artwork around the school is complemented by computer

generated pictures. Particularly good effects are achieved by more able pupils in artwork related to the life cycle of frogs.

97. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. In Year 1 pupils are keen to show their prowess on mathematics programs and to follow routes round a maze. They know how to load programs from a simple menu. Year 2 pupils confidently explain how they used the Internet to find more about Samuel Pepys. They also make effective use of listening centres.
98. There was only one short lesson observed during the inspection but the opportunities provided for the pupils indicate that teaching is very effective. Teachers have a good understanding of how to develop pupils' skills across the curriculum. The scheme of work and assessment procedures ensure that pupils' progress is consistent through the school. However, there are variations in the teachers' subject knowledge and confidence in addressing pupils' immediate needs. There are enough good quality computers available and sensible steps are taken to ensure that breakdowns do not limit pupils' progress. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic and capable co-ordinator. She has checked and discussed teachers' planning to make sure that opportunities for learning are identified and exploited but has not yet had the opportunity to monitor pupils' attainment to iron out any inconsistencies.

MUSIC

99. By the age of seven pupils achieve a satisfactory level in the subject. They sing a number of songs from memory both in class and in assembly. They understand how to phrase the words of a song to maintain the rhythm and are developing a reasonable sense of pitch. Pupils of all ages enjoy performing songs and older pupils are preparing to participate in a competition for local schools. Younger pupils listen carefully to the different sounds made by percussion instruments such as wood blocks, shakers and drums. They match these to the different sounds of animals in order to provide a musical accompaniment to a story-song, 'Walking in the Jungle'. Pupils recognise and describe the sounds with an appropriate vocabulary and discuss which suit the story better. They perform this with an appreciation of timing and mood. Many older pupils learn the recorder and play tunes together well. They follow simple notation and appreciate the need to vary volume as they interpret the music. They recognise how sounds are used to create particular effects and discuss ways of improving their performances. Pupils listen to music daily in assemblies and respond with interest to compositions from different cultures.
100. The quality of teaching in music lessons is satisfactory and follows a scheme of work which ensures that skills are developed across all aspects of the subject. However, chanting, singing and music are not widely used by teachers to enliven pupils' learning of sounds, number and vocabulary. Pupils perform in assemblies for parents and in Christmas plays. They have also benefited from a 'music week' in which they listened to professional players and members of the junior school. Some chanting takes place in class and occasionally registers are sung but opportunities to incorporate music into the curriculum are not well developed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

101. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and by the age of seven their attainment is in line with the levels expected. Pupils in Year 1 performed well in a range of running and stretching exercises in gymnastics. They showed a satisfactory means of catching a bean bag, progressing suitably to catch a ball, either in the air or after a bounce. In dance Year 1 pupils showed very good levels of

attainment when learning the steps and performing the sequences for a barn dance. Pupils made very good progress, practising and improving their performances with a partner, repeating and developing previously learned movements. At the end of the lesson most pupils performed the whole sequence very well. Pupils in Year 2 showed good standards when throwing and catching a ball with a partner. They showed a good range of body movements and made good use of space.

102. Teaching is good. Teachers' confidence to deliver the subject is well supported by an adopted commercial scheme which the school is adapting to meet the newly published scheme of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Teachers develop pupils' learning well by giving clear instruction and focusing pupils' attention on the way to improve their performances. They are good at demonstrating what they want pupils to do or effectively using pupils as models. Good opportunities are given during lessons for pupil to develop their skills both independently and in pairs and groups. Pupils behave very well and in some lessons behaviour was excellent. They show high levels of concentration. They work as hard as possible, showing a very good awareness in the rather restricted space in the hall. They are highly motivated and work with high levels of interest and enthusiasm. For outside activities the school has only the use of a small sloping playground. Teachers adapt the content and input of their games lessons effectively to develop pupils' skills and play such games as mini-hockey. There is no suitable space for older pupils to experience whole-team games such as football and netball.
103. Pupils' attainment has been maintained since the last inspection and they continue to make good progress. There is still a good range of small equipment but the absence of large apparatus, such as ropes and wallbars, and the lack of suitable outside facilities places a restriction on the range of work which pupils can undertake.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

104. By the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is above the expectations outlined in the local agreed syllabus. Pupils effectively learn about Christianity and Islam as the chosen main religions for study and also develop a knowledge of Hinduism, Judaism and Sikhism. They learn about major Bible stories and traditional stories from other faiths.
105. Pupils across the school have a good awareness of other religions as well as Christianity and their cultures and ways of life. Their experiences are heightened by visits to local churches and the range of good resources used to illustrate the ways of prayer of Christians and Hindus. Year 1 pupils showed a good understanding of why Christians and other religions pray and how they pray. Pupils in Year 2 follow on this theme and show a good awareness of Muslim worship, using Muslim terms with understanding. Pupils readily contribute well-reasoned ideas to their discussion and their written work. However, opportunities for them to research their own findings and to write about them are sometimes limited. There is sometimes too much emphasis on discussions and tasks which focus on illustrating as against writing. In a Year 2 lesson pupils showed a good awareness of Muslim beliefs but were only given the task of drawing a prayer mat. They had no opportunities to discuss and research further their own findings through the use of books and artefacts and to note their findings, developing it into a written researched text. In other classes high standards are reached where pupils follow up their discussions with their own written accounts.
106. The quality of learning is usually good. The agreed syllabus is being updated and the subject co-ordinator has drafted an outline scheme for the early years provision. She is developing the school's own scheme to be used alongside the new agreed syllabus. Teachers make good use of local contacts to introduce pupils to a diversity of faiths by visiting churches and temples. This does much to support the good standards pupils

achieve for their spiritual and moral development and the very good standards for their cultural development. This approach makes pupils feel more informed and involved in lessons and is a contributory factor to the good progress they make. Pupils' attitudes to learning overall are very good. They listen carefully to teachers and are very keen learners. They readily contribute their ideas by asking and answering questions to further develop their thinking. They show very good levels of enthusiasm to explore the ways of life of persons from various faiths with a very good cultural awareness.

107. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are confident about the subject. They link their teaching to their own experiences and those of the pupils, striking a good balance between 'learning from religion' and 'learning about religion'. Teaching is very well supported by the excellent range of artefacts the school has purchased. These are well used by teachers to illustrate the customs of the various faiths represented. Teachers explain well and use appropriate technical terms to refer to the religious books and rituals of other faiths. The subject is very well led by a knowledgeable and highly committed co-ordinator who has helped to raise standards significantly since the last inspection. The subject has a higher priority, the areas of study have been widened and resources greatly improved. The co-ordinator monitors planning, supports colleagues very well and has started to monitor standards in class although this is still an area where further development is necessary.