

INSPECTION REPORT

HATFIELD PEVEREL INFANT SCHOOL

CHELMSFORD

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114974

Head teacher: M Webster

Reporting inspector: Grace Marriott
3674

Dates of inspection: 19th to 22nd November 2001

Inspection number: 193803

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Church Road Hatfield Peverel Chelmsford Essex
Postcode:	CM3 2RP
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Webb
Date of previous inspection:	April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3674	Grace Marriott	Registered inspector	Mathematics, science, information and communication technology, history, religious education, music, special educational needs	The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well does the school care for its pupils?
9595	Susan Cash	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
31421	Susan Rogers	Team inspector	Foundation stage, English, art, design and technology, geography, physical education, equal opportunities	How well is the school led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hatfield Peverel is a community Infant School which shares a site with St Andrew's Junior School and a private day nursery. At the time of the inspection there were 149 pupils, with almost equal numbers of boys and girls. Thirty pupils will join a second Reception Class in January 2002. Children come from both the local community and further afield. Relatively few are from disadvantaged backgrounds and the number having free school meals is low. The school has very few children from ethnic minorities and none at an early stage of learning English. Attainment at the start of the Reception Year is not as good as it was at the last inspection. The assessment carried out when children join the school, and the inspection evidence, show that they have below average knowledge, skills and understanding. About a fifth of pupils have special educational needs, which is about average, though no pupils have a statement.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Hatfield Peverel is a successful school which is providing its pupils with a good education. Standards are better than the national average in English and at least average in all other subjects. The teaching is good overall, and the teaching of the youngest pupils is particularly good. The head teacher, senior staff and governors provide very strong leadership and the school is very well managed. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The teaching is consistently good and much of it is very good
- The Reception Year gives pupils a good start to their education
- Standards in reading are particularly good
- The school strongly promotes high achievement for all pupils in a lively, supportive atmosphere
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school and behave very well
- The school is very well led and managed

What could be improved

- Standards in writing, though better than average, are not as good as in reading and pupils are not doing enough writing in subjects such as mathematics, history and geography
- Pupils' handwriting and presentation of work are not as good as they could be

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1997 and it has continued to improve well since then. The monitoring of teaching and learning has become more systematic and rigorous. The staff have successfully taken on more direct responsibility for managing and monitoring work in the different subjects. The governing body has re-organised its work effectively to ensure that all governors are fully involved in monitoring the school's work and setting priorities for development. These changes have enabled the pupils to achieve well and, compared with national results, the school has succeeded in achieving average or better standards, even though the children's attainment at the start of the Reception Year is not as good as it was. There have also been numerous improvements to the buildings and facilities. There were few issues of any significance in the last report, and these have been dealt with. Schemes of work for music and physical education (PE) have been developed and the provision for multi-cultural education is now good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results. *In this context 'similar schools' means those with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals*

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
Reading	A	B	B	C
Writing	C	C	B	D
Mathematics	D	C	C	D

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

The school's results in the national tests taken at the end of Year 2 were above average in reading and writing, and broadly average in mathematics. Teacher assessment in science was broadly average. Compared with similar schools, results were average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. When compared with the pupils' attainment when they start school, the results represent good achievement. Standards have fluctuated slightly over time and, though above average, are not quite as high as at the last inspection. However this reflects the decline in pupils' attainment on entry and significant differences between year groups in relation to special educational needs. Boys and girls reach similar standards, though with occasional differences which also reflect special needs.

In the Reception Year pupils make good progress overall, so that by the time they start the National Curriculum in Year 1 their work in language, literacy and mathematics is average overall and better than average in the early stages of reading. Their personal and social development is also particularly good. They relate well to adults and other children and work and play very well together. In their knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative and physical development, they are achieving well compared with their starting point and are on track to reach the early learning goals in all these areas.

Current standards in Year 2 are similar to the 2001 test results. In Years 1 and 2 pupils develop good listening skills and satisfactory speaking skills. The higher-attainers read with excellent expression and almost all pupils read well, though they sometimes need prompting to use their phonic skills. The quality of written work is less consistent, and though standards are better than average overall, most pupils are likely to achieve higher standards in reading than writing. Pupils are achieving good standards in mental mathematics. They add and subtract two digit numbers confidently and accurately and have made a good start on multiplication and division. Their recording of their work is not of the same high quality. Many pupils do not take enough care in writing numbers and are not accurate when writing down what they are doing. In other subjects the pupils achieve good standards in art, music and religious education (RE). In science, history, geography design and technology, PE and information and communication technology (ICT) standards are broadly in line with expectations for children of this age, though practical work is often good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and work hard
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in lessons and in the playground

Personal development and relationships	Personal development and relationships are very good.
Attendance	Very good

Pupils have many very good opportunities to take responsibility and become independent, and they respond well to these. They learn to work and play together very well. Attendance is well above the national average and authorised absence is low. Unauthorised absence is average, mainly because the school is very strict about what can be counted as authorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good

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

In the school as a whole all the teaching seen was at least satisfactory and three-quarters of it was good or very good. At all stages the teaching is encouraging pupils to become responsible and independent learners. The teaching in the Foundation Stage (Reception) is very good. The staff have a very good understanding of the needs of the youngest children and of the expectations of the early learning goals. They teach the early stages of reading, writing and number very well through structured activities and play, using situations which relate to real life, for example the garden ‘shop’. All staff take every opportunity to extend children’s speaking and listening skills. The teaching helps children to learn well and make very good progress. The activities and the play help them to develop good social skills and become increasingly independent.

In Years 1 and 2 the teaching across the four classes is good overall, with many very good features. Reading is very well taught. Pupils learn to read confidently and expressively, and to enjoy books. The current emphasis on spelling is helping most pupils to learn to spell the most frequently used words accurately. Whole class sessions are used very productively to extend pupils’ ability to express themselves clearly, using a good range of vocabulary. Similarly in teaching numeracy, the emphasis on mental mathematics is helping pupils to learn to add, subtract and multiply accurately. In other subjects the teaching of oral and practical skills is good. The only relative weakness in teaching is that not enough time or attention is given to written work, with the result that the content and the presentation of work does not always reflect the quality of pupils’ knowledge and understanding.

Pupils with special educational needs are well taught in class and in sessions where they are withdrawn for individual help. Class teachers prepare good individual education plans which help pupils to achieve realistic targets and make good progress. The school is also making good provision for its high attainers through carefully targeted work and extension and enrichment activities.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good, the curriculum fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the early learning goals for the youngest children
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	These pupils are well supported and make good progress

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good overall and excellent provision for social development
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes very good care of its pupils

The curriculum is rich. The national literacy and numeracy strategies are very securely in place and the curriculum also gives pupils many opportunities to develop good creative skills and understanding through work in art and music. Information and communication technology is being used increasingly but there is scope to develop this further. The youngest children also learn successfully through stimulating indoor and outdoor play. Staff know their pupils well and at all stages assess and record their progress carefully. The school has very close links with parents, most of whom are very supportive of the school and willing to be involved in their children's education. The school works hard to keep parents well informed.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The head teacher, staff and governors, have a very clear vision for the school and are successfully achieving this
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very well informed and fulfils its responsibilities well. Governors are fully involved in setting priorities and monitoring how well the school is doing.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school monitors standards and teaching carefully and the information gained is used in planning
The strategic use of resources	Resources are very carefully targeted to support the school's educational priorities

The school is well staffed with well-qualified teachers and classroom assistants. Classrooms are large and well-organised and very good use is made of all available space. The school has very good resources and the recent improvement to the facilities is making it possible for pupils to use ICT more frequently and more effectively. The development planning is clearly focused on raising standards and continuing to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The school applies the principles of best value well. The head teacher, staff and governors share a strong commitment to creating a school where expectations are high and all pupils can achieve to the best of their ability, in a lively, stimulating atmosphere where they are secure and happy.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their children are happy at school and make good progress • teaching is good and the staff are approachable • behaviour is good • expectations are high • the school is well managed • the school is helping children to become mature and responsible 	<p>Only one question resulted in more than a few negative responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the range of opportunities outside lessons is not wide enough

Parents have confidence in the school and the inspection team shares this confidence. The range of activities is satisfactory given the age of the pupils, and the extra-curricular music and performances such

as those at Christmas, make a good contribution, particularly in Year 2. However, the school is considering how to extend the range.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The assessment carried out shortly after the children join the Reception Year shows that they start school with below average knowledge, skills and understanding, particularly in speaking and listening. The inspection evidence supports this. During their time in Reception, children's personal and social development is particularly good. They learn to share, take turns, work independently and take responsibility for themselves. They relate well to adults and other children and work and play very well together. They make good progress in learning to read, write and count so that they achieve the early learning goals and are well prepared to start the National Curriculum in Year 1. Children listen well but are less confident speakers, though with encouragement, they are able to talk to the class. Most children can read quite fluently by the time they start Year 1. They can also count to 20 or beyond and write numbers to 20.
2. In their knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative and physical development they are achieving well compared with their starting point and are on track to reach the early learning goals in all these areas. They are enthusiastic and independent learners and are keen to take part in the activities in and out of the classroom. One group of children could demonstrate how they had made a kaleidoscope and another group doing the stocktaking in the garden 'shop' outside had worked out for themselves how to write down several numbers by using the number displays.
3. Results in the 2001 national tests taken at the end of Year 2 show that the pupils were reaching above average standards in reading and writing and in mathematics the test results were broadly average. In science the teacher assessment also showed standards to be broadly average. Results have fluctuated slightly over time and are not quite as good relative to both the national picture and similar schools as they were at the last inspection. They reflect the decline in pupils' attainment on entry and significant differences between year groups in the nature and extent of special educational needs. Boys and girls achieve at a similar level though with occasional differences which also reflect individual special needs.
4. When compared with schools where a similar proportion of pupils is entitled to free school meals, the results were average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. However, when compared with the pupils' below average attainment when they start the Reception Year, the results represent good achievement overall.
5. Current standards are similar to the 2001 test results in all three subjects. In Years 1 and 2 pupils develop good listening skills and satisfactory speaking skills. Almost all pupils read well though they sometimes need prompting to use their phonic skills. Higher attainers read with excellent expression and are able to talk knowledgeably about books. The quality of written work is more variable, and though overall standards are better than average, most pupils achieve higher standards in reading than writing. This is mainly because they do not get enough practice in writing at any length in English, or in other subjects. Few pupils consistently use a joined style of handwriting and it is often not neat enough. Spelling, however, is generally good. Overall pupils are achieving well in English.
6. Pupils are reaching average standards overall in mathematics and good standards in mental mathematics. Overall, when standards in Year 2 are compared with attainment at the start of

Reception, achievement is good. By Year 2, pupils add and subtract two digit numbers confidently and accurately and have made a good start on multiplication and division. The highest-attainers were quick to spot patterns when learning about multiplication. Most pupils can identify and describe two and three dimensional shapes in terms of the number of sides and angles. Their recording of their work is not of the same good quality as their mental mathematics. Many pupils do not take enough care in writing numbers and are not accurate when writing down what they are doing.

7. In other subjects the pupils' work is above average in art, music and RE and they are achieving well. In science, history, geography, design and technology and PE standards are broadly in line with expectations for children of this age and their achievement is never less than satisfactory. Practical work is often good and there was some very good oral work in science when pupils were discussing an experiment to find out which of a range of materials was the most reflective.
8. In ICT pupils are generally confident users of computers and are achieving at a satisfactory level. They know the layout of the keyboard and can manipulate the mouse skilfully. Their opportunities to use computers regularly have been fairly limited, but the recent expansion of the facilities has improved matters considerably. A group of higher-attainers was very competently word-processing their family histories and re-drafting their work on-screen. Pupils also learn to programme a floor robot accurately to follow specific commands.
9. Pupils with special educational needs make generally good progress in working towards their individual targets. Skilful support in class, and sensitive withdrawal work, enable them to take part fully in lessons and they achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils from the Reception Year onwards have very positive attitudes to school and to their work. They say they enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic about their work. In lessons, they listen very attentively to the teacher and are keen to answer questions. Year 2 pupils listened enthralled to the story in a literacy lesson because it was very well read. They concentrate well on the tasks they are given, knowing that the work will be interesting and that adults will help if needed. Behaviour in lessons is, therefore, also very good. There are a few pupils who find it difficult to sit still and listen, but they are well supported and teachers manage them very well. Sometimes pupils are expected to sit for too long on the carpet and so become fidgety.
11. Pupils respond very well to the positive way they are spoken to and to the clear expectations about how they will behave. Behaviour in the playground is also very good. The pupils have a good range of activities to keep them occupied at lunchtimes and they are very well supervised. During the inspection, they were enjoying collecting the autumn leaves into heaps. The school has high expectations about how pupils, for example, will come into assembly and behave in the dining room and they rise to the challenge. They play very well together and there is little or no bullying. There have been no exclusions.
12. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Adults set fine examples, both in the way they deal with each other and with the children. This creates a very positive atmosphere in which pupils feel safe and valued. Pupils respond by being very polite, for example greeting each other and all the adults in the room at the start of the day. They co-operate very well together, sensibly discussing things to do with their work in pairs and small groups. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved.

13. Pupils are considerate, helping each other and their teachers. The youngest pupils are learning to share and take turns. Each class has monitors so that all have an opportunity to help with useful jobs around the room, from collecting up books to taking care of stick insects. Year 2 pupils are very conscientious in making sure that the chairs are put away after lunch in stacks of no more than ten. Such tasks are carried out very responsibly.
14. Pupils work very well independently, as was seen in a Year 1 literacy lesson where the teacher had made it very clear what she wanted the children to do. They often show considerably more initiative than is normally seen in children of this age. If they come across a problem, they stop to think what to do for themselves rather than going straight to an adult for advice. Parents feel strongly that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible and this was confirmed by the inspection. The school has maintained this very good aspect of its work since the last inspection.
15. The head teacher and governors emphasise the importance of regular attendance at every opportunity. This has led to a significant improvement in attendance since the time of the last inspection.. Levels of attendance are now well above those found nationally. This makes a useful contribution to the standards achieved by pupils. The school takes a very firm position about holidays in term-time and as a consequence unauthorised absence has also gone up slightly. Punctuality is good. Pupils come straight into the classroom when they arrive in the morning. Teachers provide an interesting range of tasks for them to do until everyone is settled and the register has been marked. For example, a Year One class had to colour the correct squares to solve an alphabetical sequence puzzle.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. Overall, the teaching is good. At all stages the teaching is encouraging pupils to become responsible and independent learners. During the inspection there was no unsatisfactory teaching and more than three-quarters of it was good or very good.
17. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good. The staff have a very good understanding of the needs of the youngest children and of the expectations of the nationally recommended early learning goals. The work is meticulously planned and expectations are high. The staff work very well together as a team.
18. In Reception, the well-structured activities and play help children to develop good social skills and become increasingly independent. The teaching of the early stages of reading is particularly good and writing and number are also well taught. Staff use situations which relate to real life, for example stocktaking in the garden 'shop' or counting the number of children who are having a school lunch and comparing it with the number having a packed lunch. Staff work hard to extend children's speaking and listening skills. This is particularly important because children start school with a relatively limited vocabulary and are not confident speakers. Staff are most successful in encouraging good listening. Classroom assistants are well deployed and contribute effectively. They generally know what is expected of them, though they were occasionally not entirely clear about the purpose of the activity.
19. In Years 1 and 2 the teaching across the four classes is good overall, with many very good features. The pairs of teachers in each year group plan together to benefit from each other's expertise and particular interests. They plan a good range of activities which are generally both stimulating and enjoyable so that pupils are keen to work and to learn. Teachers are increasingly developing the links between subjects. For example work in ICT, history or geography is used to

support the development of literacy and numeracy skills, but they are aware that there is scope to take this much further.

20. In all subjects teachers explain learning objectives well and make good use of whole-class introductions to enthuse and involve all pupils. Similarly a review at the end of the lesson helps pupils to consolidate what they have learnt. Occasionally these sessions went on a little too long and some pupils became restless. Questioning and discussion helps pupils develop good understanding. In practical work in subjects such as science and art, pupils are encouraged to think for themselves, experiment and develop their ideas. In PE pupils were being encouraged to evaluate the quality of their own and other pupils' work. The only relative weaknesses in teaching is that not enough time or attention is given to written work, with the result that the content and the presentation of work does not always reflect the quality of pupils' knowledge and understanding. Marking does not always give pupils enough guidance on how to improve their written work.
21. The level of challenge in the work is usually well matched to the range of attainment in the class. For example in a good mathematics lesson, tasks at different levels and the skilful support of a learning support assistant enabled virtually all pupils to understand the basic principle of multiplication. Extension work for the highest-attainers in Year 2 is being developed well in both English and mathematics. The specialist music teaching of both the recorder and the 'belle plates' (a form of handbell ringing) is challenging and helps to develop good concentration as well as musical skills.
22. In the school as a whole, reading is very well taught and pupils learn to read confidently and expressively, and to enjoy books. The current emphasis on spelling is also helping most pupils to spell the most frequently used words accurately. There were examples of good teaching of writing, for example in Year 2 where a group of average-attainers was making real progress in developing a story. On other occasions opportunities to extend pupils' writing skills were missed in English and in other subjects such as history and geography. In general not enough attention is paid to the teaching of handwriting or the presentation of work.
23. In teaching numeracy, the strong emphasis on mental mathematics is helping pupils to add, subtract and multiply accurately. Numeracy skills are also developed through other subjects such as PE, geography and design and technology. Teachers do not place quite enough emphasis on the need to record work and most pupils need more practice in writing down what they are doing and in forming numbers correctly.
24. Teachers are now more confident in their own knowledge and understanding of ICT and are planning more specifically to ensure that it is used effectively as a tool to support work across the whole curriculum. It is currently used reasonably effectively in support of literacy, numeracy and art.
25. Pupils with special educational needs are taught and supported well in class and in sessions where they are withdrawn for individual help. Class teachers prepare good individual education plans which help pupils to achieve realistic targets and make good progress. The school is also making good provision for its high attainers through carefully targeted work and extension and enrichment activities.

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

26. The curriculum was described in the last inspection report as being broad, balanced and very relevant to the needs of all pupils. This good provision has been maintained, and in relation to ICT it has been improved.
27. In Reception the breadth and richness of the curriculum provides the children with a very good start to their education. The curriculum is based on the nationally recommended Foundation Stage areas of learning. The work is very well planned for both the September and the January intake of pupils and all six areas of learning are well covered with the provisions for social development and reading being particularly good. Opportunities for children to learn through play are also seen as very important. The Reception classrooms provide a lively, colourful and stimulating environment in which children learn well and make good progress from the time they start school until they move up into Year 1. The outdoor areas are well used to extend children's experience.
28. In Years 1 and 2 the curriculum fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. It is also providing a lively and stimulating education. The school has adopted the nationally recommended guidelines for each subject and subject managers are developing these to meet the specific needs of the school. The joint planning and the whole-school curriculum plan help to ensure good continuity. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been successfully introduced and are having a positive impact on standards, particularly in reading and mental mathematics. Personal, social and health education are very well catered for through activities such as Circle Time which give pupils opportunities to discuss important issues.
29. All pupils have access to interesting and challenging experiences which they enjoy. The provision for those with special educational needs is good and enables them to have access to the full curriculum. The school is also providing extension work for pupils identified as gifted or talented, so far mainly in English and mathematics.
30. The school uses the resources of the local area to extend and enrich the curriculum for example through the wide variety of visitors who come into school and a good range of visits. The links with the local community, including the churches, make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. The range of extra-curricular activities is adequate considering the age of the pupils and the opportunity to take part in musical activities is a strong feature. The links with the Nursery and with the Junior School are good which helps to ensure continuity in the curriculum and helps pupils settle quickly when they transfer from one stage to the next.
31. The school makes very good provision overall for pupils' personal development. It has a strong commitment to what it calls 'the hidden curriculum', the development of the whole child, not just academic ability. This is reflected in its policies and practice. The self-confidence pupils gain as a result of this provision, makes a significant contribution to their achievement.
32. Close links with various churches in the village and a carefully planned programme of themes for assemblies, contribute to the good provision the school makes for pupils' spiritual development. Assemblies provide pupils with the opportunity to reflect and pray and, in one class, they were encouraged to reflect on the day while a pupil led them in prayer before they went home. While some opportunities are taken as they arise, to develop a sense of awe and wonder, this are not specifically planned for.
33. Pupils are supported very well as they learn to make moral judgements. The effect of poor behaviour on others is made very clear, so that pupils develop a strong sense of right and wrong. They take very good care of the environment and equipment. Those who hurt others or 'fall out' are encouraged to apologise and helped to understand the feelings of others. Classroom rules are

discussed at the start of the year so that pupils understand why rules are necessary and that, once agreed, they must be kept. Weekly whole-school targets have a moral or social emphasis and pupils are chosen to receive certificates and have their name in the book, if they have been particularly good at meeting the target. The school also encourages them to help those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils recently presented hundreds of shoe boxes filled with things for children in Eastern Europe, at a service in church.

34. The school makes excellent provision for pupils' social development. From their first days in school they are helped to make friends and play together kindly and with consideration. They are often expected to work together in pairs and groups. A 'friendship stop' in the playground ensures that those who have no-one to play with are quickly invited to join a game. The head teacher holds a 'tea-party' each week for four pupils in Year Two and talks to them about their perceptions of school. These discussions can inform future plans. There are many opportunities for pupils to be involved in village activities. They distribute harvest parcels to elderly citizens and speak to them. They take part in the produce show and perform for parents and grandparents at Christmas. Some pupils who come to school with poor social skills make very good progress. All increase in confidence and are able, for example, to talk in front of their class and speak politely to visitors.
35. The school is very aware that pupils have little first hand experience of people from ethnic minorities and is working hard to redress this. Pupils learn about a number of world faiths and their customs and celebrations. The school has its own Chinese dragon and staff perform a dragon dance. Divali and other festivals are celebrated. Visitors are invited to talk about their culture and demonstrate their national dress. Year 2 pupils recently went to a puppet theatre performance of 'Ramayana'. Most teachers play music during lessons, to support a calm and productive atmosphere and music is played in assembly, though there is rarely time to listen to it properly. A good feature is the display of famous paintings in the corridor which are thoughtfully placed a child's eye level so that they can be appreciated closely. Teachers read a very wide range of stories, from a variety of cultures which makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. Overall, this aspect of the school's work is very good, having been carefully thought about, planned and resourced. It has improved since the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. The school takes very good care of its pupils. Child protection procedures are in place and good attention is paid to health and safety. The school is cleaned to a high standard. Pupils are very well looked after if they hurt themselves or feel unwell. Those with allergies or particular medical needs are known to all adults and clear procedures are in place. The school is trying to improve fitness levels and recently hosted the national launch of the 'Safer Journeys to School' scheme. It has also joined the TOPS fitness scheme and is planning to be part of an inclusive health project next year.
37. Monitoring of pupils' personal development is largely informal but teachers know the pupils very well and are alert to any problems that might develop. This enables them to write perceptive comments on pupils' end of year reports and to talk to parents at the termly meetings.
38. The school monitors attendance well. The importance of good attendance is strongly promoted and a firm stand taken on unauthorised absence, with holidays in term-time closely monitored. The Education Welfare Officer rarely needs to be involved but regularly checks registers. Parents usually let the school know quickly why their children are absent, though if they do not, the school does not necessarily automatically contact until the third day.

39. The school makes very good provision for the support and guidance of pupils. The youngest pupils are very carefully introduced into school through the good links with the on-site nursery and other pre-school groups. Many pupils are used to eating in the dining room and already know many of the adults. They visit for half days in the term before they start school so they get to know their teacher. This makes the transition smooth. Similar care is taken in moving pupils on to the Junior School, also on the same site.
40. The procedures for promoting high standards of behaviour are very good. Expectations are high and clear rules are consistently applied. Pupils understand the rewards for being helpful or kind and doing as they are told. They enjoy 'Golden Time' and receiving stickers. Such rewards have to be earned and are not given liberally. Consequently they are greatly valued. Conversely, pupils are very aware of the sort of behaviour that is not acceptable. Assembly themes and weekly school targets are also used well to support pupils' personal development. Circle time is used to discuss ideas, such as about being good or bad. RE lessons also make a valuable contribution. Any minor incidents of bullying which may occur are dealt with firmly and effectively and pupils spoken to did not consider there was any bullying in the school. The head teacher keeps a log of any incidents of poor behaviour and parents are quickly involved in helping to deal with the problem before it becomes serious.
41. The assessment policy gives clear guidance for teachers and they use consistent procedures to assess all pupils' attainment. Teachers monitor academic progress very carefully. This starts in Reception where assessment is thorough and the records of the progress and achievement of all the children are good. This provides good information for the next teacher. Systems to monitor pupils' academic progress are good in English and mathematics. The information gained is used in planning and to identify short and longer term targets for individual pupils. The assessment of children who have special educational needs is detailed and their progress is also very carefully monitored. Individual education plans are well-matched to specific need. Pupils' achievements in other subjects are currently less closely monitored and there is less routine recording of what pupils know, can do and understand. The assessment co-ordinator has identified this as the next area for action.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. Parents feel this is a good school and express positive views about it. The inspection confirms this view. The school continues to work very hard to involve parents and appreciates any support they give. Parents are consulted over whole-school developments as well as about their own child. They have easy access to teachers and classroom assistants if they wish to speak to them. They receive very good information about the day-to-day happenings in the school through frequent newsletters. The governors' annual report is excellent and gives a very full account of all that has happened and been discussed during the year, with detailed reports from governor representatives. Parents would appreciate more information on the topics their children are learning about, so that they can give support at home. The school is aware of this and is planning to produce a leaflet. Parents were less positive about the activities provided outside lessons. However the inspection team felt that the range is satisfactory given the young age of the pupils.
43. Parents are very supportive of the school and most come to discuss their children's work. Parents of children in the Reception classes are fully involved in hearing children read at home. Many other parents also hear their children read regularly, though a number do not. The parents of children who have special educational needs are fully involved in discussions about appropriate levels of support.

44. Reports to parents about their children's work during the year are very detailed and include a contribution from the child, often in the form of an annotated picture. The best give a very clear account of what the child can do and the progress made during the year in all subjects, not just in English and mathematics. Sometimes too much jargon is used and this reduces the clarity of the report. Many parents respond with comments and words of thanks. This shows the close and constructive relationship the school has with these parents.
45. A number of parents are able to help in classrooms and provide valuable help to the teachers. A very lively and energetic Infant School Association organises a number of social and fund-raising events each year. The considerable sums of money raised have purchased adventurous play equipment and computer equipment. Events such as the Christmas performances and sports day are very well attended. Grandparents are encouraged to come and talk about their school days and this is valued and enjoyed by all.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The school continues to be very well led. The head teacher has an exceptionally clear vision for the school that builds on its clear aims and values. The resultant ethos of the school is strong and is evident in the happy but purposeful working atmosphere created for the pupils. The head teacher has worked very hard to maintain the success of the school. Much of her time has in the past, been taken up by issues relating to the Nursery, but this situation is being resolved. The head teacher and deputy have a strong and effective working partnership. They provide very good role models for management and teaching. Delegation of areas to subject managers is appropriate. The early years co-ordinator manages her role very effectively. She works well with her team of classroom assistants and has a good induction programme for them. The English co-ordinator has had a substantial impact on her subject. The role of other co-ordinators still requires development but all co-ordinators have made a positive impact on the standards in their subjects.
47. The head teacher and deputy liaise very well with the governing body, briefing them effectively. The governors in their turn are well led, extremely committed, very knowledgeable and fully discharge their statutory duties. They have planned and implemented radical changes in the format of their committee and meeting structure and continue effectively to evaluate their own performance.
48. The head teacher and deputy monitor teaching and the implementation of the improvement plan consistently and thoroughly. Lessons are observed, planning scrutinised and books examined. Teachers receive feedback but the system for ensuring that information gained from the monitoring is used effectively in the next stage of development planning is not as effective as it could be. Some subject co-ordinators have been able to monitor teaching and planning in their subjects, but time constraints have prevented further developments. There are plans for the co-ordinators to do more of this work. Performance management is seen as an integral part of the work of the school and staff and governors were involved in developing the performance management policy. Pupils are also consulted and their views are taken seriously. The head teacher meets weekly with a different group of Year 2 pupils to talk with them about their work and their views of school.
49. Pupils' work and test results are very thoroughly analysed both in terms of individual performance and to evaluate how far the school is succeeding in raising standards. A great deal of time is spent in target setting for tests in English and mathematics and in adjusting individual pupil targets. The results are well used to refine the priorities of the school improvement plan and have resulted in improvement in standards. The school has the capacity and initiative to improve still further.

50. The staff are very committed and all are valued and consulted. They work as a strong team and all are involved in the updating of the school development and improvement plans. These are detailed documents which establish clearly the priorities of the school and are appropriately costed. In the main priorities are very appropriate, but teaching writing is not yet enough of a priority.
51. Teachers and teaching assistants are well deployed to make good use of their skills and expertise. The staff training programme is good and individual development is encouraged. All necessary staffing policies are in place. Newly qualified teachers are well supported and the induction policy for other new staff is being updated, together with the new staff handbook.
52. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed. Class teachers are fully involved in writing individual education plans and the consultation and liaison with parents is good. Most pupils are supported in class, with sensitive use of withdrawal sessions for specific purposes.
53. Financial management is well organised with very capable staff in charge. Financial procedures are effective and new technology is appropriately used to support financial planning. The governor designated as responsible officer for finance has a very good grasp of the system and the governors follow up audit recommendations assiduously. The school pays due regard to the principles of best value, but this is still an area of development for the governing body.
54. The school is very well resourced and facilities are generally very good. Buildings are in good repair and the playground is well equipped. The school has the use of the Junior School playing field and swimming pool. Plans to improve facilities include re-siting the library and developing the outdoor area for the Reception Year.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The head teacher, staff and governors have a strong commitment to the continuing improvement and the school improvement plan identifies a number of sensible priorities. The only issues not clearly identified in the planning relate to writing and the presentation of work. These need to be incorporated into the planning. The head teacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) Improve standards in writing by
 - planning more opportunities for pupils to write at greater length and in more depth in English,
 - exploiting more fully opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills in other subjects such as mathematics, history and geography;
- (2) Improving the presentation of pupils' work and their handwriting by
 - adopting a more consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting including developing the use of a joined style,
 - having higher expectations for the presentation of work;

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

27

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

20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	8	13	4	0	0	0
Percentage	7	27	50	15	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, three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y2

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

149

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

YR – Y2

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

0

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

35

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

7

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving

10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the year 2000-2001.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

		Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for		2001	28	36	64
National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	26	28	
	Girls	35	34	33	
	Total	62	60	61	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (89)	94 (96)	95 (96)	
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)	

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	27	27
	Girls	34	34	33
	Total	61	61	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (93)	95 (96)	94 (98)
	National	85 (84)	85 (88)	89 (88)

Percentages in brackets refer to 2000

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	117
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	29.8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: YR– Y2

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	106

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	419493
Total expenditure	396927
Expenditure per pupil	2217
Balance brought forward from previous year	38892
Balance carried forward to next year	61458

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

149

Number of questionnaires returned

55

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	31	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	49	4	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	40	0	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	60	8	0	6
The teaching is good.	47	47	0	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	52	9	2	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	35	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	44	55	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	35	51	7	2	5
The school is well led and managed.	55	40	0	2	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	39	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	32	17	6	28

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

55. The school had one Reception Class at the time of the inspection with another group of children starting school in January 2002 in a second Reception Class. Most of the children have attended the private nursery class which shares the school site.
56. The assessment of children's knowledge, skills and understanding which is done shortly after the children start school shows that most start the Reception Year with below average attainment. The inspection evidence supports this. In particular speaking and listening skills and knowledge of literacy are limited. At the time of the inspection children in this class were already on track to reach or exceed the early learning goals in all areas so achievement overall is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
57. In all the areas of learning the teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good, and sometimes excellent. Planning is meticulous and the teacher and classroom assistants work very well as a team. Classroom assistants generally know what they are expected to do, though occasionally they were not wholly clear about the overall purpose of the activities.

Personal, social and emotional development

58. Personal, social and emotional development is a very important aspect of the Foundation Stage. The teacher and classroom assistants act as good role models and consistently maintain the positive atmosphere which nurtures these high standards. They make their expectations very clear and have developed good classroom routines which give the children a sense of security. Consequently the children achieve very high standards of behaviour. They learn to listen very well and are interested, excited by, and involved in their learning. They move very well into groups for their independent work and they concentrate intently on these. They look after each other, they take turns, they share and they co-operate very well, and have a good grounding in right and wrong. Their behaviour moving around the school and in assembly is exceptional. The children are on target to exceed the expectations of the early learning goals.

Communication, language and literacy

59. The children are in line to achieve the early learning goals in language. They make good progress in listening, but the standards they reach are still below average in speaking. The children are given a large number of opportunities to speak to each other and good use is made of the role play area. They are encouraged to expand their vocabulary and were using words such as "shimmering" and "shining". More discussion about their talking during independent work would help them make better progress.
60. The children enjoy whole-class reading sessions and know the terms 'title' and 'author'. They were responding enthusiastically to "Brown Bear Brown Bear", learning animal names and consolidating their knowledge of colours through this sensible choice of book. This lesson was typical of the whole-class teaching of reading skills, which is excellent, with especially good preparation of materials, pace of work and use of resources. The children were very carefully and enthusiastically shown how to work out the words. They played games involving the sorting of words by initial letter and most children could recognise a number of initial sounds. They followed as the teacher read and understood how to use books. Because of the good teaching some children can already read individual words and are building a vocabulary of words known by sight. Work is carefully matched to ability and because of this one pupil is already blending letters to

work out unknown words. Smaller group reading sessions are also well run, but individual reading sessions are not as structured.

61. Writing is less well developed, but is still average for the age of the children. They are able to write their name in the air and most can do this on paper. Most can write some letters and a few write recognisable words. The children are not keen to write and opportunities to write have to be carefully built in. Children were, for example, writing orders and menus in the role play café; there are not yet enough of these types of activities.

Mathematical development

62. Children are similarly on course to achieve the early learning goals in mathematical development, and they make good progress. They can count to at least 10; some can count to 20 and a few up to 100 with help. Most can count back from 5. They recognise and use coins to go shopping, buying plants in the 'plant nursery' outside. Mathematics is well taught and the pace of the mental mathematics sessions is brisk. Staff make good use of a mixture of whole-class and group activities to help pupils become confident and accurate when using numbers. Children are given real opportunities to use mathematics, as for example when they were asked to decide whether more or fewer pupils were having lunch than sandwiches.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

63. Children are on course to exceed the early learning goals in knowledge and understanding of the world. This part of the curriculum is exceptionally well planned and very well taught with clear explanations and good feedback. The current topic about Noah's ark was carefully planned to integrate all these areas of learning and the children were engrossed in the Biblical story. The teacher brought science into colour mixing with the children looking at and making rainbow colours using tinted cellophane. Children also made very good progress in understanding features of plants and facts about some animals. Design and technology was well developed using small and large construction apparatus to a design brief. Outside a group was engaged in making Noah's ark out of large blocks.
64. Other children were involved in a useful real-life project when planning a party for the new Reception children. They were designing and decorating paper plates, learning to manipulate tools, cutting and sticking. Yet another group was baking cakes for the party and decorating them, taking care both to design and to mix colours for the icing. All these activities were excellently chosen to develop the skills in question. Children were also able to use the computer independently, to manage the mouse and follow instructions. No geography was seen, but photographs showed children making maps and constructing "the City of London" out of blocks.

Physical development

65. Physical development is also very well taught with the teacher giving good clear explanations and having high expectations for what children could achieve. They move very well, demonstrating good control and the ability to use space. Again they worked in context, using the Noah story and attempting to move like animals. Children were able to skip, hop and work quietly and independently. Achievement was very well celebrated - "He couldn't skip last week and now watch this. Well done". Tracing activities, the use of brushes and tools and the use of modelling clay help children to develop their ability to control small tools and work in more detail. The outdoor area is well used to motivate children and develop their skills. Again the children are in line to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the year.

Creative development

66. Creative development is another area in which pupils are likely to exceed the early learning goals. Teachers plan appropriate activities and provide a range of suitable resources. These, together with adult encouragement and support, lead to good achievement in painting and use of other media. During the inspection children were learning to mix paint colours to achieve particular effects, for example using red and yellow to create orange. Singing was a common feature of lessons and musical rhythm was taught as part of a computer programme. Role play was an integral part of lessons and was a good means of developing speaking when supported by a class assistant.

ENGLISH

67. In 2001 the test results in English were above average for reading and writing when compared to national results. When compared to results in similar schools reading was average and writing was below average. Results in recent years indicate that standards in the national tests at the end of Year 2 are not as good as they were when the school was last inspected. However since that time the pupils' attainment on entry has declined. The 2001 results indicate that the emphasis on improving English and the national literacy strategy are having the effect of raising standards.
68. Inspection evidence showed that the current standard of work in Year 2 is in line with national expectations for speaking and listening and writing and above expectations for reading. When they start school pupils lack confidence in speaking and have a poor vocabulary. They make good progress such that in Year 2 classes they are able to explain the purpose of the lessons, role-play, read aloud with very good expression and perform in front of their friends and the school. A large number still lack the confidence to take risks such as volunteering answers, even in lessons that they find very enjoyable. Pupils make very good progress in listening. This is particularly evident in assembly, but good listening was a strength of nearly every lesson seen.
69. Reading skills on entry are also below average. By the end of Year 2 pupils have achieved very well to have reached above average standards. They enjoy reading and can read fluently, understanding the terms author, title and illustrator. They can use context cues such as pictures and have the skills to help them read unfamiliar words, though they often need prompting and support to use these. Higher-attaining pupils talk confidently about favourite authors, discuss plot and predict the story and understand the use of terms such as non-fiction.
70. Writing skills are similarly below average on entry to the school, but given their starting point pupils achieve well by the end of Year 2. However, progress in writing is more variable and not as good as it could be. In both Year 1 and Year 2 pupils do not have enough opportunity to attempt to write longer pieces of work. For example, in Year 2 lower-attainers were taping or discussing work when they could have been drafting using a computer or using a writing frame to help them in structuring their writing. There were examples of what can be achieved. A few pupils of average attainment were making very good progress indeed with obvious development in the plot and sentence structure of their stories. Pupils were enjoying constructing dialogue using speech bubbles and writing lively sections of stories. The higher-attaining pupils withdrawn for extension work every week were writing good quality family history accounts.
71. Pupils in Year 1 spend a lot of time working on spelling and word level work and they achieve well. They learn, for instance, to spell words containing consonants and vowels by playing games of Countdown. Spelling skills are above average by the end of Year 2 and this is a good achievement. Handwriting however is below average. Presentation of work throughout the school requires attention. The teaching of handwriting is inconsistent. Few pupils write using a joined style and those that can do this are not always reminded to do so

72. The national literacy strategy structure has been adapted for use in the school. Many aspects of the structure are now well used and pupils enjoy well-paced whole-class sessions with reading and writing demonstrated well. However not enough links are made with other subjects and opportunities are missed to develop writing skills in subjects such as mathematics, history and geography. However, teachers are good at introducing words and spelling in lessons other than English and classrooms are full of supporting topic vocabulary.
73. Teachers have very good knowledge, are enthusiastic and make English enjoyable. As a result pupils learn and behave well. The teaching of English is good overall. Teachers incorporate games such as cube rolling, hangman and card matching, and make reading aloud really fun. Pupils in Year 2 were very much enjoying reading a big book together and adding appropriate sound effects. They then wrote stories with plots based on their big book and were able to achieve some good complex sentences, on this occasion, because of the excellent modelling by the teacher, who then supported lower-attainers very well by guiding them in a group session. In general pupils with special educational needs are well-supported and work is well-matched to their individual needs.
74. Planning is satisfactory overall but lesson objectives were not always clear and on a few occasions expectations could have been higher. In one lesson pupils were not sure of the task, making slower progress than they might have done, though this was still satisfactory. In most lessons teachers were very good at giving the pupils precise feedback about their achievements and pupils were encouraged to be constructively critical too. A useful individual target setting system is being introduced and the effective progress made by some pupils in Year 2 was clearly linked to specific targets and the feedback from the teacher. However marking is not consistent in giving pupils advice on how to improve their work.
75. English policies are clear and useful and the subject manager is very clear about priorities for development. She has worked hard, with success, to improve standards. She is a good role model and has provided a great deal of training and has assisted in analysing results and setting targets. English was judged to be good at the last inspection. Improvement since then has been satisfactory overall considering changes in the school intake and the introduction of national initiatives.

MATHEMATICS

76. Standards in mathematics are broadly average. The results of the 2001 national tests taken in Year 2 were average compared with schools nationally but below average compared with similar schools. Standards compared with national results are not as high as they were at the last inspection, but this is mainly because of differences between year groups and the change in the attainment of pupils when they start school. The results represent good achievement for these pupils given their starting point.
77. The work seen during the inspection was consistent with the recent test results. Pupils are confident in their ability to count sort and order numbers to 100 and to add and subtract two digit numbers accurately. They count on and back in twos, fives and tens without difficulty. They can identify and describe the main two and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils have a good grasp of mathematical vocabulary and use it accurately. They enjoy mathematics, work hard and with enthusiasm. Relationships are good and pupils co-operate well with each other in paired and group work.
78. The teaching was good overall, particularly in relation to mental mathematics. Oral work is frequently very good. The sessions at the start of lessons are being well-used to develop pupils'

mental agility and their ability to manipulate numbers quickly and accurately. The teachers use these sessions and the plenary at the end of lessons to build confidence and understanding. The only relative weakness in the teaching is in the amount and quality of written work expected of pupils. In general pupils are not recording enough of what they do and their work is not well enough presented.

79. In all classes, teachers' planning is securely based on the guidelines of the national numeracy strategy. As a result, lessons are well structured and move at a fairly brisk pace. Learning objectives are shared with pupils at the start of the lesson and reviewed at the end, though occasionally these whole-class sessions went on a little long. This helps the pupils to understand what is expected of them and check what they have learnt.
80. The work is well matched to the range of attainment in the classes. For example in a very good lesson on multiplication in Year 2, the teacher had planned three different levels of work and had prepared good resources. The initial whole-class explanation, probing questions and well-timed help and encouragement enabled pupils to make real progress. The higher-attainers grasped the principle and the process quickly. Other groups worked well at their own pace and by the end of the session almost all pupils had understood the basic principle of multiplication. The learning support assistant had been well-briefed to work with one group of pupils with special needs. The head teacher provides challenging extension work for a group of higher-attaining pupils. These sessions are being used effectively to develop their problem-solving skills.
81. The teachers use day-to-day assessment well to help them plan suitable work and set individual targets which are shared with pupils. Test results are also carefully analysed to help set targets and plan further development. Pupils' work is regularly marked but there is some variation in quality and comments tend to be encouraging rather than giving advice on how to improve.
82. Resources for mathematics are good and well used. The use of individual white boards was helping the teacher to keep a check on each pupil's accuracy. In one lesson the pupils were making good use of the number lines and other mathematical displays. The use of a programmable floor robot is developing pupils' understanding of the use of ICT. More use of ICT is planned now that the facilities have been improved.
83. The mathematics subject manager has taken over responsibility only recently. She has evaluated results and looked at examples of work, but not yet had the chance to observe teaching. She is particularly keen to see more pupils reaching the higher level at the end of Year 2 and the expansion in the use of ICT.

SCIENCE

84. In 2001 the results of teacher assessment for Year 2 showed that standards are average overall, with a good proportion of pupils assessed as reaching the higher level 3. This is not as good as at the last inspection but as with other subjects it reflects the changes in the nature of the intake.
85. It was not possible to observe science in all classes but it was clear that current standards are at least average overall and some aspects of practical work are good. In the lessons in Year 1 pupils demonstrated a secure understanding of scientific concepts related to light. They were able to formulate sensible hypotheses and carry out simple experiments designed to test their predictions about which materials would make the most effective reflectors. They generally worked co-operatively and sensibly to set these up, though occasionally a few pupils were slightly carried

away by their own enthusiasm. Pupils with special educational needs were generally well supported so that they could join in fully in the lesson.

86. Work in books in both year groups showed that they had studied different aspects of science such as electricity, growth in people and plants, and forces and friction. The recording did not sufficiently reflect the pupils' understanding of their work, for example at times it included predictions, but no explanation about why the outcome had differed. Some of the work in science is supporting numeracy well. In one investigation into growth, a tally chart was used to create a bar graph of hand measurements.
87. The teaching is good. Teachers help to develop scientific knowledge and understanding through careful planning of suitable investigations and practical work. They use scientific vocabulary well, which further develops understanding. The quality of discussion in lessons was good, with a good range of visual aids readily available and questions and answer sessions used to check understanding. Teachers encouraged pupils to develop their own ideas, though some groups needed rather more direction. While pupils were working on their experiments the teachers continued to check understanding and ask questions about what pupils were doing and why, on occasion intervening effectively to put a group back on track. The only relative weakness in the teaching is the limited emphasis on the need for informative and accurate recording.
88. The school has adopted the nationally recommended guidance and the subject manager has a good action plan to adapt these to develop the use of assessment and extend the range of practical and investigative activities. She is strongly promoting the links between science and literacy and has already bought books suitable for use in group reading in the literacy sessions. She has had good access to in-service training in science which she has found supportive and helpful.

ART AND DESIGN

89. Standards in art are above national expectations and pupils achieve well. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The pupils are given plenty of opportunities to draw and paint and strong links are made with work in other subjects. Pictures are often matched with words to reinforce spelling and boost vocabulary. Pupils in Year 1 had linked RE and science with art by making collage candles and adding flame vocabulary. They had also produced very good quality self portraits, made mathematical shape pictures out of coloured sticky paper, used pastel to make firework pictures and had painted trees as part of an autumn project. In Year 2 strong links are made with ICT. Pupils had made very effective use of graphics packages to produce good quality work modelled on Mondrian and Kandinsky. The story of Rama and Sita had been used to stimulate painting and more graphics work. There were also samples of printing. By the end of Year 2 pupils have had opportunities to work in a wide variety of two-dimensional media with work well set in the context of other lessons. Three-dimensional work is less well developed, though there was photographic evidence of some attractive clay work.
90. Pupils obviously enjoy, and are enthusiastic about art. They concentrate well and are learning to observe carefully. Pupils in Year 2 were seen learning to use frames to sketch real life objects and were being given very careful feedback to ensure they could match their drawing to reality and improve their skills. Teaching is thoughtful, knowledgeable and well matched to ability. Art is planned very well to integrate with other work. Schemes of work and a satisfactory policy are in place. Resources are used well.

91. The art subject manager has collected large amounts of supportive material and ideas and is particularly good at ensuring inclusion of multicultural art. She is very clear about the strengths and weaknesses of her subject and manages it well.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

92. Standards of work in design and technology are in line with national expectations and achievement is satisfactory. The solid grounding given in the Reception Year is consolidated in both Year 1 and Year 2. Pupils in Year 1 had made models, building to a design brief. They had studied levers and made lever books. By the end of Year 2 pupils can follow the process through from design, to making, to evaluation. The current Year 2 class had applied this process to the construction of a variety of attractive puppets. Good links were made with literacy topics whilst doing this. Pupils make good, progressive use of construction apparatus, such as Lego and Mobilo throughout the school. It was not possible to observe design technology being taught during the inspection, but it is clear from work on display, that appropriate teaching methods are used.
93. Currently there is no co-ordinator for design and technology and the head teacher and deputy are monitoring the subject. Appropriate schemes of work and policies are in place. Design technology was judged to be good during the last inspection, but there was too little evidence to comment on overall progress in development of the subject since then.

GEOGRAPHY

94. No geography was being taught at the time of the inspection and judgements are therefore based on records of work. Attainment is at least in line with national expectations and achievement is satisfactory, but there is very little recorded work. As they progress through the school pupils learn to understand and make maps, based on their routes to school and the locality of the school. They study weather and make links with mathematics in recording weather patterns. They study the globe, learn about other parts of the world, such as Scottish islands and Finland and compare them with Hatfield Peverel.
95. The 'Katie Morag' books are well used to create stimulating links with literacy and pupils are enthralled to learn about island life. They are even more motivated by the travels of 'Barnaby Bear' who comes back to school with photos and diaries from his travels to engage pupils in an understanding of life in other lands.
96. The subject manager has a sensible approach to the development of geography and it is scheduled for further evaluation. The subject policy needs updating and this is recognised in the school. The subject manager is currently engaged in the sampling of work.

HISTORY

97. During the inspection it was not possible to observe history being taught but it was clear from displays, samples of work and through talking to pupils, that attainment by the end of Year 2 is broadly average. Pupils' achievement in relation to their attainment when they start school is good, even though standards are not as high overall as they were at the last inspection. This can be attributed to the change in the school's intake since then.
98. The work on famous people such as Florence Nightingale and learning about events such as the Fire of London introduces pupils to the use of historical evidence. They understand concepts such as 'then' and 'now', through comparing photographs of themselves as babies and 'old' and 'new'

through different toys. Most of the work in pupils' books consists of illustrations. This is appropriate for some topics and for the younger pupils, but opportunities are being missed to develop and extend pupils' literacy skills through writing about people and events in their own words.

99. The subject manager has taken on subject responsibility only fairly recently and history has not yet been a whole-school priority. She has sensible plans for developing the subject both in its own right and in terms of the contribution it can make to both literacy and numeracy. Resources are generally adequate and are well used. Displays are attractive and informative.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

100. The creation of the ICT suite room and the considerable increase in the access to computers that this represents, are encouraging the use of ICT, particularly in literacy and art, but increasingly in other subjects as well. Pupils are able to develop good knowledge and skills more quickly and also increase their understanding of how ICT can be used in a variety of situations. Teachers have had access to good training, which has improved their knowledge, skills and confidence. This is an improvement on the position at the last inspection.
101. Pupils are working at the level expected of children of this age. They are generally confident users of computers, loading the relevant program and with help, saving and printing their work. They knew the layout of the keyboard and were manipulating the mouse skilfully, for example several groups of Year 2 pupils were competently adding speech bubbles and appropriate captions to pictures. A group of higher-attainers were very competently word-processing their family histories and re-drafting their work on-screen. Classroom displays provide good examples of the use of graphics software. Pupils also learn to program a floor robot accurately to follow specific commands. This is supporting work in mathematics.
102. Much has been done recently to improve the use of ICT and the capable subject manager is very aware that this needs to be developed much further so that the opportunities to use ICT are fully exploited in all subjects. Resources are good in terms of the number of computers and adequate in terms of the software.

MUSIC

103. Music makes a significant contribution to the life of the school which is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Attainment is good and pupils achieve well. Pupils enjoy music, whether in lessons, assembly or extra-curricular activities. They learn to sing tunefully and with expression and can sustain a two-part song such as a round. They handle musical instruments carefully and the lessons seen in the Year 1 classes showed that they are developing a good sense of rhythm and the ability to follow accurately the beat of a conductor. In Year 2 as well as their class music lessons pupils are able to learn the recorder and the 'Belle Plates' and to take part in music festivals with other schools. These musical activities considerably extend their skills and understanding.
104. Teachers are responsible for their own class music using the whole-school framework. In the lessons observed, teachers prepared their lessons carefully and chose a topic that the pupils would enjoy. Both teachers used question-and-answer well to develop pupils' understanding of technical points. They gave pupils good opportunities to develop their composing and performing skills through discussing and then practising how to use different sounds and instruments to illustrate a

theme. The final 'performance' was taken very seriously and pupils concentrated well throughout. The session also made a good contribution to developing literacy and numeracy skills. Resources for music are adequate.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

105. Attainment in physical education was in line with expectations at the last inspection and this is still the case. Gymnastics and dance lessons were observed and pupils were making satisfactory progress. In Year 2 pupils are able to plan, perform and evaluate their work. They have good control and bodily awareness and understand the importance of safety issues. They understand the need to warm up and cool down. They can integrate their gymnastics movements into dance sequences and are learning to move different parts of their bodies to music. This work builds on lessons in Year 1, where pupils were beginning to learn dance and were following directions from a puppet, reflecting his range of emotions.
106. Pupils enjoy the lessons because of the range of activity and the enthusiasm of the teachers. Teaching was never less than satisfactory and the best teaching was very good. In the best lesson the feedback to pupils was very effective in helping them modify their movements and so make good progress. Good use is made of pupils to demonstrate ways to improve and suggest ideas. Good links are made with previous and planned work. Resources are also well utilised. Mats marked with spots are, for example, used to help pupils stay in one place when working. Schemes of work are in place and are well used by the staff. Swimming takes place in the summer. Due regard is paid to the safety issues in the policy.
107. Resources and accommodation are generally good, but the temporary installation of the library in the hall prevents optimum use of space. The co-ordinator for the subject is effective and knowledgeable. She has been able to do some monitoring and has organised TOPS scheme training in the teaching of games.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

108. Pupils' attainment in Year 2 is above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and they achieve well. They have a growing knowledge of Christianity and the main festivals and Bible stories. They understand that stories can have a meaning beyond the literal one. Visits to the local church and links with the Salvation Army support their understanding of Christianity. They also learn about other faiths, for example they had learnt the story of Rama and Sita from the Hindu tradition and there were displays about festivals such as Divali.
109. The work in pupils' books shows that a good range of moral and social issues are discussed as well as matters of faith. Pupils are being encouraged to think about personal beliefs and about relationships at a level appropriate to their age and understanding. The written work is making a good contribution to literacy, with the higher-attainers re-telling stories in their own words.
110. The subject manager is capable and knowledgeable. She is enthusiastic about the place of RE in the curriculum. The planning ensures that the teaching of RE meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Resources and displays around the school are good.