

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S CE VA INFANT SCHOOL

Plympton, Plymouth

LEA area: Plymouth

Unique reference number: 113486

Headteacher: Ms M Wild

Reporting inspector: Ms S Billington
4343

Dates of inspection: 26th – 28th February 2002

Inspection number: 195521

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

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	8 Market Road Plympton Plymouth Devon
Postcode:	PL7 1QW
Telephone number:	01752 337912
Fax number:	01752 343782
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L Rendle
Date of previous inspection:	19 th May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
4343	Ms S Billington	Registered inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs Equality of opportunity	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? What the school should do to improve further?
14066	Ms G Hoggard	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values, behaviour and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
16971	Mr R Hardaker	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History	How well is the school led and managed?
22967	Ms M Griffiths	Team inspector	Science Music Physical education The Foundation Stage	How good are curriculum opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Wessex Education
2 Riverside
Athelhampton
Dorchester
Dorset
DT2 7LG

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	11
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	13
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	15
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	16
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	18
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	19
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	23

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This school is slightly smaller than the average with 205 pupils on roll aged from four to seven. Pupils are taught in seven classes, some of which cater for two age groups. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average.

Approximately eight per cent of pupils has special educational needs; a below average proportion. Four pupils (two per cent) have statements of special needs; this is a slightly higher proportion than is normally found. The type of special educational needs is wide-ranging, including developmental delay, medical conditions and learning difficulties.

No pupils speak English as an additional language.

The vast majority of children benefit from pre-school education. On entry to school, their skills in literacy and numeracy are broadly average.

There have been several changes of staff since the last inspection and the number of support staff has significantly increased. There are currently some temporary arrangements in place to cover for long-term absences of teachers.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. Pupils attain high standards in English, mathematics and science. Teaching is generally good and at times very good. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. The school is well led and managed. Overall, it provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science
- Pupils have positive attitudes to school and are enthusiastic about learning
- Leadership and management are good
- Teaching is generally good
- There is a high degree of concern for pupils' care and welfare
- There is a strong partnership between home and school and parents get good information to encourage them to support their children's learning

What could be improved

- The organisation of the curriculum in the reception classes
- The quality of the records kept on pupils with special educational needs

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 May 1997. Since then there has been good improvement in the areas identified as weaknesses at that time. There is more rigorous monitoring of teaching and of the standards being attained. Statutory requirements for reporting to parents are now met and written reports on children's progress are detailed and informative. Higher attainers now make at least satisfactory progress as they move through the school and attain the standards that they should. Assessment procedures have improved and the information gained is used more systematically, though there is still scope for further improvement. Pupils' performance in national tests has improved overall and results compare well with those attained in similar schools.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Apart from a dip in 2000, pupils' performance in national tests is generally well above average levels. Inspection findings reflect the most recent test results, finding that good standards are attained in English and mathematics. The vast majority of pupils in Year 2 are already working at average levels and a significant number is attaining higher levels in reading and mathematics, indicating that their performance in national tests is likely to be similar to that of last year. Standards in writing are improving as a result of the focus that the school has had on this area and again the vast majority of Year 2 pupils are already attaining at least average levels with a small proportion working at higher levels.

In science and physical education (PE), pupils are achieving good standards overall. In all other subjects, standards are at least in line with expectations and in aspects of history and geography, pupils achieve well.

The youngest children in the reception class make good progress in literacy and numeracy. The majority exceeds the targets set for children at the start of Year 1. Their learning in other areas of the curriculum is satisfactory, but affected by some limitations in curriculum provision.

Pupils with special educational needs benefit from a good level of focused support and make good progress, but this is not recorded as systematically as it should be.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils have positive attitudes to school and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The majority of pupils are very well behaved in classrooms, the playground and when moving around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils work well together and form positive relationships with peers and adults. They respond well to opportunities to take on responsibilities.
Attendance	Good. Levels of attendance are well above the national average and there is very little unauthorised absence.

Pupils' very good attitudes and standards of behaviour create a good foundation for teaching and learning and are key factors in their good levels of achievement.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching is good but there is some variation through the school. Teaching in the reception classes is always satisfactory and some aspects, such as the teaching of personal and social skills and early literacy skills, are good. There are some weaknesses, however, in the way in which time is used and the curriculum is organised. Teaching in Year 1 is satisfactory and often good; in Year 2 teaching is consistently good and a key factor in the good standards attained by the time that pupils leave the school.

Literacy and numeracy are taught well in Years 1 and 2 and teachers make good use of the guidance in the national literacy and numeracy strategies to support their planning and to ensure effective teaching.

Teachers generally have secure knowledge of what they are going to teach and share their learning intentions with the pupils so that they are clear about what they are going to learn and how this relates to work they have already done. Good use is made of resources, demonstration and questions to support pupils' learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is broad and well balanced. There are some weaknesses in the way that the curriculum for the reception classes is organised.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good, in terms of the level of support that pupils are given. There are weaknesses in the systems for keeping records on the progress of these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good and they respond well to consistent expectations and the positive school ethos. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory, but opportunities are sometimes missed to promote pupils' appreciation of the world around.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. There is a high level of care and concern for all pupils and good systems in place to monitor their personal development.

The school works well in partnership with parents and gives them good information to encourage them to support their children's learning at home. There are good opportunities for pupils to apply their developing skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) as they move through the school. The curriculum for the youngest children includes all the recommended areas of learning, but provision for children's creative and physical development is limited. There are also some gaps in the provision for art and design and technology (DT) in Years 1 and 2.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides a clear sense of direction and has been instrumental in leading the school forward. Key subject co-ordinators have had a significant impact on developments in areas such as literacy, numeracy and ICT.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are well organised and fulfil their responsibilities effectively. They are very supportive of the school and well informed about key aspects of management.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good use is made of information from national tests to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum and target areas for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Funding is targeted at key areas of need and expenditure is carefully planned to ensure best value.

There is a good level of staffing; teaching assistants make a good contribution to the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. Accommodation has been much improved since the last inspection and is generally well used. The school is adequately resourced for teaching all subjects, and resources for areas such as English and ICT are good. There is currently no secure play area for the reception classes and a limited range of equipment for outdoor play, but there are plans to improve this.

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 like school and make good progress • Teaching is good, children are expected to work hard and are helped to become mature • The school is well managed • They feel comfortable approaching the school and are well informed about how their children are getting on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents feel that the range of activities provided outside of the taught curriculum is limited

The inspection team is happy to support parents' positive views of the school; their high degree of confidence is justified. There are no extra-curricular activities, as is often the case in infant schools. The inspection team found that the range of visits outside of school is limited and this aspect of provision could be further extended.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils' performance in national tests is generally well above average and compares well with that of similar schools. Overall, there has been an improvement since the last inspection, with a generally upward trend, apart from the year 2000 when there was a slight dip owing to some significant disruption in teaching arrangements for that year group. In 2001, the majority of pupils attained at least average levels in tests in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion attaining higher levels was well above average in reading and mathematics and close to the average in writing.
2. Inspection findings largely reflect the test results. Standards in reading and mathematics are above average. In writing, the vast majority of pupils attain at least average levels and a minority is working at above average levels; very few are working at lower levels. Test results show no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls with the attainment of both exceeding national averages.
3. Teacher assessments in science in 2001 indicated that the majority of pupils attained average levels with a small proportion attaining higher levels. Inspection findings are better than these results would indicate as a result of improved provision for the subject. Overall standards in science are above average. Standards in physical education are good. In all other subjects, pupils attain at least expected levels at the age of seven. They achieve well in some aspects of history and geography.
4. On entry to school, children's skills and understanding are at broadly average levels. Almost all reach the goals set for children at the start of Year 1 in literacy and numeracy. Many are exceeding these and are working in the early stages of the National Curriculum.
5. Subsequently pupils make good progress overall to reach above average levels at the age of seven. The rate of progress is never less than satisfactory and at times it is good or very good. This is particularly the case in Year 2 where learning moves on rapidly, enabling good achievement by the time that pupils leave the school. By this stage, pupils have a good base of skills in literacy and numeracy and use these effectively across the curriculum. They read with understanding and are able to locate and extract information from reference books. Skills in writing are used in subjects such as geography, where pupils describe the similarities and differences between locations and key facts about life in Mexico. In history, many are able to describe some of the events of the Fire of London from Samuel Pepys' perspective. In numeracy, the vast majority of pupils are competent in working with numbers to 100 and have a secure understanding of place value. They have good mental recall of number facts and are able to use the four operations. They begin to use their skills in collating data and represent this in graphs, for example in traffic surveys.
6. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from a good level of support and make good progress overall. This is not always recorded as rigorously as it should be.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Pupils show considerable enthusiasm and good attitudes to learning. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils' responses and the climate for learning have a positive

impact on children's progress. This was evident, for example, in a reception class where children worked hard and persevered at their number work and in a Year 1 literacy lesson looking at the 'Hurry Up Harry' story where the majority were keen to read the dialogue individually. Generally pupils behave well in lessons and move sensibly around the school. Temporary eating arrangements were in place during the inspection because of the new building. These were not very convenient, but pupils behaved sensibly and co-operated well to make the new routines work well. They are polite in holding doors open for others and talking to visitors. School and personal property is safe and well cared for; toilets and playground equipment are in good condition with no deliberate damage.

8. Pupils often form constructive relationships, both with staff and with each other; this is a strength of the school that is appreciated by parents. The youngest reception children (who started school only two months prior to the inspection) behaved well and listened to each other in a literacy lesson on a story about 'The Amazing Multicoloured Glasses'. Year 2 pupils in a music lesson listened to fast and slow sounds and then worked well in pairs, discussing sensibly what they had heard. Occasionally the behaviour of a few pupils falls below the normal high standards. In a Year 1 science lesson, for example, some pupils were restless and constantly calling out and then did not behave well on the subsequent 'sound walk' around the school. Occasionally, pupils push and jostle each other in the corridors or squabble over toys in a wet play session.
9. Older pupils in particular are showing the ability to reflect on their behaviour and how it may affect others. For example, in a circle time session where Year 1 pupils sat in a large ring for discussion, they considered the importance of friends when feeling lonely and were able to say what words and actions would help. Year 2 pupils in history, looking at changes since Victorian times, were able to draw some comparisons with their own experience. Pupils learn to be respectful and tolerant of others. For example, in a Year 2 gymnastics lesson they watched their classmates perform in a sensible way. Boys and girls play happily together and pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the life of the school. There are currently no children from minority ethnic backgrounds in the school, but pupils are encouraged to show interest in and respect for a variety of beliefs and cultures.
10. Pupils are keen to take responsibility, for example in taking registers to the office or helping with the organisation of assembly. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to demonstrate initiative and to work independently, as the majority of their activities are directed by staff.
11. Attendance is much better than national average levels and there are few unauthorised absences There were no exclusions last year.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

12. The overall quality of teaching is good, but there is some variation through the school. Teaching in reception classes is satisfactory; some aspects are good but there are weaknesses, largely due to the way in which time is used and the curriculum is organised. Teaching in Year 1 ranges from satisfactory to good and in Year 2 teaching is consistently good and at times very good. In subjects throughout the school teaching is never less than satisfactory; teaching of literacy, numeracy and ICT is generally good and there are instances of very good teaching in PE, history and geography.

13. In reception classes, all staff pay a high degree of attention to promoting children's personal and social skills and teaching in this aspect is good. Routines are well established, teachers and support staff are very clear about expectations of behaviour and there is a strong emphasis on praise, for example when children readily share equipment or listen carefully. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are well taught, but the structure of the literacy and numeracy lessons is already fully in place at this stage and this results in children being static for lengthy periods and also restricts their opportunities to experience other areas of learning. In particular, opportunities for creative development are limited and, where provided, are often over-directed by adults. There is an over-emphasis on teacher directed activities and limited opportunities for children to learn through investigation and exploration; where these do occur, children are often left to play without adult intervention and opportunities are missed to extend their learning through discussion and demonstration.
14. In Years 1 and 2, teachers have secure knowledge of many of the subjects that they teach. Guidance from the literacy and numeracy strategies is used well to focus planning; in subjects such as PE, the school's own guidance material provides good support for teaching and leads to high standards. In the most effective lessons, teachers make good use of resources to demonstrate and explain key teaching points. In a history lesson with Year 2, for example, a timeline helped the pupils to place the Victorian period in an appropriate context. Books, pictures and a CD-Rom were used well for research purposes; the teacher's very clear instructions ensured that the pupils knew how to extract information and write notes on their findings.
15. Teachers generally make good use of learning objectives to focus their teaching. In many instances, these are shared with the pupils and used for review purpose at the end of the lessons so that they gain a view of what they have learned. Lessons often start by recapping previous work so that pupils have a clear view of how to build on what they have already learned. This was a feature of a gymnastics lesson where the teacher briefly reminded the pupils of what they had worked on in the previous half term before moving on to develop the use of different body parts to lead their movements and change levels. This lesson was also notable for good use of assessment as the children worked; the teacher encouraged the pupils to improve their movements through demonstration and instruction, for example by saying 'legs nice and straight'. In some lessons, however, assessment is not used as effectively as it might be; this results, very occasionally, in higher attaining pupils not being challenged by the work that they are given and also in lower attainers struggling to understand what to do.
16. Probing questions and good demonstration are features of effective learning in many lessons. In a numeracy lesson with Year 2, for example, the teacher encouraged the pupils, through some challenging questions, to explain the processes that they had used to arrive at their answers in adding or subtracting multiples of 10. This clarified their thinking and promoted understanding of different methods that they could use for calculation. In an ICT lesson, the teacher demonstrated how to save text so that pupils extended their existing skills in word processing and were able to be more independent in their work.
17. Many teachers have good strategies for managing their pupils and very clear expectations of work and behaviour. There is some variation in this and, on occasions, lack of effective management of behaviour results in some loss of teaching time. In many classes, support staff play a key role in helping individual pupils, often with special educational needs, to concentrate and participate in discussion. Where teaching assistants have a clear role in lessons, their skills are used very effectively

and they have a very positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. On occasions, their role in introductory sessions is not clear and opportunities to use their skills to support or assess the responses of pupils or to play a more active role in supporting the teacher, for example by distributing resources such as whiteboards to children, is overlooked.

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

18. The overall curriculum is satisfactory and there is a good range of learning opportunities. The school's curriculum meets statutory requirements and includes all subjects of the National Curriculum together with religious education. The curriculum for the children in the reception classes is based on the recommended areas of learning for this stage. However, the overall quality of this is unsatisfactory as it lacks balance. Provision is too formal and there is a lack of opportunity for children's physical and creative development. Throughout the school pupils generally have access to all aspects of the curriculum but on occasions some miss important parts of lessons, for example by being withdrawn for individual reading during the introductory session in the literacy hour.
19. The school is successfully using national guidance as the basis for its curriculum planning and the literacy and numeracy strategies have been effectively implemented in Years 1 and 2. There are some good opportunities for the pupils to use and apply their developing literacy and numeracy skills. There are strengths in the curriculum provision for history, geography, science and PE, but there are gaps in the range of experiences provided for art and design technology.
20. The school has no planned programme for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE). However, some individual teachers regularly make good use of circle time (an approach that helps pupils to develop respect for others and improves their self-esteem). Approaches to this are inconsistent and the school has recognised this as an area for development. Provision for teaching of sex education is in line with the governors' agreed policy. There is currently no provision for teaching about drugs misuse.
21. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good in all parts of the school. All pupils with special educational needs benefit from a good level of support so that they have access to the full range of the curriculum.
22. The curriculum is enriched by a number of visitors. Pupils regularly enjoy visits from theatre groups, which gives extra opportunities for drama and dance workshops such as when 'Literacy Unlimited' performed 'The Talking Bird, The Singing Tree and The Golden Water'. A 'Victorian Day' gave opportunities for the children to experience firsthand what it might have been like to be at school in Victorian times. Pupils enjoyed dressing as Victorians, learning about Victorian playground games and watching a play about Victorian life from 'Chatterbox Theatre'. Book Week gave good opportunities for children in the school to gain a greater knowledge of literature when they dressed as characters from books and enjoyed a story day with 'Venture Theatre'. Year 2 children visit Morwellham Quay and this gives them good insight into how people used to live. However the range of educational visits to places outside of school is limited overall.

23. Overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development across the school is satisfactory. There is good emphasis on moral and social development but more limited provision for cultural and spiritual.
24. The school appropriately promotes pupils' spiritual development through daily acts of collective worship which teach the values and beliefs of the Christian faith. Pupils have the opportunity to engage in prayer and sometimes there are opportunities for quiet reflection, such as after singing about 'be careful what you do'. There are insufficient planned opportunities across the curriculum to promote spiritual awareness, but where these are provided, pupils respond enthusiastically. In a science lesson, pupils were excited about seeing the seeds inside a poppy head and quickly became engrossed in their activity and wanted to see and do more. This enthusiasm makes a positive contribution to learning.
25. The provision for moral development is good. The school places a high priority on equipping pupils with a clear set of moral values. Pupils are taught to distinguish between right and wrong through informal discussions, assemblies and story times. The school's golden rules are clear and supported by each classroom's set of rules; these contribute effectively to pupils' moral development. All adults in school are good role models and encourage the pupils to behave well at all times. In most classes a strong emphasis is placed on recognising and rewarding good behaviour, rather than highlighting negative responses and imposing sanctions.
26. The provision for social development is also good. The promotion of values, such as friendship and caring, forms an important part of school life. During lessons teachers talk about the importance of sharing equipment, taking turns and working together sensibly. This was well demonstrated in a music lesson when pupils were working together on worksheets about long and short sounds. Class rules, decided by the pupils, place strong emphasis upon the need to get on well with each other. In class assemblies, pupils think about ways to help others and to form friendships. Opportunities are given for pupils to develop understanding of their own roles as part of the school community and they happily respond. This was apparent in the way that they coped well with the changes in lunchtime eating arrangements and helped to make sure that these ran smoothly.
27. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have opportunities to visit the local church and benefit from learning about traditions of the different Christian festivals. Recently, pupils have also been learning about the traditions of the Chinese New Year and have enjoyed making fans and dragon masks. Year 2 pupils acquire some knowledge and understanding of other cultures by studying a village in Mexico as part of their geography curriculum. The school has recently enjoyed a visit from 'Drum Crazy' which gave the pupils an opportunity to see a variety of African drums and learn African songs. This experience broadened their knowledge of cultures other than their own. However, insufficient attention is given overall to making pupils aware of the rich diversity of cultures within the wider community of the United Kingdom.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

28. The school is a warm and caring institution where all staff know pupils well and place a strong emphasis on supporting their development and well-being.
29. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory and have improved since the last inspection. Children's skills are assessed on entry to school, but this information is not used as effectively as it might be, for example, by re-assessing children at the end of the reception year to check their progress. Pupils' progress in reading and numeracy

is tracked through the school and recorded regularly each term. Examples of assessed tasks are kept in pupils' progress books, but these are rarely annotated to give a clear overview of progress. For example, the teacher does not record how long a particular piece of work took or how much support was given to complete it. In science, there is currently no subject leader but assessment arrangements are ready to be implemented, showing the school's awareness of the right track.

30. The school is beginning to use some elements of assessment well to guide planning, for example, by putting pupils into groups for mathematics and English lessons but there is scope to make more rigorous use of the information. For example, the criteria for selecting Year 1 pupils for extra support with literacy and for tracking their progress are unclear; as a result some children in the group are not benefiting from the support provided.
31. Teachers make home visits before each child comes to school and note any concerns. Throughout the school, pupils' attendance is carefully monitored and registers are filled in according to statutory guidelines. The school is scrupulous in chasing up absence notes and will send out letters or call in the educational welfare officer if there are concerns about attendance or punctuality.
32. Teaching staff, support assistants and lunchtime supervisors are good role models, showing respect for each other and the children, but there is some variation in the ways in which they manage behaviour. School rules are negotiated with the pupils and referred to as necessary. Staff from the behaviour support service also visit the school to give help and advice for specific pupils. However, some teachers lack appropriate strategies to effectively manage mildly disruptive behaviour, whereas those with a strong range of classroom tactics successfully motivate children on all occasions. In a Year 1 music lesson, for example, the teacher used dynamic and effective ways to control and motivate the pupils, who were tired after a long day and over-excited at hearing themselves on tape.
33. Arrangements for child protection are very good. Procedures are clearly laid out and staff work closely as a team so that concerns can be dealt with quickly. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) is the designated officer and has undergone appropriate training; she encourages anyone with any concerns to talk to her informally. The staff handbook, however, needs updating for this and other information relating to health and safety and daily routines. The school has had some turnover of staff recently and also hosts a number of trainee teachers, all of whom need clear written guidance on these areas.
34. Everyday welfare routines are sensible and effective. There is a trained first aider in the school who maintains an up-to-date treatment book. Medical records are supplied by parents and the school administers medication to some pupils with long-term conditions. Toilets are clean and pleasant; temporary eating arrangements are sensibly managed during the disruption caused by the building. Staff are very good at giving pupils careful supervision in the playground, or, for example, when pupils conduct a traffic survey from the pavement outside the school. The school has maintained the high standards found at the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

35. Parents' views of the school are extremely positive: the majority is very pleased with the standards achieved. Almost all say their children enjoy school and are making good progress; they praise behaviour, teaching and the leadership and management.

They feel the staff are approachable and have high expectations for their children, and give them enough information about progress.

36. The school provides a good variety of information for parents. There are regular newsletters, useful booklets on how to help your child at home with reading and numeracy, a helpful school brochure (although this needs the addition of the statutory pupil absence rates), and the governors' annual report to parents. The parent-school association sends out regular newsletters and has done sterling work in raising funds for playground equipment. There are regular parents' evenings for which teachers make good preparation to give a clear view of children's progress; parents feel these meetings are really informative. They also stress how easy it is simply to talk informally to the headteacher or other staff if there are any concerns. Written annual reports on pupils' progress have greatly improved since the last inspection and now contain detailed information on what children know, understand and can do, as well as suggestions for improvement.
37. The school has a number of ways in which it actively involves parents in their children's learning. It is caring and supportive in introducing those new to school through home visits and a phased induction over two or three weeks. Parents have been involved and consulted on such issues as revisions to the behaviour policy, homework arrangements and even the weekly lunch menus. A number of parents help in school as volunteers. Pupils get regular homework-often reading or spelling- and older pupils have home-school diaries for parents to fill in. The SENCO has regular weekly slots when she is available to talk to parents concerned about their children. However, the parents of children with special educational needs are not always involved as they should be in formulating their children's individual education plans (IEPs). For instance, they are not automatically invited to review meetings; neither is their attendance or views recorded on their children's IEP.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

38. Leadership in the school is good. With good support from staff colleagues and the governing body, the headteacher provides effective leadership and gives the school a clear sense of direction which has resulted in the school making good improvement since the last inspection.
39. Established teachers have made a good contribution to management through having a effective impact on successful curriculum developments. For example, the co-ordinators of English and mathematics have effectively contributed to the successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, resulting in standards being raised. Good management by the co-ordinator for ICT has contributed to the good improvement in provision in this area.
40. Leadership and management have continued to improve since the last inspection. In the last report concerns were expressed about the monitoring role of the governing body and of senior members of the teaching staff. Governors now play a more prominent role in monitoring pupil performance and other aspects of school life. They are kept well informed by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators about pupil performance and curriculum developments. Some of the governors are now regular visitors to the school to see teachers and pupils working in classrooms. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and they are well informed on important issues. This enables them to fulfil their responsibilities well.

41. Governors, the headteacher and staff plan well for the future. Planning is directed at school improvement and raising standards. The overall planning gives a good sense of direction to the school by identifying the right priorities. Clear guidance is given in the planning as to the sequence of steps required for successful outcomes to be achieved. As a result of this good planning, the school has recently successfully established a well-equipped computer suite.
42. The overall monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance is good with many strengths and a few weaknesses. The headteacher has taken the lead in evaluating performance data and involves staff and governors in the findings. Information is gathered on the performance of pupils at the end of each year in English and mathematics and realistic targets are set for them to achieve in the following year. On the basis of information collected, decisions are made as to where extra learning support is to be targeted, in order that pupils will make appropriate progress. Results of National Curriculum tests are analysed carefully in order to identify areas for improvement. The school then takes effective action to remedy any curriculum weaknesses. For example, on finding pupil performance in writing being behind that of other aspects of English the school planned a strategy to improve performance in this area and this has effectively raised writing standards. However, not all data is usefully analysed. There is good information available on children's attainment in a range of areas when they start school. This data is used to group the children but not to assess their rate of progress in the reception year or to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in curriculum provision at this stage.
43. Monitoring of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection and is satisfactory. The headteacher systematically visits classrooms on a regular basis to observe teaching. Curriculum co-ordinators of English, mathematics and ICT play an active role in the monitoring of teaching and learning, sometimes by direct observation and at other times by working alongside colleagues in the classroom. However, teachers are not always set clear targets directed at further improving their performance.
44. There are weaknesses in the management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs. While the quantity and quality of the support given to these pupils is good, there are weakness in the records kept on their progress. The outcomes of reviews are not systematically recorded and are not clearly linked with the targets set in pupils' IEPs. In addition, the targets that are set by class teachers vary in quality and are often not sufficiently specific and measurable. While there is good informal support and advice available to parents of children with special educational needs, they are not always invited to contribute to reviews and the formulation of targets on IEPs. The SENCO does not have a clear role in monitoring the quality of the provision in classrooms and in evaluating the quality of record-keeping.
45. A strong feature of the school is the teamwork that is evident throughout all aspects of its life. Relationships are good at all levels and staff are committed to the well being of the children. The level of adult support in classrooms has increased considerably since the last inspection. Overall, the classroom assistants make a good contribution to the learning of pupils in classrooms. Teaching and support staff work closely together and this is of benefit to all pupils and has resulted in raising standards and creating an inclusive school. For example, in one mixed age class of Year 1 and 2 pupils, the classroom assistant, working in close partnership with the teacher, enables pupils to be provided with separate programmes of study suitable for their respective ages. However, not all classroom assistants are used as effectively as they might be and their role in lessons needs clearer definition.

46. Performance management systems are well established. Although there is need for a clearer focus on improvement in teaching quality, there is an appropriate overall emphasis on further professional development. Much of this development is targeted at whole school priorities. The successful implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies is largely due to the effective involvement of teachers in continual in-service training in these two areas. All teachers and classroom assistants have recently participated in courses aimed at developing their knowledge and understanding in ICT. This has made a significant contribution to the improvement in provision of the subject. Newly qualified teachers within the school receive very good support.
47. Financial management is good and governors are appropriately involved in financial decision making. Budgeting relates directly to the priorities set in the school plans. The school is making good use of all the financial resources available to it. For example, funding for staff training in ICT is contributing to staff having much greater confidence when teaching aspects of the subject. Funding allocated for supporting pupils with special educational needs contributes to the good progress these pupils make. Resources in the school overall are satisfactory. Some curriculum areas, for example English, ICT, history, geography and physical education are well resourced and this has a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning.
48. Accommodation has been improved since the last inspection and the overall standard is now good; on the completion of an extensive building programme, to include a multi-purpose hall, it should be very good. The school uses the existing available space well. Teachers and teaching assistants work hard to make classrooms exciting and attractive by setting up a range of stimulating displays that celebrate pupils' work and provide support for their learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

49. In order to further improve the quality of education, governors, the headteacher and staff should now:
- (1) Ensure that the curriculum for children in the reception year is more appropriately balanced to meet their learning needs by:
- making full use of guidance for planning for this stage, and in particular ensure that the objectives related to early learning goals inform the provision of appropriate activities
 - planning for a phased introduction of the literacy hour and numeracy lessons
 - enhancing provision for children's creative and physical development
 - ensuring that children's experiences are appropriately balanced between directed tasks and opportunities to explore, investigate and experiment, with adult support, in a range of situations. (*Paragraphs: 13, 18, 50, 60, 61*)
- (2) Improve systems for maintaining the records kept on pupils with special educational needs by:
- ensuring that all individual education plans include clear targets
 - ensuring that the targets form the basis of regular reviews of pupils' progress
 - systematically recording the outcomes of reviews
 - recording the dates when IEPs are formulated and reviewed
 - involving parents in reviews of their children's progress. (*Paragraphs: 37, 44*)

Minor points for improvement:

- Ensure that all aspects of the curriculum for art and design and design and technology (DT) are planned and taught throughout the school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	35
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	17	10	0	0	0
Percentage	0	21	50	29	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 almost 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)	202
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	8

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	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

National comparative data	5.6
---------------------------	-----

National comparative data	0.5
---------------------------	-----

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	27	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	22	24
	Girls	37	35	38
	Total	60	57	62
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (91)	86 (85)	94 (85)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	24	23
	Girls	37	38	38
	Total	59	62	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (87)	94 (85)	92 (90)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89n(88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	202
Any other minority ethnic group	

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

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.5
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	192.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	379,194
Total expenditure	393,618
Expenditure per pupil	2,019
Balance brought forward from previous year	17,867
Balance carried forward to next year	3,443

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
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	172
Number of questionnaires returned	56

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	23	2	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	66	29	2	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	39	2	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	50	39	5	0	5
The teaching is good.	68	29	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	34	9	0	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	88	11	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	34	0	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	55	34	9	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	71	25	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	68	30	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	30	21	4	18

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

50. The majority of children enter the reception classes with average attainment. They make good progress towards the learning goals in literacy and numeracy. Progress in all other areas is broadly satisfactory. The Foundation Stage curriculum¹ has been introduced, but teachers need to make full use of the guidance for planning in order to ensure that all aspects of provision support the objectives of the early learning goals. There is currently an imbalance between directed tasks and opportunities for children to explore, investigate and experiment in a range of different situations. There is a lack of a phased introduction to literacy and numeracy lessons, and as a result some aspects of the curriculum are too formal and children are static for lengthy periods. There is also a lack of provision for children's creative development and in many activities there is too little interaction between adults and children to promote learning through talk. There is a lack of provision for physical development, which will be remedied to a large extent when the school's new hall is finished. The school is also aware of the need for a play area specifically for reception children and has plans for this when the building work is finished.
51. Children are accommodated in three classes, with a small group of children in a class with Year 1 pupils. The teachers and learning support staff know the children well and priority is given to helping the children's self-esteem and helping them to move forward confidently in their learning. Children with special needs are well supported and make good progress.

Personal, social and emotional development

52. The quality of teaching is good in this area. The teachers and learning support staff know the children well and priority is given to raising the children's self-esteem and helping them to get to know the class daily routines. Children make good progress in this area of learning. They take turns to give out the milk each day and enjoy this responsibility when it is their turn. They sit sensibly to drink their milk and know that they must stack their cups by the sink when they have finished. There are good opportunities during these activities for social interaction with other children. When fruit is being given out each day, the children understand that they must come to get their fruit in their small groups and wait their turn sensibly. The older reception children enjoy learning about people's feelings, looking at picture cards of Doobee' (a little comic figure) and deciding how he feels and then conveying this by facial expression. This activity gives the children good opportunities to understand emotions and feelings.
53. All adults provide very good rôle models for the children, always treating each other and the children with respect and courtesy. This promotes a good level of trust, which helps the development of the children's social skills. During snack time, adults encourage the children to wait their turn and to develop appropriate manners when eating and drinking. Careful teaching helps them to understand what is expected of them in school. They learn how to work together co-operatively in small groups, for example, when they are working in small groups on the mats in PE. Teachers have high expectations of how the children should behave in school and use praise and

¹ This is the recommended curriculum for children in the reception classes that includes the six areas of learning that are reported on in this section

gentle reminders to make sure that children behave well.

Communication, language and literacy

54. The quality of teaching is good overall helping children make good progress in literacy. Attainment is good in this area of learning. Children enjoy listening to stories, particularly with some humour, for example, when hearing about the adventures of Molly, a puppet who has a new hairstyle and is afraid the children will laugh. This activity was especially effective because the teacher used her voice and facial expressions well. Children listened attentively, were involved and expressed themselves confidently when talking about what they had heard, for example in expressing a concern that Molly was unhappy. However, teachers do not provide enough of these types of opportunities for discussion in order to extend children's vocabulary and thinking.
55. Children understand that words tell the story in books and enjoy looking at books on their own or with friends. Teachers provide daily opportunities to develop reading skills, emphasising sounds and commonly used words that the children need to recognise and learn to use. The children enjoy stories and join in the reading enthusiastically with their teacher. Some children are beginning to be confident with their writing and write some simple words independently and most children know how to hold their pencils when they are writing. Most children are able to write their first name without help. By the time that children start in Year 1, the vast majority writes simple sentences independently with commonly used words spelt accurately. They write stories, labels for objects in the classroom and letters, for example to Father Christmas.
56. Children take books home to read every day and teachers keep detailed records of their progress in recognising sounds and high frequency words. Computers are used to practise early reading skills and children learn, for example, to match pictures confidently with the sounds with which they start. Children know the words 'front cover' and 'title' and are very keen to answer questions. Teachers are aware of the importance of promoting interest in reading and teach an appropriate range of skills.

Mathematical development

57. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and some aspects are good, but activities do not always take account of children's existing levels of knowledge and understanding. When teaching is good, teachers explain to the children what they will be learning in the lesson and remind them of what they learned in the previous lesson. Many incidental opportunities are used to count, such as counting the number of children in the class: some higher attaining children count confidently in twos. Higher attaining children also count to 100 in tens and the majority of others count to 20. Some children are very secure in their recognition of numbers to ten and some activities they are given are completed very quickly and do not challenge them enough. A small group of lower attainers are not yet secure in their recognition and knowledge of 1 to 5 and some of the tasks that they are given are beyond their levels of understanding. Higher attaining children have a good understanding of symmetry and can explain that 'it's when we colour the other side of the butterfly exactly the same'. Higher attaining children begin to estimate correctly how many things are in a group and fill in missing numbers up to ten or copy a repeating pattern.
58. Children enthusiastically join in the counting rhymes such as 'Five Currant Buns' that feature regularly in daily routines. A group of children also enjoyed going for a 'number walk' with the teaching assistant and were excited as they searched for and found the

numbers 1 to 5 in the correct order. This enthusiasm makes a positive contribution to their learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

59. No teaching of this area of learning was seen during the inspection and it is not possible to make a clear judgement on the quality. The range of activities and planning indicate that teaching is broadly satisfactory. Most children know which picture they should put on the weather chart to show whether it is rainy, cloudy or sunny. When using the computer, they know how to use the mouse when drawing a picture and write some simple sentences with the help of a teaching assistant. Children confidently use the headphones on the listening centres to listen to stories. At the time of the inspection, the children were learning about the five senses and had made a chart to show the different eye colours in the class. They enjoyed a visit to the church and learning about some of the main parts of the building. In a music lesson, the children named a range of percussion instruments such as tambourine and rainstick and knew that 'p' on a piece of music means that you have to play it quietly.

Physical development

60. The poor weather during the inspection meant that children could not have their timetabled outdoor play sessions. One PE lesson in the church hall was observed but an overall judgement on the quality of teaching in this area of learning cannot be made. In this lesson, children made good progress in balancing activities and moved around the hall sensibly, showing that they are aware of space. They moved the mats sensibly in pairs and watched their teacher when she demonstrated what they had to do. Overall, however, provision for children's physical development is limited by a lack of facilities: this is planned as an area for development as soon as the current building programme is completed. The majority of children develop good control in using tools such as pencils and scissors and enjoy using small construction kits, such as Duplo.

Creative development

61. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although activities to enhance children's creative development are too teacher directed. There are few opportunities for children to explore and investigate different media independently or to represent their ideas and observations in a variety of forms. There is a range of activities planned for creative development, but too many are adult led. For example, after a visit to the church, children were given the opportunity to make stained glass windows with tissue paper but the outcome was tightly prescribed and provided almost no scope for creativity. Children enjoy singing and choosing musical instruments and get great pleasure in playing long or short sounds as their teacher requests. They copy rhythms that the teacher claps for them. They make attractive prints with their hands and enjoy finger painting. They have painted pictures of themselves and carefully observed and drawn a teddy. The small group of the oldest children have had good opportunity to create their own role play area which is in the form of an eye hospital, with a waiting room and they enjoy using the tool bench where 'the glasses are made'. This gives good opportunities for talking together. However, provision and opportunities for role play in the other reception classes are limited.

ENGLISH

62. Standards in all aspects of the subject are good. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection, when standards were found to be broadly average but with higher attaining pupils not achieving the levels that they should. Children generally make good progress as they move through the school and pupils of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. Good teaching, supported by the successful implementation of the literacy strategy, together with a recent focus on the further raising of standards in writing and strong leadership in the subject are key factors in ensuring pupils' good achievement.
63. In many lessons there is a strong focus on discussion, good use of questions and the exploration of new or interesting vocabulary. The result is that pupils' skills in speaking and listening develop well. By the age of seven, the vast majority shows good understanding of the main points in a discussion. Pupils listen carefully to adults and to each other and show by their responses that they have understood what is said and can take account of others' ideas. Many pupils talk with confidence in a range of situations using a wide range of vocabulary. This was evident when Year 2 pupils were discussing the feeling of the main character in 'Dear Greenpeace' when they used terms such as 'curious' and 'disappointed'. Pupils' good skills in this area support their learning in subjects across the curriculum so that they are able to accurately describe, for example, a range of different types of materials in science.
64. Throughout the school pupils show a keen interest in books and read regularly at home and at school. There is a good focus on teaching key skills in reading from the earliest stages and teachers make particularly good use of introductory sessions in the literacy hour to extend pupils' understanding of how to interpret text. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, the teacher gave a good explanation of how changes in the print, such as the introduction of bold text, influences the expression of the reader. She also introduced the term 'ellipsis' and discussed how its use creates a sense of anticipation for the reader. This was challenging for these young children but they enjoyed 'spotting' where an ellipsis subsequently occurred, followed the teacher's lead in introducing the correct intonation as they read the story and, in some instances, made a good attempt at pronouncing the word! Mid-way through the year almost all Year 2 pupils are reading at the levels expected by the end. A significant minority is attaining higher levels. Pupils read accurately, use a range of strategies to tackle words they do not recognise and show understanding of what they read. Higher attaining pupils are aware of the need to pay attention to punctuation and read with expression. They are beginning to read with critical appreciation and are aware of how to use their skills to find information in a dictionary or reference book.
65. Pupils' skills in writing progress steadily as they move through the school. At the start of Year 1, the majority of pupils write a few sentence with some common words spelt accurately and use their knowledge of sounds well in making recognisable attempts at spelling other words. Their skills are extended and they learn to retell stories with some detail, write structured accounts of their activities and start to apply their skills across the curriculum, for example in making lists of ingredients for fruit salad and noting their observations in science. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils write clearly structured accounts and stories with a good sense of sequence. They are beginning to use vocabulary for effect; a small number of higher attainers make good use of descriptive terms to engage the reader's attention – 'his eyes were glinting in the moonlight'. Spellings are generally accurate and handwriting is legible and clearly formed, although few pupils consistently join their letters.

66. Teaching is generally good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and are clear about the aspects of English that they are going to teach in each lesson. They make effective use of questions and explanations to extend pupils' understanding; in one lesson with Year 2, for example, the teacher drew attention to the differences in language and tone in formal and informal letters. In the most effective lessons, teachers use every opportunity to write with the pupils, for example, by making notes of key words that might be used or demonstrating the layout of a letter. Support staff generally make a very positive contribution to teaching and learning; this is particularly effective where the teaching assistant sits with individual pupils in whole class sessions, aiding their concentration and understanding, before moving to work with a particular group.
67. Pupils' progress in reading is tracked systematically as they move through the school. Samples of their written work are retained to show the progress that they make, but these are rarely annotated to identify the particular skills or understanding that each shows. Some useful professional development has been undertaken to give guidance to staff on teaching writing and on assessing written work; the latter now needs to be used more rigorously to evaluate pupils' progress and to identify the next step in their learning. The school is well resourced to teach all aspects of English, with a particularly good range of books, although some of the core reading materials are in poor condition. An attractive library area has recently been established, but this is currently under-used. Good use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning, for example, as they research aspects of history or word-process their written work.

MATHEMATICS

68. Standards attained by pupils by the age of seven are good. In Years 1 and 2 pupils achieve well in all areas of the subject. This is an improvement since the last inspection. At that time there were concerns that the higher attaining pupils were not achieving as they should. As a result of improved planning, better teaching and the provision of more challenging activities these pupils are now achieving well and this is no longer an area of concern. The successful implementation of planning based on the national numeracy framework and the effective application of the suggested teaching strategies ensure that pupils leave the school with a good base of numeracy skills.
69. Pupils start Year 1 with a satisfactory base of numeracy skills; most count small numbers of objects, sort them and sequence them in simple patterns. Pupils refine and extend these skills in Year 1, learning how to add numbers together, first by 'adding on' and then by using previously memorised simple number bonds. Year 2 pupils move on and continue to extend their understanding. Through guided practice they become more confident about using higher numbers. They learn to count in 5s and 10s. Using a 1 to 100 number square, with the support of the teacher, they begin to recognise patterns in numbers and the importance of place value. Through this sort of activity, they build up an understanding of how numbers work. They learn to subtract numbers, first taking off one then extending the process to involve larger numbers. There is a clear focus on numeracy skills but other areas of mathematics are appropriately covered. Pupils develop a good awareness of the properties of shapes and lines of symmetry. They begin to measure, first using arbitrary measures and then standard units. Well paced lessons and a purposeful approach ensures that work is appropriately challenging for all pupils and their progress in learning is good.
70. The higher and average attaining pupils in Year 2 understand simple fractions, such as half and quarter, and are confident when adding or subtracting numbers to 100,

having good mental recall of addition and subtraction facts using numbers to 20. These same pupils have good knowledge of a range of multiplication facts. Higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of place value including hundreds. They accurately order numbers including hundreds. They explain strategies they use when doing this. Average attaining pupils have a good understanding of place value when handling two digit numbers. Both higher attaining and average attaining pupils are clear about the characteristics of odd and even numbers. Lower attaining pupils count accurately when using practical aids. Pupils use an appropriate range of mathematical vocabulary when discussing their work; higher attaining pupils, for example, can use the term 'multiple' in context. Achievement of pupils is good, and their recorded work shows that they are making good progress. Those with special educational needs are making good progress and they achieve well as a result of good support. All pupils apply themselves well to mathematical tasks. They quickly settle to class and group activities after the initial whole class sessions. They co-operate well and the pace of working is usually good.

71. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and this is helping to promote effective learning. The best teaching, for example that seen in a Year 2 lesson, reflects very good subject knowledge, with clear explanations and demonstration and careful attention being given to the wide range of learning needs of pupils in the class. Teachers have successfully implemented the national numeracy strategy and work is generally matched well to pupils' levels of attainment. Teachers use mathematical vocabulary effectively. On occasions pupils use their numeracy skills well in other subjects, for example in graph work in geography when carrying out a traffic survey. In history pupils are introduced to timelines. Teachers use ICT well to support teaching and learning.
72. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and very enthusiastic. She uses assessment data to track pupil progress throughout the school and she has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. The subject is adequately resourced and these resources are used well to support teaching and learning. The curriculum places a strong emphasis on numeracy but also addresses the requirements of other aspects with the result that standards are consistent across all areas of mathematics.

SCIENCE

73. Standards attained by pupils at the age of seven are above average. This is the result of improvement in the coverage of the curriculum, ensuring that pupils have good experience of all aspects of the subject. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress as they move through the school. Pupils in Year 1 learning about light identify objects that give light, such as a candle or a torch and explain why it is important to wear something reflective for safety when out in the dark. They know that a reflective object can be seen in the dark. They discover that metal objects, such as paperclips or drawing pins stick to a magnet. In Year 2, pupils learn more about materials and carry out tests to find out about materials changing shape; they learn that some, such as a rubber ball, return to their original shape and others like plasticine, do not change back. By the age of seven, pupils know the differences between a small baby, a toddler and an older child and know that as living things grow, they change. They also learn about food groups and know that fruit and vegetables are important elements in a healthy diet.. They understand that it is possible to sort animals into groups by the way in which they move, such as walking, slithering or flying.

74. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers make lessons interesting with effective use of resources that involve the pupils well in practical activities. For instance, when pupils were learning about sound, the teacher made the lesson interesting by using a book with buttons that made a variety of sounds when pressed. The pupils enjoyed listening carefully to the different sounds and trying to name them. Teachers make good use of questioning, as in one lesson when Year 1 pupils were asked to predict what would happen when they went outside to listen for different sounds. The teacher asked the pupils to think about how a car sounds as it gets closer and the children predicted that it would be louder. Pupils in Year 2 were given a good range of materials to find facts out for themselves about seeds. They reported back to the rest of the class about how seeds disperse from a dandelion head and how squirrels hiding nuts can help young trees to grow. This activity provided good opportunities for pupils to improve their research skills.
75. Pupils enjoy science and usually concentrate well on their activities. They enjoyed a 'listening walk' around the school and later defining the different types of sound that they had heard. Pupils in Year 2 watched excitedly as the teaching assistant cut tomatoes, apples and pears to find the seeds inside. They shared books sensibly to find the information that they needed about seeds, showing one another pictures relating to their individual topics for research.
76. The headteacher is acting as subject co-ordinator at present and planning for the subject is based on national guidelines. Assessment is at an early stage but the head teacher is aware of what needs to be done to move the subject further forward. Recent training on assessment in science is helping teachers to be more confident in judging pupils' attainment. This is an improvement since the last inspection when assessment was not used consistently through the school.

ART AND DESIGN AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (DT)

77. Only one lesson in design and technology was seen and there were limited examples of pupils' work, apart from that on display, on which to base judgements. Planning for both subjects gave an outline of the experiences that pupils have as they move through the school. This range of evidence shows that standards that are broadly in line with expectations in those aspects of the subjects that are taught as they were at the last inspection. However, there are gaps in the curriculum that mean that pupils' skills and knowledge do not progressively develop in a systematic way. The school is aware of this and has identified both subjects as areas for focus for development in the next academic year.
78. In art, pupils learn to use a range of techniques to represent their observations. Their skills in observational drawing and painting are often of a high standard by the age of seven. Year 2 pupils, for example, made very effective use of pastels in studies of fruit. Their work based on that of Georgia O'Keefe, shows close attention to detail and bold use of colour in the depiction of flowers and plants. Pupils use shade and tone for effect and confidently use paint, pencil and pastels. This aspect of art work is very impressive, but overall there is limited attention to the work of famous artists and very little three-dimensional work. There is also limited opportunity for pupils to explore ideas and to make decisions about how to represent their observations and impressions using a range of materials and processes.
79. In DT, pupils have a good range of experience in investigative work and some experiences of making but not enough opportunities to design and evaluate. They learn techniques of folding, pleating and scrunching paper and in Year 1 these were

used to good effect in making a dragon for Chinese New Year. Year 2 used a variety of materials, including pasta, pulses and string, and bold colour in making some impressive Mexican masks. In some classes pupils have some experiences of designing and clearly label constituent parts of a product and the materials to be used to make it. Their evaluations show awareness of how to improve what they have made, although these are often descriptive rather than focusing on points for improvement. In making vehicles, Year 2 pupils worked well in pairs on all aspects of the designing, making and reviewing process but opportunities for experience of this type are not regularly planned.

80. National guidance is used as the basis of planning. This is helpful, but in the absence of a co-ordinator, there is no strategy for overseeing the range of experiences that pupils have and promoting the progressive development of skills as they move through the school.

GEOGRAPHY

81. Standards attained at the end of Year 2 are at least in line with national expectations and in some aspects of the subject pupils achieve well. The progress pupils make in lessons and over time is good. Pupils are given good opportunities to develop geography skills and to extend their geographical knowledge.
82. Year 1 pupils are familiar with places around the school and talk about why they prefer one to another. They learn about their locality by walking around and observing it closely. They focus on buildings with which they are familiar such as the houses in which they live and make comparisons with other houses in the locality. They broaden their understanding of the wider world by comparing houses and living conditions enjoyed by people in other countries. In their study of the immediate locality they are introduced to simple maps and they look at aerial photographs. They further develop their understanding of their own locality by studying road networks and comparing busy streets with quiet roads. They develop good awareness of the wider world through following the travels of the fictional character Barnaby Bear. The pupils enjoy participating in this project by contributing to a display of holiday postcards from other parts of the country and around the world.
83. Year 2 pupils study living conditions on the fictional Scottish Island of Struay and contrast them with conditions with which they are familiar in Plympton. In their studies, pupils are able to draw and use simple maps; they locate features such as bridges, mountains, hills, the post office and the jetty. These pupils have studied the transport arrangements on the island and know what types of vehicle might and might not be found in such an environment. They record the different purposes for which buildings are used and the work that people do. This enables them to make comparisons with life in Plympton. These pupils also study the country of Mexico in order to further their understanding of the wider world. They consider home life, school life and village life as experienced by people in that country and compare these with their own experiences. They show a good awareness of places beyond their own locality.
84. Teaching is good. Pupils learn to make effective use of a wide range of resources in their learning, including maps, good reference books, photographs and the Internet. Numeracy and literacy skills are used well in geography lessons. For example, Year 1 pupils put their counting skills to good use when carrying out a traffic survey in the locality. Year 2 pupils used their reading skills to find out facts from books and then wrote notes about their findings. In their search for information these same pupils use their computing skills searching for information on the Internet. As a result of good

teaching, pupils learn well.

85. Subject leadership is sound. The present co-ordinator has held the post since the beginning of the school year. She is knowledgeable in the subject and enthusiastic. A good action plan is in place for the further development of the subject. No issues of concern were raised at the last inspection.

HISTORY

86. By the end of Year 2 pupils reach at least the expected levels in history. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in developing a good awareness of ways in which the past differs from the present.
87. All pupils develop an understanding of the passage of time through their work on the similarities and differences between conditions now and those long ago. Year 1 pupils look at toys and compare their own toys with those children played with in bygone days. For example, they study the toys that Victorian children played with. They further their understanding of what life was like in past times by studying homes throughout history. They are able to consider the conditions under which people have lived in the past and compare these with their own present day experiences. Older pupils extend their historical knowledge through stories about famous people from the past. For example, Year 2 pupils learn about Samuel Pepys and his diaries. His writings are linked to study of the Great Plagues and the Fire of London. These pupils also learn about famous people in history, particularly those who have made some significant contribution to our lives today such as Florence Nightingale.
88. Year 2 pupils are taught a range of research skills. In studying life in Victorian times, pupils are able to find things out for themselves using a wide range of resources. These include good quality reference books, everyday objects from the Victorian era, quality photographs of everyday devices used in the home in Victorian times and the Internet.
89. Two lessons were observed during the inspection, both of which were very good. The lessons completely engaged the pupils, motivating them and arousing their interest. Pupils used a range of literacy skills to enhance learning. Working together in groups, they found a range of factual information from given sources. Having completed their tasks pupils then regrouped and shared their discoveries with one another. In this way pupils develop communication skills and confidence in speaking to a larger audience. The teachers aid learning by challenging pupils' thinking with a range of carefully framed questions.
90. Curriculum provision is good and planning takes account of both the content to be studied and how pupils' skills and understanding are to be developed in a systematic way. The school has adopted the national guidance for the subject and this provides a structure to support teachers' planning. There are good resources available to support teaching, including reference books, pictures, objects of historical significance and CD-ROMs. Good use is made of ICT and this is being further developed.
91. At the time of the last inspection some weaknesses were identified. One was that the higher attaining pupils were not sufficiently challenged. This problem has been addressed in the planning and these pupils now face appropriate learning demands. A further concern was that the co-ordinator did not monitor teaching. The current co-ordinator has only recently taken up the responsibility and therefore has not yet

monitored teaching. However, she has devised an action plan for the subject and monitoring of teaching and learning is a priority for the future.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

92. Most seven-year-olds pupils are confident when using computers and achieve expected standards when using information technology for communicating and handling information.
93. Year 1 pupils learn about the power of ICT. They learn how to make technology work, for example, how to programme a simple robotic toy in order that it will follow a prescribed pathway. Doing this they learn how to sequence simple instructions. They learn about the functions of the mouse and keyboard. They quickly learn basic word processing skills, which they extend in Year 2, learning how to change font size, change colour of text, save work and print it out. They learn how to incorporate pictures into text.
94. Pupils in Year 2 use a word-processing program to draft ideas and edit text. They write text on screen using the keyboard and they can produce both upper and lower case letters. They can change the font and the size of text on screen. They use programs to create pictures with lines and fill them in with colour. Pupils enter information and produce bar charts from data they gather. They produce pictograms showing the distribution of pets of pupils in their class.
95. Two lessons were observed, in both of which the teaching was good. Teachers are confident and display good subject knowledge as a result of extensive training. Resourcing for the subject is good, with pupils being able to work in pairs on a computer in a well designed computer suite. In both the observed lessons pupils worked enthusiastically and co-operated well and these factors contributed significantly to the good progress they made.
96. Pupils were also working on computers in classrooms in a range of lessons. Good opportunities are provided for them to develop and use their skills and knowledge in several areas of the curriculum with the result that they develop confidence in their own abilities and make good progress. For example, in a Year 2 history lesson pupils used the Internet to find out about life in England during the Victorian era. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson pupils were solving computer generated multiplication sums. Pupils use computers confidently in these sorts of activities, showing themselves to be familiar with both the keyboard and the operation of the mouse.
97. Good headway has been made since the previous inspection. Computers are now being used across most curriculum areas. Following a good training programme, teachers are much more confident in using computers with pupils in classrooms and in the computer suite. There is a good shared commitment to improve. Management of the subject is good, The school has recently established a well-equipped computer suite in its move towards the full implementation of a good development plan. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable, enthusiastic, well-informed and determined to continue the good improvement.

MUSIC

98. Standards achieved by seven-year-olds are broadly in line with national expectations. Throughout the school, pupils make satisfactory progress in music and enjoy musical

activities. By Year 2, most children sing tunefully, are beginning to have a strong sense of rhythm and confidently use a range of percussion instruments.

99. As few lessons were seen during the week of the inspection, it is not possible to make a judgement about the quality of teaching. However, curriculum guidance provides for good coverage of all the aspects of the subject, such as singing and learning about and creating music. Teachers use a carefully planned sequence of lessons for pupils to develop good knowledge of music. In one lesson, pupils listened carefully to sounds to decide whether they were fast or slow. Pictures of a car moving on a flat surface, going down hill and stopping were used to help them to understand how sounds can be either fast or slow. The teacher introduced this lesson well by asking pupils to think of different sounds in everyday life that could be at different speeds. Younger children were learning about long and short sounds and the teacher made the lesson interesting for them by using a tape recorder and giving them the opportunity to record their own voices.
100. Pupils respond well to and show interest in musical activities. They enjoy listening to the piano as they come into assembly. There is an adequate range of musical instruments to support the curriculum. These include some representing a variety of cultures and traditions, such as rainmakers.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

101. Standards achieved by seven-year-olds are above national expectations. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in physical education. During the inspection, work in gymnastics and dance showed improvement over time and good progress during lessons. Pupils show good control of their movement and good awareness of the space that they are using and of the other pupils in the class, especially when they are using apparatus. This was evident in a lesson when pupils in Year 2 were working on sequences during which they chose one body part to lead the way and to move from a high level to a low level. The teacher encouraged the pupils to improve their sequences by 'straightening their legs' or 'not wobbling when balancing'.
102. Teaching is very good. In all lessons, teachers dress appropriately and demonstrate different movements for the children, providing good rôle models. This helps the pupils to improve their own techniques. Teachers have a dynamic lively approach and are knowledgeable, which helps to promote pupils' enthusiasm. Teachers constantly monitor activities to ensure that pupils are working safely. For example, when the children were pretending to be walking like giants, the teacher reminded them they must not stamp their bare feet too hard, as the muscles in their legs could be damaged. Teachers encourage children to think about their movements and to try to improve their sequences. They give good opportunities for children to evaluate each other's movements, so giving them the chance to improve their work. Apparatus is always carefully moved and, because of good class management, pupils behave well and are obviously used to the routines of the lessons. This means that time during lessons is used well for pupils to improve their skills.
103. Pupils respond well to the very good teaching and join in enthusiastically and sensibly. They are keen to try out teachers' ideas. In a dance lesson telling the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk', Year 2 pupils were enthusiastic to show the movements that Jack makes when climbing the beanstalk. They twisted and turned their bodies and knew that for the dance to be successful and to tell the story well, they must exaggerate their movements. After the teacher explained why the 'warm-up' time is important, pupils in Year 1 were keen to warm up well so that they could feel their hearts beating

more quickly.

104. The co-ordinator has based planning on national guidance and put together a useful file of suggested activities and photographs; this provides a useful resource for teachers. There is a good range of small and large equipment, but PE lessons currently take place in the nearby church hall, while the school is awaiting a new hall to be finished. Given the constraints this places on teaching and learning, the school has done well to enable pupils to achieve such high standards in the subject.