

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **CYPRESS INFANT SCHOOL**

South Norwood

LEA area: Croydon

Unique reference number: 101715

Headteacher: Ms Nicky Godetz

Reporting inspector: Mr Selwyn Ward  
9271

Dates of inspection: 26 - 29 November 2001

Inspection number: 193488

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Cypress Road South Norwood Croydon
Postcode:	SE25 4AU
Telephone number:	020 8653 4203
Fax number:	020 8771 1792
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms Janice Beaumont
Date of previous inspection:	18 April 1997

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subjects	Aspect responsibilities
Selwyn Ward	9271	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How good is the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development? Pupils' attitudes and personal development What should the school do to improve further?
Jane O'Keefe	19798	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Adrian Everix	23079	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?
Sue Rogers	31421	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Information & communication technology Religious education	English as an additional language How good are curricular and other opportunities?
John Viner	22170	Team inspector	English Art Design technology Music	Equal opportunities Special educational needs

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

#### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

With 260 full-time pupils aged between 5 and 7, and an additional 48 part-time pupils who attend the Nursery, Cypress Infants is larger than the average primary school. The school serves a socially mixed area which has become more cosmopolitan over recent years. More than half the children are from an ethnic minority; the largest group being of Caribbean heritage. A small number of children are of Asian origin, and there are pupils from families who have come to the country as refugees and asylum seekers. More than one in five pupils is learning English as an additional language, which is a high proportion, and more than half of these are at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is a little below average. Overall, pupils are of broadly average attainment when they join the school.

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

Standards show signs of recent improvement so that the majority of pupils are now achieving in line with their ability. Because of the extra support they receive, pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language do well, although more able pupils are not doing as well as they should be, and it is this that is depressing standards. The good leadership of the headteacher and management team has been effective in creating a very good climate for learning and in improving the quality of teaching. Together the staff team have created a caring and very supportive ethos in the school that helps pupils to become mature and responsible. Children have a positive attitude to learning and they do well in the practical subjects of art and design technology. Cypress Infants is an effective school that provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Good teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes means that children get off to a good start in school.
- The school provides very well for pupils' personal development and, as a result, children behave well and have a positive attitude to learning.
- The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, and these children make good progress.
- Children are looked after very well.
- Pupils do well in art and design technology.

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

- Standards are not high enough in English and mathematics, particularly for more able pupils.
- Parents are not working closely enough with the school to ensure their children attend regularly and on time.

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

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

Cypress Infants was last inspected in April 1997. Standards in English and mathematics are not as good as they were at the time of the last inspection, but the area served by the school has changed significantly over the last four years. This makes direct comparisons on standards unreliable. Teaching is more effective than was seen in the last inspection and there is better provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which has resulted in improved behaviour and attitudes from the children. The school now meets all statutory requirements but some of the weaknesses identified in the last inspection have still to be fully tackled to further improve teaching and learning. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the results attained at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in the national tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
Reading	D	C	<b>D</b>	<b>C</b>	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	D	D	<b>E</b>	<b>D</b>	
Mathematics	D	E	<b>E</b>	<b>E</b>	

*Schools are categorised as similar according to the number of children known to be eligible for free school meals.*

Work seen during the inspection was generally better than might be expected from last year's test results. Reading is average. In both writing and mathematics, most children are working at the expected level and are on track to attain the expected standard. With current provision, however, few of the more able children are likely to attain the higher level and it is this that is depressing standards overall as it did in last year's test results, so that, taken overall, standards are below average. Most children are achieving in line with their ability. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make good progress because of the extra support they receive, and they achieve well. It is the more able children who are not achieving as well as they could be. Standards are broadly in line with national expectations in science, information and communication technology, and music, although pupils' singing is above average. In religious education, standards are in line with those expected for the local syllabus. Inspectors had insufficient evidence to judge standards overall in physical education, history or geography, but standards in art and design technology are better than national expectations, with pupils taking a particular pride in their achievement in these practical subjects. Children make a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes, so that most are on target to attain all of the *early learning goals* by the time they join Year 1.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy school and have a very positive attitude to learning. They are attentive in lessons, and where activities are appropriately chosen, they work with concentration.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Children behave well both in lessons and around the school. They appreciate and respond well to teachers' high expectations of good behaviour and this contributes to the progress that pupils make in lessons. There have been two temporary exclusions over the past year.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are good, both among pupils and between pupils and the adults in the school. Children are generally polite, friendly and considerate. Children of different abilities and from different backgrounds mix and get on well together and are all included in school activities.
Attendance	Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory. Absence rates are higher than average and, despite the relatively late start to the school day, many parents bring their children in after the start of school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery & Reception	Years 1 - 2
Lessons seen overall	good	satisfactory

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

The teaching seen ranged from satisfactory to very good. It was good or better in about four in every ten lessons seen, and in about one in ten lessons the teaching was very good. There were no lessons seen that were less than satisfactory. The teaching of literacy and numeracy was satisfactory.

Teachers manage pupils very well so that even the youngest children quickly learn and settle into orderly routines which help create a positive climate for learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and children in return respond well to the behaviour policies which are very effectively and consistently applied throughout the school. Children work with interest and concentration. Learning support assistants are part of the teaching team. They are generally well deployed and provide effective support to pupils with special educational and language needs which contributes to the good progress which these children make. The most effective lessons were well prepared and made good use of the resources, with children being given clear instructions so they knew what they were expected to do. In some lessons, teaching would have been even more effective if teachers had explained to pupils what it was they were expected to learn. In other lessons which, though satisfactory, were less effective, time was not always well used, so that too long was allowed for some activities and children's attention drifted. On occasion, teachers stuck too rigidly to their planning, so that relevant learning points raised by children were not followed up. Although teachers have generally high expectations of the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, lessons often offered too little challenge for more able pupils. Marking is good, with both oral and written guidance to pupils on what they need to do to improve.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and senior management team provide clear educational direction for the school and all staff share a commitment to raising standards and providing a supportive learning environment for the children.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are keen for the school to do well and satisfactorily fulfil their legal duties but they have not been sufficiently aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and this limits their effectiveness.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Teaching and learning are monitored well and this has contributed to the improvement in teaching. The school has begun to adopt the principles of "best value" to evaluate for itself what it does well and what it needs to do to improve.
The strategic use of resources	Spending is linked to the school's development plan which is agreed among staff and governors, priorities are appropriately set and good use is made of specific funding to support pupils with special educational needs.
The school's buildings and facilities	The library is satisfactory but there are not enough reading books for more able pupils. The school is otherwise well resourced. The buildings and site are attractive and offer good facilities, and there are plans to improve these still further. Displays are generally well used in classrooms and around the school to celebrate children's work and create a stimulating learning environment.
Staffing	The school has a full complement of qualified teachers, including additional teachers who provide extra support to pupils in literacy and numeracy. Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to the teaching team and are particularly effective in supporting the learning of pupils with special educational or language needs.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	National Curriculum requirements are met, although the amount of time set aside for teaching of some subjects is low. The curriculum in the Nursery and Reception classes is good, being well matched to children's needs. The <i>National Literacy</i> and <i>Numeracy Strategies</i> are beginning to make a contribution to raising standards.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and as a result they make good progress.
Provision for pupils learning English as an additional language	Pupils learning English as an additional language are well supported and this results in them making good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Teachers and support staff know pupils well and provide well for their personal development. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, with particular strengths in the very good opportunities with pupils have for reflection in assemblies and in some lessons, and the very good celebration of different cultures. This very effective provision has had a positive effect in improving behaviour and relationships across the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Teaching and other staff are caring and supportive. Children's welfare is very well looked after. There are very effective and consistent procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and good systems for monitoring and promoting attendance.
How well the school uses assessment information	The school collects and analyses information from tests and other assessments and has begun to use these to plan teaching and learning, but this is a recent initiative which has not yet had the opportunity to have an effect on standards.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Relationships with parents are not as strong as they could be because a significant minority of parents are critical of communications. However, the information which the school provides in both newsletters and reports is very good. Some parents could do more to ensure their children attend school more regularly and arrive on time.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like school and are well behaved</li> <li>• The teaching is good and children make good progress</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed</li> <li>• The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best</li> <li>• Children are helped to become mature and responsible</li> <li>• The school is approachable with any problems or concerns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication between the school and parents is not good enough</li> <li>• The school does not work closely enough with parents</li> <li>• The amount of homework is not right</li> <li>• There are not enough extracurricular activities</li> </ul>

The number of parents who returned their questionnaires was quite low, with less than 20 per cent responding. Inspectors agree with most of the positive views expressed by parents. All of the teaching seen was satisfactory or better. Inspectors considered the range of extracurricular activities to be satisfactory, and if the various charged-for clubs are taken into account, the range is very good. Homework is appropriately used. Although inspectors found

many strengths in the communications with parents, the fact that a significant number of those who responded expressed dissatisfaction is a concern which the school acknowledges it needs to respond to.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Throughout this report, references to *Key Stage 1* relate to the infant years (Years 1 and 2) when pupils are aged 5 to 7 years. Children in the Nursery and Reception years, who are aged 5 and under, are considered to be in the *Foundation Stage*. Schools are compared as against the national average, as well as against "*similar schools*". Schools are grouped as similar according to the proportion of children attending who are known to be eligible for free school meals. In judging standards, inspectors analysed results attained in the national standard assessment tests (SATs) taken at the end of Year 2, both in 2001 and in previous years. Inspectors looked at work currently being done in lessons and at some of the work done last year. They listened to children read and discussed children's work with them, as well as with their teachers. Whereas judgements on *attainment* relate to comparisons with nationally expected standards, *achievement* relates to the progress pupils make and compares how well children do as against their prior attainment.
2. Children join the school with a wide range of abilities, including an increasing number who do not speak English at home, but overall children's attainment on entry is average. Children make a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and are taught to quickly adjust to the school's orderly routines. By the time they join Year 1, most children are on target to attain all of the *early learning goals* expected in the *Foundation Stage*.
3. Test results taken by pupils at the end of Year 2 last year showed a decline from the previous year. Results were below average in reading and well below average in writing and mathematics. When compared with similar schools, results were average in reading, below average in writing and well below average in mathematics. There are no national tests in science at the end of Year 2, but in teacher assessments last year, pupils were below average both when compared with schools nationally and with similar schools. These results are not as good as the standards reported in the last inspection but direct comparisons between results in 2001 and those in 1997 are unreliable as the area served by the school has changed significantly over this period, with, for example, many more children joining the school at a very early stage of learning English.
4. In tests over the past three years, girls have tended to do better than boys in reading and writing, and boys have tended to do better than girls in mathematics. This is the same as is found nationally, and by a similar margin to that seen in most schools. There is no statistically significant difference in the results attained by children from different ethnic minorities, except that in mathematics white pupils have tended to do better than others. The school has identified this in its own analysis of test results, but has not yet determined why this is the case. In addition to homework, mathematics games are available for children to take home on payment of a small weekly hire charge. Although the charge is only 20p, the school has not analysed take-up to see whether some families may be deterred by the charge from using these games and whether this may be excluding some children and affecting results.
5. Work seen during the inspection was generally better than might be expected from last year's tests. This is the result of recent initiatives to tackle weaknesses identified through the school's monitoring, supporting, for example, an improved emphasis on mental arithmetic and writing. Reading is average. In both writing and mathematics, most pupils are working at the expected level and are on track to attain the expected standard at the end of Year 2. With current provision, however, few of the more able children are likely to attain the higher level and it is this that is depressing standards overall as it did in last year's test results, so that, taken overall, standards are below average. Similarly most children are achieving in line with their ability. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make good progress because of the extra support they receive, and they achieve well. It is the more able children who are not achieving as well as they could be.

- Standards are broadly in line with national expectations in science, information and communication technology, and music, although pupils' singing is above average. In religious education, standards are in line with those expected for the locally-agreed syllabus. Inspectors had insufficient evidence to judge standards overall in physical education, history or geography, but standards in art and design technology are better than national expectations, with children taking a particular pride in their achievement in these practical subjects.

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

- Children enjoy coming to school. All of the parents who responded to the questionnaire expressed this view, and the children themselves confirmed it. Children at Cypress Infants develop a very positive attitude to learning. Pupils of all abilities learn the school's orderly routines from the time they first join the school and, as a result, they are attentive in lessons and keen to join in. Even those who find sustained concentration difficult, try hard at the tasks they are given, particularly where these are appropriately chosen and where children are given clear instructions so that they know exactly what is expected of them. They co-operate well together, and this contributes to the good progress that they make in many lessons. For example, in a music lesson in a Reception class, children shared instruments without fuss and took turns to play and listen. As a result, they learnt much more about the sounds made by the different instruments than they would have had they shared and listened less. Pupils throughout the school learn to take pride in their achievement, particularly in practical activities such as art, although they show less care over standards of presentation for their written work.
- Children recognise the school as a safe and supportive community of which they are part. Their social development is good. They are polite and friendly. Pupils relate well to the teachers and other adults and get on well with each other. Because pupils benefit from the school's good provision for their social and personal development, the school functions as a very civilised racially harmonious community where pupils of different abilities and different backgrounds, including different ethnic backgrounds, mix, play and work together as friends. Pupils' growing self-confidence, and the respect which children throughout the school show for one another and for each others' cultures, represent very good spiritual and cultural development.
- As parents recognise in their questionnaire replies, pupils behave well, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils understand and appreciate the school's positive behaviour rules and their moral development is good. Although, for some, good behaviour is a response to the school's incentives and rewards, pupils learn appropriate behaviour and this helps them to become mature and responsible. In a lesson in a Year 2 class, for example, pupils did not allow themselves to be drawn or distracted by the attention-seeking misbehaviour of one child. As a result, the child who was misbehaving was denied his audience and the learning of the other children in the class was not interrupted. There was no evidence of bullying seen during the inspection, and pupils told inspectors that they were confident that staff would deal with any incidents that occurred. There have been two exclusions over the past year.
- At the last inspection, pupils' behaviour was considered to be satisfactory and pupils were judged to have a good attitude to learning. Since that inspection, as a result of the school's improved provision for pupils' social, moral and personal development, pupils' behaviour and attitude have improved.
- Attendance levels over the past year were below those of other schools, although comparisons are with primary (infant and junior) schools rather than with other infant schools alone. Unauthorised absences were well above average. These figures are particularly affected by a small number of pupils who go on extended family trips abroad, often for over a term, whilst still remaining on the school's roll. The school has worked hard, in conjunction with the education welfare officer to improve this situation and most recent figures show a slight improvement. Attendance is not as good as it was at the time of the last inspection. Punctuality was considered to be unsatisfactory at the last inspection. This is still the case. Despite the relatively late start to the school day, too many parents drift into school with their children after the start of registration. In some cases, this delays registrations and the start of morning lessons.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. Part of the focus of the inspection was on literacy and numeracy, so that priority was given to observing the teaching of English and mathematics. All classes were seen being taught these subjects. During the inspection, lessons were seen in all subjects except geography and design technology. However, only in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science was a sufficient large sample of lessons seen to make a valid judgement about the overall quality of teaching in individual subjects. In most cases, inspectors were able to observe full lessons and in judging teaching, inspectors sought evidence that pupils were learning and making progress.
13. The teaching seen ranged from satisfactory to very good. It was good or better in about four in every ten lessons seen, and in about one in ten lessons the teaching was very good. There were no lessons that were less than satisfactory. This represents satisfactory teaching overall, and a better profile of teaching than was seen during the previous inspection. It is also in line with the positive view of teaching expressed by the overwhelming majority of parents who returned the questionnaire. The teaching seen in the *Foundation Stage* was consistently good. The teaching of English, mathematics and science was satisfactory. Groups of children of similar ability are withdrawn from their class for separate lessons in literacy and numeracy. Described by the school as “*booster classes*”, these lessons are beginning to make a contribution to raising standards as pupils benefit from the more targeted support they are given in these smaller, similar ability teaching groups.
14. Teachers manage pupils very well so that even the youngest children quickly learn and settle into orderly routines which help create a positive climate for learning. Children work with interest and concentration. Teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils’ behaviour. Behaviour policies are very effectively and consistently applied throughout the school, so that pupils understand what is expected of them and appreciate and acknowledge that rules, rewards and sanctions are fair. In a lesson in Year 2, when a pupil misbehaved, the teacher gave appropriate warnings and then when the child failed to respond, the teacher followed through in imposing the threatened sanction.
15. Learning support assistants are part of the teaching team. They are generally well deployed and provide effective support to pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. The effective support from which these pupils benefit, including additional support from specialist teachers, results in their learning and achieving well, particularly where tasks are clearly explained and pupils can complete them in small manageable steps. The local education authority funded support teacher for pupils learning English as an additional language is available for 36 per cent of the teaching week and she works in all classes. Her work is well planned and carefully integrated into class topics. Pupils are often taught in the classroom so as to ensure that they do not miss out on what the other children are learning.
16. The most effective lessons were well planned and prepared and generally made good use of learning resources, although computers were often not well used. Pupils were given clear instructions so they knew what they were expected to do. In some lessons, however, teaching would have been even more effective if teachers had explained to pupils what it was they were expected to learn so that pupils knew not just *what* they were supposed to do but also *why*.
17. In some lessons which, although satisfactory, were less effective, time was not always well used, so that too long was allowed for some activities and children’s attention drifted. For example, in a literacy session, Year 1 pupils were set the task of identifying and writing rhyming words. They settled quickly to the activity and worked with concentration for more than 20 minutes but were allowed twice this amount of time, so that by the end of the lesson more than half the children had lost interest. On occasion, teachers stuck too rigidly to their planning, so that relevant points raised by children were not followed up. For example, in a science lesson in Year 2, children designing an experiment on forces involving toy cars and a ramp, asked a questions about gravity which the teacher avoided answering because it was not in her lesson plan.

18. Although teachers have generally high expectations of the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, lessons often offered too little challenge for more able pupils and as a result these pupils made less progress in their learning than they were capable of.
19. Marking is of good quality. Children are given helpful oral feedback on work, and many of the written comments on older pupils' work includes guidance as to how to improve. In some cases, these comments lacked precision and so the advice to pupils was unclear, but most of the examples seen gave helpful support to pupils which aided their learning. Several examples were seen where pupils had clearly taken note of their teacher's comments in subsequent pieces of work. A particularly good feature of teachers' marking is their annotation of comments to pupils' work that record the context of the work and the views expressed by the child. This in turn helps teachers in tracking the progress of individual pupils.
20. A significant minority of parents expressed concern dissatisfaction with the amount of homework. Inspectors considered that homework was used satisfactorily to support pupils' learning. In addition to reading, spellings and other homework set, families have the option of borrowing mathematics games. There is a small weekly charge for these, but the school has not ascertained whether this small fee might have deterred some needy families from taking part. This is a weakness.

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

21. The *Foundation Stage* curriculum offered to the pupils in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. It meets the requirements of the statutory guidance, and planning is detailed to ensure that all areas of knowledge are well covered, placing particular emphasis on practical activities and on children's personal and social development. The *Key Stage 1* curriculum meets the needs of the pupils and all statutory requirements are met. The school has given priority to implementing the *National Literacy* and *Numeracy Strategies*, and, in order to raise standards, has allocated additional teaching time to writing and reading. The school has also promoted the use of *Circle Time* in order to effectively improve the climate for learning. Pupils now freely discuss their worries and concerns and the school is a friendly caring community. Inevitably these priorities mean less time for non-core subjects, although some other subjects are brought in as part of relevant topics. Use is made of information and communication technology within other subjects, although, partly because several computers were out of action during the inspection, opportunities are missed for using and developing information and communication technology skills in other subjects.
22. Appropriate schemes of work are used to write detailed half-termly *topic wheels* that carefully integrate both the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and subjects. This long-term planning is specific and effective. A good feature is that it is displayed around the school and shared with parents who know what their children are due to be taught. Teachers in each year group plan together weekly, basing their plans on the *topic wheels* as well as their assessments of pupil's work.
23. Basic skills are soundly taught throughout the school. The *National Literacy* and *Numeracy Strategies* are used effectively. Insufficient opportunities are taken, however, to plan for literacy and numeracy in lessons other than English and mathematics. There is little recording in non-core subjects and so opportunities to write are missed. Although there are examples of numeracy being used in some subjects, as, for example, when tessellating patterns were used in art, there are generally too few opportunities taken to use numeracy skills in subjects such as science and geography. The school takes part in a family numeracy programme which supports some families. This involves additional numeracy sessions for a group of children who are withdrawn from other subjects for this. Once a week they are taught alongside their parents. The scheme has only recently been introduced and so it is too early to measure its effectiveness. Aside from this, most of the pupils who benefit from additional support receive this within their normal class lessons and so pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are fully included and do not miss out on the broader curriculum.
24. The curriculum is enhanced well by the use of visitors, such as musicians, the fire brigade and police. Corresponding visits are made out to local amenities. Pupils visit various shops on the High Street with

tasks progressively increasing in skills level as the pupils mature. In Year 2, pupils visit Godstone to make a comparative village study. There are other good links with the local community through music. Children go, for example, to a local old peoples' home to sing to the old folk at Christmas and Easter. There are good links with the neighbouring junior school to which almost all pupils transfer. The headteachers and staff meet regularly and their governing bodies have combined meetings. These contribute to the continuity of education that is important between the two schools.

25. Although a number of parents say there are not enough activities outside lessons, the opportunities for children to take part in clubs and other activities is at least as good as is offered to infants in most schools. There is a range of clubs for which a charge is made, including French and drama. If these are taken into account, the school's extracurricular provision is good, but the school has not monitored participation to ascertain whether or not the charges for out-of-school activities are causing some pupils to be excluded from taking part.
26. In the last inspection, the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education was judged to be good. Following concerns that this had not been maintained, the school has given priority to this area of its work in order to ensure that pupils benefit from a climate for learning. The school has been successful in achieving this objective and its provision is now very good, with particular strengths in the school's spiritual and cultural provision.
27. In subjects such as art and music, children are encouraged to respond thoughtfully to the work of composers and artists and to think about their emotional responses when listening to music or looking at a painting. Yoga is included in the physical education curriculum in Year 2, and children have the opportunity to relax and reflect in these physical education lessons as they hold calming poses. Assemblies are of high quality, offering good opportunities for quiet reflection and for thoughtful consideration of the needs of others. These contribute to the development both of pupils' self-confidence as they learn to express their feelings and responses as well as their respect for the feelings and thoughts of others.
28. The consistently applied and very well reinforced behaviour policies ensure that pupils are given a clear understanding of what is acceptable and appropriate. Although, for some, good behaviour is seen as a means of earning rewards or avoiding sanctions, for many the calm, consistent expectations of the school contribute to even some of the youngest pupils demonstrating a good understanding of *right* and *wrong*. Pupils are also encouraged to adopt a moral perspective on other activities, with, for example, the moral arguments for recycling introduced in geography.
29. Throughout the school, even the youngest children are encouraged to take on responsibility and this supports their social development. Pupils take on simple tasks such as taking registers to the office as well as classroom monitor jobs. In the Reception classes, although teachers carefully monitor their choices, children choose activities for themselves and begin to take responsibility for their own learning. This is taken forward as pupils get older and they are, for example, involved by teachers in setting their own learning targets in English. Social development is also promoted through the opportunities children are given to work together and share activities, as they do, for example, when using computers.
30. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very effective. Pupils learn about famous artists and composers and have very good opportunities to explore a rich variety of cultures, particularly in art and religious education. Lively and imaginative displays in classrooms and around the school on art, history and geography, stimulate children's interest in their own and each other's different cultural heritage and this contributes to the atmosphere of racial harmony that is very evident throughout the school.

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

31. Cypress Infants is a very caring school where efficient welfare systems ensure pupils' general well-being. Parents expressed their satisfaction with this aspect of the school, describing it as a happy place, and the school has maintained this strength since the last inspection. Very thorough procedures for dealing with child protection are in place. The headteacher is the person designated to deal with any concerns, with

two other senior staff members also trained. All staff receive regular training in this area and the school's policy follows local authority guidelines.

32. The school is well maintained by the hardworking site manager. The health and safety policy is very thoroughly implemented with regular checks and risk assessments taking place. Health and safety is taken very seriously and the efficient systems ensure that any concerns are dealt with effectively and quickly. Pupils benefit from the very good procedures for dealing with illness and accidents. The welfare room is well equipped and staff keep full records of incidents and treatment. Parents are notified promptly, in writing, of all minor accidents.
33. The school is working hard to improve its attendance figures. All unexplained absences are quickly followed up and staff are very rigorous in insisting on written absence notes. The school's unauthorised absence rate is very high not because of truancy but because of the rigour with which the school applies the rules for classifying non-attendance. The importance of good attendance is stressed to parents when they first visit the school and reminders are included in newsletters and on individual pupil's reports.
34. Behaviour is promoted very well through the use of simple rules displayed around the school and the consistent approach of teaching and support staff. The '*traffic light*' system, where pupils are given warnings before sanctions are applied, works well and is understood and respected by children. Staff work hard to ensure that there is no oppressive behaviour in the school. Any incident of, in particular, racist name-calling is dealt with quickly and effectively with appropriate records kept. Useful action plans are drawn up in liaison with parents in response to individual incidents. The role models that the staff themselves present, coupled with the very good provision for pupils' cultural development which broadens their awareness of other cultures, play a significant part in ensuring that racial harmony is maintained in the school. Pupils themselves confirm that they are confident that, should it occur, staff will deal with any bullying incident quickly and effectively.
35. The school has made significant recent improvements to its assessment procedures. Teachers monitor pupils' academic performance, including analysing test results, and identify those areas of the curriculum where there are weaknesses. These good assessments are then satisfactorily used in curriculum planning and in the organisation of classes and groups. For example, the analysis of assessments in speaking and listening has led to the introduction of increased opportunities in these areas through role-play. The use of "*benchmark groups*", where pupils are compared with those of similar ability, is proving successful for placing pupils in the most appropriate groups for English so that the right pupils receive the targeted teaching being provided. Although the assessment of pupils' progress is undertaken diligently, the strategies that result from it have not yet led to an improvement in test results. For example, the analysis of the Year 2 results for 2000 and subsequent targeting of boys failed to improve results in writing in 2001, although standards seen during the inspection were a little higher.
36. The progress of pupils on the register of special educational needs is monitored well and reviews are carried out appropriately. Individual education plans are carefully written and shared with all those involved with each pupil so that they receive appropriate support in all areas of the curriculum where they are likely to need it. Assessment and record-keeping for pupils with statements of special educational need are good and these pupils' needs are met well. The special needs co-ordinator carefully monitors the achievement of children with individual education plans, and analysis of their achievement is used to plan their work.

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

37. Only about 20 per cent of parents returned their questionnaires. Of those that did, or who attended the parents' meeting before the inspection, most were satisfied with the education and care that their children received. More than a quarter of those responding, however, felt that the school does not communicate well and does not work closely enough with them. The school has already recognised that its communication with parents needs improvement and has made this area a priority in its development planning. Nevertheless, inspectors found the information provided to parents to be very good. Termly newsletters and the governors' annual report are comprehensive and attractively presented. Inspectors

found that where the school had written to individual parents, these letters were straightforward and explicit. Pupils' end of year reports are written consistently well, with very little use of jargon. Parents are given clear, succinct advice, written in simple terms, on the strengths and weaknesses their children have shown in each subject area and given targets for them to focus on in the coming year. They are more detailed and explicit than in most schools. Both pupils and parents are given an opportunity to record their own comments. Teaching staff are available to see parents briefly after school and by appointment for longer discussions. Parents are regularly invited into the school to attend special assemblies and concerts. They have also been consulted on school policies; as, for example, with parents joining a working party earlier in the year to consider changes to the school's approach to managing behaviour.

38. The school is fortunate in having a strong parent, teacher and friends' association which organises regular fundraising and social events. These events are well supported by parents and help to provide extra funds for resources. Fewer parents now help in the classroom than was the case at the time of the last inspection, although each class has at least one regular helper each week. Each parent offering to help is provided with a useful initial training session. Most parents support their children's learning at home through the reading book scheme.
39. Parents are satisfactorily involved in their children's learning. The school provides a helpful homework newsletter each half term giving parents ideas on how to support their children's learning through the topics that are due to be taught. The home-school agreement is received and signed by all. A significant minority of parents, however, do not support the school's work well. Some do little to support their children's learning at home, and too many bring their children in to school late and take them out of school for relatively trivial reasons.

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

40. The good leadership and management reported at the last inspection has been maintained. The headteacher, who has been in post for less than a year, provides good leadership. She works effectively in a partnership with her deputy and senior teachers to implement policies and decisions. Staff and governors share the headteacher's vision of developing a school with high achievement in all aspects of its work. Over the past year, priorities in the school's improvement have been wholly appropriate. A major focus has been the creation of a more positive ethos for learning and the improvement of pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Inspection evidence shows that these important targets have been successfully achieved.
41. The school development plan is clearly aimed at improving performance in many aspects of educational provision and pupils' achievement. Targets in the plan are regularly reviewed and, when necessary, amended to ensure the actions taken are successful. The school monitors pupils' performance well by carefully tracking their progress and analysing data such as test results. Action is taken to tackle issues that arise. For example, an analysis of teachers' assessment in speaking and listening led to changes in the school development plan and more training for teachers in this aspect of English. Teaching is monitored and evaluated by the headteacher and by co-ordinators whose subjects have a high priority, such as English and mathematics. Useful feedback is provided to individual teachers and a general evaluation of positive aspects of lessons and points for improvement are shared in year group teams. Targets are set and form a focus for subsequent lesson observations. It has been through observing teaching and learning that the school determined, for example, that the mental arithmetic session in mathematics needed improvement in many classes. In several subjects there has been little opportunity for co-ordinators to monitor lessons and, as a result, give extra support or advice to teachers. A timetable of monitoring over the next year indicates that these opportunities will increase. Overall, the monitoring of teaching has been successful and this was reflected during the inspection where no unsatisfactory lessons were observed. However, a few aspects of teaching, especially for the more able pupils, have significant scope for improvement.
42. The school is effective in promoting and providing for equality of opportunity. A detailed analysis of the relative performance of different groups of pupils has been carried out and this information has been used to set strategic objectives and to target support to groups of pupils who seem to be underachieving. An example of this is the acquisition of reading books aimed at boys, whose reading attainment is less than



girls. During the inspection, a Reception class teacher had identified that few boys were choosing reading as an activity so had stocked the reading corner with *Thomas The Tank Engine* books in order to encourage boys to take more of an interest. Books and equipment are purchased to reflect the different groups of pupils in the school and are carefully checked to ensure that they are anti-racist. The school takes part in curriculum events that reflect the ethnic mix of its pupils. For example, work was undertaken earlier in the term as part of black history month. Care is taken in lessons to ensure that all groups of pupils are engaged, involved and supported.

43. Financial planning is good. Spending is closely linked to priorities in the school development plan and grants, such as those for special educational needs and English as an additional language, are used well. Money spent on additional teaching and learning support helps both groups of pupils to make good progress. The principles of “*best value*” are satisfactorily applied as the school evaluates for itself what it does well and what needs to be improved, and compares itself to other schools. The school also ensures that it achieves value for money in its purchasing, with estimates appropriately compared before purchases are authorised. Office administration is efficient and supports the management of the school. New technology is appropriately used for administration, although records and analyses of pupils’ assessments are currently still done manually. The school has built up a surplus on its accounts. This is to fund planned building works.
44. The school has committed and hard working staff. Teachers and support staff have a range of expertise well matched to the demands of the curriculum. The additional qualified teaching staff, employed in the *Foundation Stage* and for extra classes in numeracy and literacy, make a good contribution to the quality of learning. The learning support staff are usually well deployed and have a good impact on the progress of the pupils they support. There are satisfactory systems in place for the induction of new teachers and support staff. The school makes effective provision for the training of new teachers. The student teachers who were in school during the inspection were well supported, and were allocated appropriate tasks when working with groups of pupils. Suitable systems for the performance management of teachers are in place and are being extended to support staff this year.
45. Governors fulfil their statutory duties and are keen for the school to succeed. They meet jointly with the governing body of the neighbouring junior school and several governors serve on both governing bodies. This has been helpful in maintaining strong links and continuity between the schools. Although governors are very supportive, however, many do not have a clear enough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and this limits their effectiveness in helping to shape its future direction. The Chairman is a frequent visitor to the school and has a much wider awareness of school issues. To improve the effectiveness of governors, she has introduced new systems which are intended to give them more focused involvement and a broader understanding of issues. It is too soon to judge the effectiveness of these changes, which involve more meetings of the full governing body and each governor being responsible for monitoring the success of specific targets in the school development plan.
46. The school has good accommodation. Shared areas with seating enable small groups to have focused teaching away from their classes. A good-sized hall gives ample space for drama and physical education. The school is clean and its attractive appearance is enhanced by high quality displays stimulating interest in a wide range of subjects. Further improvements to the building are planned within the next few years including better access to the Reception classrooms and the installation of ramps to make the school more inclusive by making it accessible for pupils and adults in wheelchairs. Learning resources are good overall. Classrooms are particularly well equipped and all subjects have sufficient resources to allow the full curriculum to be taught. The library is an inviting area with books and signs clearly displayed. The range and quantity of non-fiction books in the library is satisfactory. However, the range of fiction books for the older more-able children is too narrow and a few computers are becoming unreliable, with several out of action during the inspection.
47. The school successfully meets its aims and values regarding care, positive relationships and pupils’ attitudes, although it has more work to do on raising overall attainment, particularly in relation to the achievement of more able children. The school currently provides satisfactory value for money. The leadership of the school is giving a firm steer to raising the quality of education. The school is therefore in a good position to sustain further improvement.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

48. Inspectors have identified the following key issues for action. In order to improve the standard of education provided to pupils, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) Raise standards of attainment, particularly for more able pupils, by
  - (i) ensuring that work is more consistently matched to different pupils' abilities
  - (ii) providing more challenging reading books for able children
  - (iii) providing children with more opportunities for extended writing
  - (iv) ensuring a consistent approach to teaching phonics
  - (v) providing more varied opportunities for pupils to record their work in science
  - (vi) making fuller use of literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects  
*(paras 5, 18, 23, 41, 46, 47, 64, 66, 69-73, 76, 100)*
  
- (2) Continue to improve communication with parents and to work to involve more parents in supporting their children's education through
  - (i) listening to children read at home and ensuring they complete their homework
  - (ii) ensuring that children attend regularly
  - (iii) ensuring that their children arrive at school on time  
*(paras 11, 37, 39)*

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the governors' action plan. *(Paragraph references are in brackets)*

- A. Review the balance of the curriculum to ensure that children benefit from sufficient teaching time in all subjects *(para 21)*
- B. Improve the standard of presentation of pupils' work *(paras 7, 64, 72)*
- C. Monitor participation in extracurricular clubs and in the use of mathematics games to ensure that charges are not excluding some children from the opportunity to take part *(paras 4, 20, 25)*
- D. Continue with plans to broaden the involvement of governors so that all are more fully able to take part in monitoring the effectiveness of the school and in the setting of school priorities *(para 45)*
- E. Ensure pupils are given more opportunities to develop and use their information and communication skills in other subjects *(para 21, 64, 74, 76, 90, 92)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	45
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	4	14	27	0	0	0
Percentage	0	9	31	60	0	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	24	260
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		65

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	42

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	51

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	6.1
National comparative data	5.6

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	1.9
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for 2001, which is the most recent year for which national comparative data is available.

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of <i>Key Stage 1</i> for the latest reporting year	2001	41	47	88

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	27	33
	Girls	40	41	42
	Total	70	68	75
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (90)	77 (86)	85 (88)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	32	33
	Girls	40	42	43
	Total	69	74	76
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (88)	84 (86)	86 (85)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	67
Black – African heritage	21
Black – other	32
Indian	3
Pakistani	11
Bangladeshi	5
Chinese	2
White	136
Any other minority ethnic group	34

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	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 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.3
Average class size	29

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

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	216

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	44
Number of pupils per FTE adult	9

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	737,904
Total expenditure	719,120
Expenditure per pupil	2,454
Balance brought forward from previous year	37,490
Balance carried forward to next year	56,274

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	315
Number of questionnaires returned	60

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	35	0	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	41	8	2	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	45	2	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	44	20	2	9
The teaching is good.	40	50	2	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	30	42	18	10	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	45	8	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	36	3	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	38	35	18	7	2
The school is well led and managed.	44	44	3	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	40	7	2	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	31	25	0	14

*(figures may not sum to 100 due to rounding)*

Many of those attending the parents' meeting expressed concerns over communications.

## **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**

49. The school has three Reception classes and two Nursery classes: a morning and an afternoon class each of which currently has 24 children. Children join the Nursery in the September after their third birthday. They come with varied experiences of pre-school: some have been to nurseries and private care, others come straight from being at home. They are, sensibly, started in Nursery in small groups depending on their age, eldest first. Entrance into the Reception classes is also sensitively managed. Children enter Reception class in the year in which they are five, and are all admitted, gradually through the September term. Most children in the Nursery move on to attend the school. Again, those who come straight into Reception without having been in the Nursery have varied educational experiences before school.
50. The children enter school with broadly the skills and knowledge that are normally expected, but there is a wide range of attainment. This is confirmed by initial assessments of these young children, where particular weaknesses have been identified in their mathematical development. There are an increasing number of children who speak little or no English and an also increasing number of children with below average speaking skills. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes follow the prescribed *Foundation Stage* curriculum, which consists of six areas of learning. Standards are in line with those normally expected for children's ages, with most children on course to attain the *early learning goals* by the end of the *Foundation Stage* and to surpass them in behaviour and physical development. This represents satisfactory achievement overall, with children with weak English language skills making particularly good progress. All children make good progress in behaviour because expectations are high and relationships between teachers, learning support assistants and pupils are very good.
51. Teaching seen in the *Foundation Stage* ranged from satisfactory to very good. It was good overall, being good or very good in twelve of the fifteen lessons seen. Teaching is good in all six areas of learning. Teachers are enthusiastic and, as a result, the children enjoy their lessons and have very good attitudes to school. The teachers are knowledgeable, work hard and use the learning support assistants well. Most of their planning is thorough, although in a few lessons there were too many activities for the teacher to support well and it became difficult for adults to track children's progress or talk to them about their learning. In the best lessons, the activities were linked to the preceding whole class introduction and a whole class (plenary) session at the end which consolidated learning by allowing children to discuss their work. Teachers usually use their time well, but on occasion teachers were engaged too long in one to one tasks, such as hearing reading. Classroom organisation and preparation of resources are very good.
52. The curriculum is well balanced and there are plenty of good opportunities for children to work actively and to choose what they would like to do. Appropriate records are kept to record the activities that children choose to do, so ensuring that all have an equal opportunity. For example, in one Reception Class, where the teacher had noted that it had only been girls who chose the reading activities, *Thomas The Tank Engine* books were displayed in the reading corner to encourage more boys to take-up reading tasks. Assessment is generally good, with detailed records being collated through the use of sticky labels written by adults to record children's learning. Partnerships with parents are good and parents are involved well in their child's start to school. The *Foundation Stage* is well managed. Accommodation is good. The organisation and provision of resources for outdoor playtime is an especially good feature.

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

53. Children achieve well in personal, social and emotional development. Most children will have attained the expected goals before they leave Reception. Children learn to listen well and are excited by and involved in their learning. They move without fuss into groups for their independent work and they concentrate very well as they carry out their tasks. Children in the Nursery have very good standards of behaviour and concentration for their age. They look after each other, take turns, and share and co-operate well. The



children themselves quickly resolve squabbles. They have been taught to understand right and wrong. Children in the Reception classes undress themselves, and good systems are in place to increase their independence further. For example, they are supported by a very good arrival system every morning. They register themselves, putting their name card into a box and then move on to fill in their own reading records with the help of their parents. The teachers and learning support assistants act as good role models and maintain a positive rewarding atmosphere.

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

54. The children are in line to attain the expected standard by the end of the Reception year. They make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening: standards of listening are good, but many children lack confidence in speaking. Children in the Nursery work well together, though often without speaking at all. They can be reluctant to engage in dialogue with each other and they speak in phrases rather than complete sentences. They are appropriately encouraged to talk by the teachers and learning support assistants whenever possible. In Reception classes, the same pattern is continued. As a result some children can speak in sentences using longer words. Others are keen to show their work and talk about what they have done in very simple sentences. The children are given a large number of opportunities to speak to each other and good use is made of the role-play areas.
55. Elements of the *National Literacy Strategy* are well used by all the teachers in the Reception classes. Reading skills are taught well, with children being able to follow the text, recall the words and read aloud with the teacher, making good use of picture cues. They were observed responding enthusiastically to "*Brown Bear, Brown Bear*"; learning animal names and colour words through this appropriate choice of book. The book in one lesson was held cleverly so that the children could see part of the next page and so predict what might come next. Children in the Nursery choose, use and appreciate books. Children in Reception recognise initial sounds and are beginning to build up a vocabulary of recognisable words. They talk about rhyme, for example when using words from *Humpty Dumpty*.
56. Most of the children in the Reception classes write their names and attempt the letters of the alphabet. Too much time, however, is spent tracing individual letters and repeating the tracing and making of names instead of moving on to other groups of letters and whole words. The children spend some time doing free or emergent writing work that is well annotated, with helpful assessment feedback for the teacher to share with the child.

### **Mathematical development**

57. The local education authority's baseline tests show that children's knowledge of mathematics is below average on entry. Children make good progress through the *Foundation Stage* and they achieve well, so that most are in line to attain the nationally expected standard by the end of the Reception year. Children in Reception count up to 10 and then to 20 in many cases. A few, more able, children count to 100 and beyond. They count backwards from 8 and understand mathematical terms such as *greater than*, *lesser than* and *find the difference*. Mathematics is well taught and made interesting for the pupils and this contributes to the progress they make. At the time of the inspection, children were learning to understand symmetry and were producing symmetrical patterns in all kinds of media. Similar opportunities to teach numeracy within other activities are often, well chosen, especially in the Nursery, where children were mixing paint and carefully counting out three scoops of powder.

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

58. Teachers build on the children's basic general knowledge and involve them well in their learning, as, for example, when children in the Nursery helped design an attractive and useful sensory garden. Design technology is a daily feature of lessons in all classes, with many opportunities to use construction apparatus of different types. Children make satisfactory progress. Children in both the Nursery and Reception have good information and communication technology skills, being able to log onto the computer, run programs and use the mouse to follow counting and graphical matching games.

59. Elements of religious education are introduced well. Few examples were seen in the inspection of children learning history, but a foundation is being laid for geographical skills, with opportunities for the children to learn about the locality of the classroom and of the school itself.

### **Physical development**

60. Physical development is well taught and most children will have attained the *early learning goals* before the end of the Reception year. In gymnastics, the children achieve very good controlled movement and use space well. They move sensibly and carefully to music. The Nursery outdoor area is well suited to encourage all kinds of physical movement and, in Reception, outdoor playtime is well used to further develop skills with various equipment courses, such as a line of hoops and ball target games. Children in all classes have a good awareness of safety issues and use tools such as scissors sensibly. Many opportunities are provided to practise fine muscle-control skills. Manipulation of clay and plasticene is included, as is the tracing of lines of varying complexity, although children in a Reception class were observed spending time doing the latter activity when they had already achieved good control and were capable of greater progress.

### **Creative development**

61. Creative work is often integrated with physical development and as a result many opportunities are made for children to work creatively. Various media such as clay, dough, plasticene, paper, paint and straws are offered and the children enjoy the work. They are in line to attain these *early learning goals* by the end of the Reception year. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall, and their progress is satisfactory in Reception. In the Nursery, where learning support assistants are very clear with children about what is to be done and why, progress is better. There is also more challenge in the Nursery class. For example, children in the Nursery were seen mixing their own paints. In Reception, it was done for them.
62. A good lesson on symmetry successfully demonstrated links with mathematics and art. Children were given careful feedback on whether or not their opposing patterns matched. They made good progress as a result, in both mathematics and in the skill of careful paint application. The singing of songs is a feature of a number of lessons and learning in music is encouraged well.

## **ENGLISH**

63. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 are not as good as they were at the time of the last inspection. In 2001, results in reading were below the national average but around the average for similar schools. Standards in writing were well below the national average and below the average for similar schools. Relatively few pupils attained the higher levels in the tests. In writing, girls did better than boys, which reflects the position found nationally. Pupils' speaking and listening were assessed by teachers as being well below the national average.
64. Inspection evidence showed that the standards of speaking and listening are now broadly in line with national expectations. The majority of pupils in Year 2 express themselves clearly and articulately. They listen to each other and their teachers, in and out of the classrooms, and can respond appropriately. These standards are higher than the 2001 teacher assessments because the school has acted to improve opportunities for speaking and listening, through more role-play, through drama and by ensuring that literacy lessons are more interactive. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading are in line with national expectations for the majority of pupils, but more able pupils do not attain as highly as they should because they are not challenged in their reading. These pupils complain that the school's books "*are all easy*" and express frustration that they can read better than the books available to them in school. Standards in writing are below national expectations. Although average and less able pupils make satisfactory progress, more able pupils are not working at the levels that are expected of them. Too often the work that is set for them lacks challenge and they do not have enough opportunities to practice their extended writing skills. Too much of the written work of pupils of all abilities is untidy and poorly

presented. Nevertheless, by the end of Year 2, pupils develop good understanding of technical English. For example, they understand different writing requirements for different genres and can identify and give examples of imperative verbs when writing a set of instructions. Opportunities are missed for using information and communication technology in English. During the inspection, in some classes where word processing might have been a relevant activity within the *literacy hour*, computers were out of action.

65. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them and in lessons where a learning assistant directly supports them, they sometimes make very good progress. The school has good systems for identification and support of these pupils, which ensures that all their teachers have the information to match the work to their needs. The learning support assistants know their pupils well and make sure that their work is explained clearly and set out in small steps so that they can succeed. Pupils who speak English as an additional language similarly make good progress in English because of the support they receive and the care that is taken to help them achieve.
66. Teaching seen in English was satisfactory. Teachers make effective use of the *literacy hour*. Lessons are generally well structured. Teachers are beginning to tackle some of the issues identified in the previous inspection. However, teachers do not always share the learning objectives with their pupils and it is often unclear if the focus of the lesson is on the activity or the learning that comes from it. This means that pupils are often involved in an activity without understanding why they are doing it. The extended writing skills of more able pupils are insufficiently developed as they progress through the school. When they leave Year 1, able pupils are writing stories around 75 words in length but this is not immediately built on in Year 2 so that these skills do not develop as quickly as they should. Sometimes, the work that is set for the less able pupils is not sufficiently different from that set for the rest of the class and, although there are tools such as writing frames to help them, there is inconsistency in their use and they are not sufficiently varied to support the development of writing skills. Although there is some good practice, teaching of phonics is generally weak. Teachers do not have sufficient understanding of how to teach it so that, while some teach by sounds, others teach by letter names. This produces such phonic confusions as *biscuit* being grouped with “u” words and word lists containing *zoom*, *book* and *floor*. This is having the effect of depressing standards of reading, writing and spelling.
67. The “*booster classes*” are having a positive effect on raising standards. The termly review of progress against “*benchmark groups*” of similar pupils provides an effective monitoring tool. Teachers ensure that pupils are moved between groups regularly so that the additional support is focused on those likely to most benefit from it.
68. Assessment in English is comprehensive and used well. Pupils’ progress is tracked individually. This helps to ensure that pupils are correctly grouped within their classes. Individual target-setting takes place for all pupils. Children discuss their targets with their teachers and they are shared with parents at consultation evenings. Pupils and teachers together review and setting new targets. This helps to involve pupils in their own learning. Teachers’ marking is generally good. It gives both encouragement and indications of how work can be improved, although in some cases some of the advice given to pupils in the marking lacks precision, leaving pupils unclear about what they must do to improve.
69. English is managed effectively. The strategies outlined in the school’s development plan for raising standards are having a positive effect although their implementation is too recent to have had an effect on test results. The subject leader has put a great deal of work into developing systematic assessment and ensuring that it is used in tracking pupils’ progress and planning lessons. Monitoring has taken place and has resulted in action such as training relating to the use of drama and role-play to raise standards in speaking and listening and in writing. The effectiveness of monitoring of English is restricted by the limited release time given to the subject leader. The subject leader has helped to ensure that English is well resourced. The school library contains a satisfactory range and quantity of non-fiction titles that pupils can use for research and there is a good range of reading books in each classroom. There are, however, insufficient reading books for more able pupils.

## **MATHEMATICS**

70. Attainment is not as good as was reported in the last inspection. The 2001 test results were well below average when compared nationally and with similar schools. The school's results were low mainly because the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels in the tests was significantly below the national average. Inspection evidence shows an improvement on this overall performance, with standards now below rather than well below average. The monitoring of mathematics lessons and the action taken to improve teaching, for example in mental arithmetic, are helping to raise standards. Test results over the past few years, and an analysis of the schools own data, show that boys are performing better than girls, which is similar to the position found nationally.
71. The overall achievement of pupils is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well because of the good support they are given by teachers and well-deployed learning support assistants. Pupils of average attainment make sound progress. However, more able pupils are not achieving as well as they should. Although the school has identified and taken some action to address this underachievement, it has yet to have a major impact on raising their attainment.
72. Most pupils currently in Year 2 order numbers to 100 and a few go beyond this. They are developing sound strategies to solve mental addition and subtraction. For example, when adding nine, several pupils count on ten and take away one. Most understand that the first digit in numbers such as 49 represents "tens". Pupils are beginning to draw lines accurately using centimetres, and recognise shapes such as squares, triangles and rectangles from a description of their features. Pupils use the correct mathematical symbols for recording addition and subtraction. Much of the past work of the average and more able pupils is similar, although more able pupils have usually completed a greater amount of work. However, in several classes there is little evidence of extra challenge especially for problem solving and mathematical investigations. In many of the pupils' books, the presentation of work is untidy. The blank, unlined pages do not help pupils to form consistently sized numerals or to set out their work systematically.
73. The quality of teaching and learning observed was satisfactory. In the more effective lessons, all pupils were challenged including during the mental arithmetic session. For example, one teacher carefully targeted individual pupils with questions to build on their current understanding. Occasionally, the oral sessions were less successful because too many of the questions were set at one level and did not challenge some pupils. In all lessons, teachers were well-organised with carefully planned groupings of pupils and resources. This ensured that no learning time was wasted in the change from whole-class sessions to individual work. Mathematical vocabulary was taught well with helpful classroom displays reminding pupils of the correct terms. Good marking, assessment and record-keeping have been used well to track pupils' progress and to place them in different attainment groups. Work was adapted well for most groups in the lessons observed, including for those with special educational needs. However, it was not always sufficiently challenging to ensure the most able pupils made the maximum progress. In several lessons these pupils were given larger numbers to add, subtract or order but there was often no other purpose to the task. For example, pupils were not asked to investigate a number pattern or estimate and check their answers. Consequently, some of the more able pupils began to lose interest and their rate of working declined as the lesson progressed. The teaching methods used for these pupils occasionally prevented them from making rapid gains in their learning. For example, in one lesson the worksheet was confusing and they spent too long trying to understand what was required.
74. The subject is managed well to build on improvements during the past year. Staff training and the rigorous monitoring of teaching have helped to ensure the *Numeracy Strategy* is firmly in place. Strengths and weaknesses in lessons have been identified and targets set to help improve learning. Plans for future action are firmly based on raising achievement. They include better investigative mathematics and improved use of information and communication technology, which is currently under-used in the subject. Resources are good and include a library of mathematical activities and games that parents can borrow.

## SCIENCE

75. There are no national tests in science for pupils at the end of Year 2, but teacher assessments for 2001 show that standards attained by pupils were below those expected nationally and below those of similar schools. Attainment is not as good as was reported in the last inspection, but it has improved over the

past year following improvements to the curriculum. Standards seen in the current Year 2 are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils in Year 2 had looked at *push* and *pull* in studying forces and had experimented in changing the shape of objects by pushing and pulling. They had examined their toys and tried to work out how they move. They had drawn labelled diagrams of vehicles and looked at ways to make cars travel further, although some continued to confuse distance with speed. Earlier in Year 2, pupils had studied life processes and issues of food hygiene. Some observational work was included and children were predicting the outcome of experiments and assessing equipment needed. This demonstrated that teachers were also paying due attention to developing pupils' scientific thinking skills. Last year's assessments showed significant differences in pupils' understanding of different areas in science. Study of materials and their properties was a weakness. The curriculum has been altered to make sure the right work is covered and, following this, materials have been covered in more detail in Year 1. Pupils had, for example, sorted and classified materials both according to type and by use. They had gone on to look at light sources and electricity. At the time of the inspection, pupils in Year 1 were making circuits and all understood that a complete circuit with a battery would light a bulb. More able children were experimenting by adding another bulb in series and were achieving well in understanding that this has the effect of decreasing the brightness of the bulbs.

76. An analysis of pupils' work shows satisfactory achievement overall. This is due to an increased emphasis on science. Literacy is reinforced through science, with scientific vocabulary made available on flashcards and on the board. Recorded work is insufficiently varied, however. Work on forces, for example, was recorded on photocopied worksheets when many pupils, particularly the more able, could have worked out their own methods of recording their results. Computers are not used enough to support learning and opportunities are missed to develop pupils' numeracy through science. No measuring, for example, was seen used in the work on forces.
77. Teaching is satisfactory. In the science lessons seen, pupils benefited from teachers' good preparation, good resources and lively questioning that stimulated children's thinking. The best lesson seen also included a very useful plenary session that involved all children in a consolidation of skills by discussing what they had learned about electricity, with two children demonstrating to the others how to change their circuit. In one lesson, however, the teacher glossed over some very relevant questions asked by pupils because she was reluctant to depart from her lesson plan. Work is not always planned for children of different abilities in science and more able pupils are not always set work that is sufficiently challenging.
78. The headteacher is the subject leader for science and has given appropriate priority to further develop teaching and learning in this subject. Staff have recently received training in the experiences that should be planned for pupils of different ages. As a result the quality of teaching has risen and so have expectations. Detailed assessment procedures have been drawn up to make sure that each pupil covers and understands each area of work. Staff, however, are still getting used to this new system of recording and not all teachers make full use of it. Resources for teaching science are satisfactory.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

79. Art is a strength in the school. Standards in art are above those expected nationally. Although few art lessons were seen, the work on display was of a consistently high quality and demonstrated the application of a wide range of techniques and styles.
80. Pupils are taught to use different media from the moment that they enter the school. They learn about colour, tone, and texture so that they quickly develop the ability to use paint confidently. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils compared the effects of using thick and thin paint and used stippling and splashing to produce effective "firework" art. Year 2 pupils explore the use of shade and tone and mix media, as in the extremely high quality work based on the styles of Lowry and Monet. That paintings from this collection have been lent to the local education authority for local exhibition underlines their quality. Pupils are familiar with the language of art so that they talk with understanding and pride about their work. The portraits sketched and shaded by Year 2 pupils are executed well and provide good examples of their neat, careful work. Pupils also learn to work in three dimensions, as exemplified by the clay, "pinched and poked" by Year 2 pupils with painstaking care to produce highly effective masks.

81. The subject is managed well. The school's good stock of resources is rigorously checked and maintained in an effective and accessible way. The subject leader has ensured that the local education authority scheme of work is adapted to meet the needs of the school and that teachers feel confident with the subject. The mural of a rain forest being painted by a local artist makes a positive contribution to the environment. It provides pupils with a developing picture and helps them to take an interest in art and to value their own work. Some good use is made of information and communication technology in art, with, for example, pupils using a graphics program to design and print their own Christmas cards.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

82. Although no design technology lessons were seen, pupils' work indicates standards that are above those expected nationally and better than seen in the last inspection. Work on display is of a consistently high quality. The subject leader provides good leadership and ensures that the school is well resourced and that the staff are supported by effective plans.
83. Pupils are taught skills of designing, making and evaluating from the time they enter the school so that, by the end of Year 2, they have good understanding of the process and are in a strong position to build on the skills they have learnt. Very good use is made of wide range of commercially produced construction apparatus and pupils are given an early introduction to working from plans. From Reception, children begin to turn two-dimensional plans into three-dimensional models using these kits. They are proud of their efforts and some are very ambitious in the complexity of the models that they build. As they progress through the school, pupils learn to draw their own plans and to realise them, both from construction kits and from the selection of their own materials. They also learn how machines move by disassembling toys and models to reveal the mechanism and they learn the vocabulary to describe the components. By the time they reach the end of Year 2, pupils are familiar with the processes of design technology and know how to evaluate their creations against a number of criteria.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

84. No geography lessons were taught during the period of the inspection and there was insufficient work available to make an overall assessment of standards in the subject or their improvement since the last inspection. Curriculum planning indicates, however, that all the required aspects of the subject are taught.
85. Pupils in Year 1 have compared the weather patterns during a week in September with one in November. The individual charts completed for each week show that pupils are becoming aware of how the seasons cause many changes. Pupils in both year groups are developing simple map skills, by, for example, drawing their route to school. Several pupils have used computers well to assist in the drawing of their maps. Large world maps displayed in Year 2 classrooms have postcards written by pupils linked to places where families originated or where they have been on holiday. This is an interesting and effective way of developing pupils' knowledge and awareness of countries and cultures outside the United Kingdom.
86. Development of the curriculum has been effectively managed to ensure it matches national guidance. Care for the environment is given a good emphasis in learning. Planning shows that pupils are made keenly aware of the effect of human action on their locality and they also participate in recycling schemes. A yearly trip to a village in Surrey is a good basis for comparing the features there with those in their own area.

## **HISTORY**

87. In the narrow range of work seen in the subject, pupils are achieving standards appropriate for their ages. However, as only two lessons were observed and there was only a small amount of work available for inspectors to look at, there is not enough evidence to make an overall judgement on pupils' attainment,

the quality of teaching or improvement since the last inspection. Curriculum planning indicates that the range of topics and approaches to learning are suitably matched to national guidance.

88. Year 2 pupils are developing a good understanding about ways of finding out about the past. For example, they prepared sensible questions to ask a grandmother about her childhood toys and how they were made. Before the lesson, teachers paid good attention to developing pupils' social skills by explaining how politeness and good manners are important when asking questions. Pupils' learning was developed well when the teacher related what they found out from the visitor to their previous work on Victorian toys. Attractive displays in classrooms, which include books and items from the school's good range of historical artefacts, generate much interest. Several questions placed around old and new toys invite pupils to handle, order and compare different materials used to make them.
89. Developments in the curriculum have been effectively managed to ensure that it is balanced and that it matches national guidance. A strong emphasis is placed on the achievements of important figures from ethnic minority backgrounds and this makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. This is reflected in a prominent display of such people as Garrett Morgan and Meredith Gourdine which highlights their contributions to safety and science.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

90. There has been good improvement in information and communication technology since the last inspection. The curriculum is now satisfactory, with teachers building well on the good start that children have in the *Foundation Stage* so that pupils attain standards that are in line with national expectations. Pupils have a good understanding of the function of computers, can log on and off, load programs and save and retrieve their work. They use a programmable toy to learn about control technology. Good use was made of word processing to produce speech bubbles in Year 1. Year 1 pupils had also made very effective use of a graphics package to produce very good quality designs for Christmas cards. Generally, however, there are insufficient opportunities to use computers across the curriculum. Word processing is not used enough in *literacy hour*, for instance, or in writing in other subjects such as history or geography.
91. The children enjoy this subject and work well independently. Those pupils who have developed an expertise readily share their knowledge and skills in helping others to learn. Information and communication technology is well reinforced in displays around the school. Whole class lessons are used appropriately to demonstrate skills. The teachers have received training and their knowledge of the subject is now satisfactory. All the teachers have a laptop computer on which to practise their own skills. Detailed assessment sheets have been put in place and teachers are beginning to use these to track pupil progress.
92. The subject leader is fairly new to the subject but she has received good induction, being shadowed by the previous co-ordinator. She has good plans drawn up to further develop information and communication technology and is very clear about appropriate priorities. Problems with faulty computers have hindered the use of information and communication technology as a tool for learning in other subjects. New computers have now been purchased and some of the Year 2 classes are now connected to the internet. *New Opportunities Fund* grant finance has been used to install cabling and the school will soon be entirely networked. This will allow all pupils to use the internet and develop their information accessing skills.

## **MUSIC**

93. Standards in music are in line with national expectations. Singing is better than is usually heard in infant classes. Pupils sing enthusiastically, without shouting. They hold the tune unaccompanied and sing with a sweet tone. Teachers ensure that there are opportunities for pupils to listen and appreciate a variety of musical styles and to develop their own skills in composing and performing. However teachers do not link these aspects cohesively. During the inspection, for example, pupils in Year 2 were listening to classical

music and learning that music can be used to convey an emotional response. There were no immediate plans to follow this up with opportunities for children to try for themselves their own simple compositions.

94. Pupils have good attitudes to music and respond sensitively. They enjoy singing and making music of all kinds. They are introduced to a range of untuned, and then tuned, instruments as soon as they enter the school and this helps them to appreciate the importance of music within the creative arts
95. At the time of the last inspection the school had a specialist music teacher. Although this is no longer the case, the subject leader has ensured that the school's plans for teaching music support non-specialist teachers. Assessment, by good use of question and answer, effectively supports the monitoring of pupils' progress. The school is well equipped with a range of instruments and musical recordings. These include instruments and music from a wide range of cultures that have been acquired since the last inspection.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

96. Not enough classes or aspects of the subject were observed to make an overall judgement about standards or the quality of teaching. In the few lessons seen, pupils demonstrated skills appropriate for their ages when throwing, rolling and controlling a ball. They are learning to take account of the distance and force needed to aim a ball accurately for their partner to receive it. During small-group games, pupils are beginning to understand that co-operation is important if their team is to compete successfully. In the one gymnastics lesson seen, pupils showed good body control and use of space when smoothly linking together a balance, a turn and a movement near the floor.
97. In the lessons observed, teachers introduced a variety of exercises at the start of each lesson which helped pupils to understand the importance of warming-up before physical exertion. Teachers offered good encouragement and feedback to pupils, which motivated them to work harder at mastering their skills. In a good lesson, where there was a brisk pace to learning, the teacher demonstrated movements well and highlighted pupils' good ideas to improve the quality of their work. In another lesson, there was not enough emphasis on helping the class to learn from those pupils who had mastered techniques. Teachers did not always change their footwear for lessons. This did not set a good example to pupils, especially for the few who did not have their physical education kit in school.
98. The subject is well managed and the subject leader has clear plans for further improving learning. For example, better equipment to develop bat and net games, and greater guidance for teachers when planning dance lessons, have been identified as priorities. The development of playground games using small games equipment and involving lunchtime staff is a helpful way of developing pupils' skills and interest. Lessons based on dance from different countries, and links with yoga, make a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

99. Religious education standards are in line with those expected in the Croydon locally-agreed syllabus. This is similar to the position at the time of the last inspection. Teachers' planning indicates that the scheme of work has been satisfactorily covered. By the end of Year 2, pupils have learned about the Hindu and Jewish religions, as well as aspects of Christianity. They can recount the story of Rama and Sita. This and the Hindu story of *The Mouse and The Dove* were recorded in pupils' books. Divali has also recently been studied as part of the coverage of the Hindu religion. This was supported by an attractive display outside the school hall. Year 2 pupils had also been studying the teachings of Jesus and had retold the story of *The Good Samaritan*. In Year 1, pupils had looked at aspects of Judaism. They had drawn Jewish artefacts and had learned about the festival of Hanukkah. This was reinforced well in an assembly with a presentation to the whole of the infants.



100. Children benefit from the good integration of personal, moral and spiritual education into religious education. In both religious education and assemblies, pupils had looked at different festivals, thinking about feelings and emotions and discussing what was special to them. There is relatively little recorded work and much of the work is insufficiently varied. This is a weakness and means that opportunities are missed for pupils to draw on and develop their literacy skills. Work that is recorded shows that children were usually asked to recount the story being studied in their own words.
101. The subject leader has been effective in introducing the recently revised locally-agreed syllabus. She supports her colleagues well and has obtained a number of artefacts for use in lessons. She has not yet been given the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning.