

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **PILTON INFANTS' SCHOOL**

Barnstaple, Devon

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113128

Headteacher: Mrs A Bellamy

Reporting inspector: Mr R Sadler  
13752

Dates of inspection: 7 – 10 October 2002

Inspection number: 247307

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Abbey Road Barnstaple Devon
Postcode:	EX31 1JU
Telephone number:	01271 342579
Fax number:	01271 373459
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Elisabeth Seymour
Date of previous inspection:	14 June 2000

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
13752	Mr R Sadler	Registered inspector	<p>English</p> <p>Information and communication technology</p> <p>History</p> <p>Physical education</p> <p>Special educational needs</p> <p>English as an additional language</p>	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and pupils' achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
15522	Mr B Morgan	Lay inspector	<p>Educational inclusion</p>	<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
22347	Ms G Ransby	Team inspector	<p>Mathematics</p> <p>Science</p> <p>Art and design</p> <p>Design and technology</p> <p>Geography</p> <p>Music</p> <p>Religious education</p> <p>Foundation Stage</p>	<p>How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?</p>

The inspection contractor was:

Staffordshire and Midlands Consortium

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London WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Pilton Infants' School is situated in Pilton, Barnstaple in Devon. The community includes families from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds. The school is smaller than average with 140 four- to seven-year-old pupils on roll, with equal numbers of boys and girls. An above average number of pupils (10%) joined the school at a time other than the normal date for entry. An average percentage of pupils (17%) are entitled to free school meals. No pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and, over the last year, only three pupils have English as an additional language, which is below national norms. Eleven pupils (below average) are identified as having special educational needs, mainly in relation to moderate learning difficulties or emotional and behavioural issues. No pupil (below average) has a statement of special educational needs. Most children's attainment on entry to the school is broadly average, with some exceeding nationally expected standards in communication skills and knowledge of numbers.

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

This is a good school where, as a result of effective leadership and management and good teaching, standards achieved by seven-year-olds are above average. Pupils behave well and relationships are very good. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been very well implemented and all staff work as a team to continually raise standards and improve provision. The school takes account of the learning needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and the brighter pupils, and all pupils make good progress in their time at school. Overall, pupils enter the school with average levels of attainment and leave the school with above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The school therefore provides good value for money.

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

- Attainment in English, mathematics and science are above average and all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress.
- Teaching is good throughout the school and learning support assistants make an important contribution to pupils' good progress in both the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2.
- Governors, the headteacher and all staff work together with a common sense of purpose to bring about improvements in pupils' learning and personal development.
- Relationships throughout school are very good and pupils behave well and show good attitudes to learning.
- The school provides a safe secure environment for all pupils. Staff know pupils' personal needs well and use this knowledge to support their personal, social, moral and spiritual development.
- The school has effective links with parents, who hold the school in high regard.

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



- The quality of pupils' learning in the afternoons.
- Pupils' understanding of their own learning so that they are clear about which particular aspects of their work need improvement and how they should go about it.
- Monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning in all subjects other than English, mathematics and science.
- The system for tracking pupils' learning in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Levels of attendance.

*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 June 2000 and before that, in November 1998. The 2000 inspection reported good improvement between 1998 and 2000. This rate of improvement is being maintained and the school has good capacity to continue to improve well. Standards in English, mathematics and science have improved well over the last four years and National Curriculum test results in 2002 were very good, especially in reading. The main reason for this is because pupils continue to be taught effectively and because leadership and management have improved well. All subjects now have policies and schemes of work that guide teachers' planning and the school has very effectively used the national strategies for literacy and numeracy to bring about further improvement. The school has made significant improvement in resources and staff confidence in information and communication technology (ICT) where standards are now rising. Overall there has been satisfactory improvement in the key issues identified in the June 2000 inspection. Firstly, the school's planning for improvement has developed very well and is now effective. Secondly, the coordination of special educational needs is now satisfactory and some improvement is evident in individual education plans. However, in relation to the third key issue, although an effective assessment programme has been established, there has been insufficient progress in using this information to track standards across the curriculum in Years 1 and 2.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	D	B	A	A
writing	D	C	B	A
mathematics	C	C	B	A

  

<i>Key</i>	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

When children enter Reception, their attainment is average overall, with some achieving above average levels in communication and number. In Reception, all children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and, by the time they start Year 1, most pupils are achieving above the expected level (the Early Learning Goals) and very few achieve below national expectations. In reading, writing, mathematics and science, they continue to make good progress in their learning in Years 1 and 2 and many pupils leave the school at the age of seven with above average standards in all these subjects. The trend in pupils' test results over the last four years in reading, writing and mathematics has been one of good improvement. In 2002's tests, Pilton's seven-year-olds attained well above the averages achieved by pupils in similar schools in reading writing and mathematics. In 2002 the school exceeded the challenging targets set for seven-year-olds in reading, writing and mathematics.

These good standards are due to good teaching and effective leadership and management which have resulted in a shared sense of priorities and teamwork by all staff. Parents make an important contribution to pupils' learning by regularly hearing them reading at home. Inspection evidence shows that standards, by the end of Year 2, are satisfactory in ICT and there are signs that pupils are making good progress and that standards are rising. Pupils' work in art and design and design and technology is above average and they make good progress. In history, music, physical education and religious education, pupils achieve satisfactory standards and make sound progress. There was insufficient evidence available to make a judgement on attainment in geography. Pupils use their skills in writing, reading, speaking and listening and ICT well in other subjects and the school's sensible emphasis on basic skills has helped pupils' confidence in all subjects. The special educational needs of pupils and the needs of pupils with English as an additional language are carefully considered and this helps them make good progress.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	<b>Good:</b> Pupils, including the youngest, show good attitudes to learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	<b>Good:</b> Behaviour in lessons is good and in the mornings often very good. In and around the school, behaviour is very good. Pupils are polite and friendly.
Personal development and relationships	<b>Very good:</b> The personal development of pupils is carefully promoted by all staff. Relationships throughout the school, amongst pupils and between pupils and staff, are very good.
Attendance	<b>Unsatisfactory:</b> The school has an attendance rate well below similar schools.

Relationships seen throughout the school are very good and result from the commitment of staff to their pupils' learning and development. Pupils are developing good attitudes to school and learning. They behave well in lessons. Overall, levels of attendance are unsatisfactory.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching learning is good overall and meets the learning needs of all pupils well. Of the 28 lessons observed, teaching in five was very good, in 13 it was good, and in the remaining ten lessons teaching was satisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching.

Throughout the school, the basic skills of reading, writing and number are consistently well taught. Teachers have a very good understanding of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, and letter sounds and spelling patterns are taught particularly well. This results in above average attainment and good progress by all pupils, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language. Expectations of both learning and behaviour are high and instructions and information are clearly presented. The pace of lessons is good and little time is wasted. Learning support assistants make an important contribution, particularly when pupils are working in groups, when lower-attaining pupils are often very well supported. Pupils often lack a clear understanding of exactly what they need to get better at or how to improve their work because this is not made sufficiently clear to them. Teachers spend much time marking work but marking does not often provide pupils with enough guidance on where and how to improve their work.

The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. In Reception, learning is continually carefully assessed and work is very carefully matched to the children's learning needs. Children enjoy their time in Reception and develop good attitudes to learning and to school.

Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are well taught and these pupils make good progress in their learning. They are given sensitive and effective support by teachers and learning support assistants and in English and mathematics they are often placed in smaller groups enabling them to be provided with an improved level of support.

Although pupils' learning is good overall, it is often better in the morning than in the afternoon, which is a two hour period of teaching without a break. Pupils learning is better when they have not been sitting too long.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	<b>Good:</b> All pupils receive a high quality range of learning opportunities. The organisation of the school day requires improvement.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	<b>Good:</b> The school ensures that special educational needs are identified early and that pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

Aspect (continued)	Comment (continued)
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	<b>Good:</b> Although the school has had few pupils with English as an additional language, their needs are carefully provided for by their teachers and learning support assistants.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	<b>Good:</b> Provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good. Spiritual development is well provided for and pupils have good opportunities to reflect. Cultural development is satisfactory and pupils have a sound knowledge of their own culture, although provision for awareness of other cultures is underdeveloped.
How well the school cares for its pupils	<b>Good:</b> Procedures for child protection are very good. The school has good procedures that ensure pupil welfare. The school lacks a policy for promoting race equality but has it in hand to deal with this issue. On-going assessment of work in lessons is not used sufficiently well to provide pupils with clear information about how they can improve.

The school has good links with parents. Their involvement in school is encouraged and welcomed. Parents play a particularly useful part in supporting swimming lessons and by hearing pupils read at home. The school curriculum meets statutory requirements and there has been appropriate emphasis on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The school knows its pupils well and there is an effective regular programme of assessments.

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

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	<b>Good:</b> The headteacher provides good leadership for the school and manages improvement well. There is a very good team spirit. Although there is no deputy headteacher at the moment, good arrangements have been made to cover the vacancy. Subject leaders in English, mathematics, science, ICT and the Foundation Stage provide good leadership and management. All other subjects and special educational needs are soundly managed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	<b>Very well:</b> Governors have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, carry out their duties diligently and intelligently and ensure the school continues to improve.
The school's evaluation of its performance	<b>Good:</b> Governors, the headteacher and staff keep a careful eye on the school's results and performance and, together, use findings to plan and bring about improvement.
The strategic use of resources	<b>Good:</b> Staff, learning resources and accommodation are used well to help all pupils learn. The school improvement plan is effective, focuses on key areas and is well supported by the allocation of resources, staff training and performance management. The school applies the principles of best value by consulting parents, comparing its performance with other schools and

	challenging itself continually to improve. The school also selects the most cost-effective options for larger areas of expenditure.
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There is an appropriate number of teaching and support staff to meet the needs of the pupils. There is a satisfactory range of resources that are often used well. The school grounds are very good and the building is satisfactory and well maintained.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like school and are helped to make good progress.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Children are helped well to develop.</li> <li>• The headteacher and staff are very approachable.</li> <li>• Staff expect children to work hard.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• That they are kept well informed about the progress their children make.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>• The amount of homework.</li> </ul>

Inspectors support fully the many positive views of parents. Evidence from inspection shows that the school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular activities which is typical for a school of this type and age-range. Similarly, the inspection team found that much useful work was done by pupils at home throughout the school. Of particular note was the amount of reading that pupils do at home. Inspectors therefore cannot support parents' views on these topics. However, the school does not always give sufficiently clear information to parents about the homework that is set.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The attainment of most children when they enter Reception is average, with some showing above average communication and number skills. In Reception, all children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in all areas of learning and by the time they enter Year 1, the majority of pupils exceed the national standards (the Early Learning Goals) and others are well on the way to achieving these.
2. In 2002, the National Curriculum test results for reading were well above both national averages and the averages in similar schools. In writing and mathematics results were above average compared with national figures and well above results attained by pupils in similar schools. In reading, in comparison with national averages an above average percentage of pupils achieved the nationally expected level (Level 2), and the percentage of pupils who achieved the higher levels was well above average. In comparison with similar schools, in reading, Pilton pupils, at all levels attained well above average results. In writing, compared with national averages and averages in similar schools, a well above average percentage of pupils achieved Level 2. In writing, the school's pupils were not quite so successful at the higher level (Level 3), but even at the higher levels pupils still achieved in line with national averages. In mathematics, an above average percentage of pupils achieved Level 2 and Pilton's results were well above national averages and averages in similar schools at the higher level (Level 3). These are very good results and reflect good improvement on 2001 results. In science, based on teachers' assessments, an average percentage of pupils achieved Level 2 but a well above average percentage of pupils attained Level 3. The school's trend of improvement since 1998 has been consistently upward because of improvements in teaching and leadership and management.
3. In its school improvement plan, the school included targets for the percentage of pupils who would achieve each level in reading, writing and mathematics in National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds. Although the targets for 2002 were challenging, they were exceeded in all subjects. This reflects the way that the school's test results have risen well over the last four years.
4. The year group of pupils who achieved the 2002 results has now left, but inspection evidence indicates that these high standards are being maintained by the current Year 2 pupils. In reading, writing, mathematics and science, standards are above average, despite the fact that the school has a higher than average percentage of pupils transferring to its role at times other than the normal date for admission. The rising standards in English and mathematics have come about because the school's successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy which have helped improve teachers' skills and confidence in teaching these subjects. Speaking and listening skills are above average and some of the higher attaining pupils are able to provide sensible, interesting and detailed answers to questions. Most pupils show good confidence in speaking. A pupil with English as an additional language was able to understand instructions given in English and play an '*I spy*'-like game using their knowledge of English letter

- sounds. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their speaking and are helped to listen carefully and sustain concentration by teachers and learning support assistants.
5. Reading is above average and all pupils achieve well and make good progress both because it is well taught at school and also because parents make an important contribution at home. Pupils' skills of reading unfamiliar words using letter sounds (phonics) are particularly good because these are carefully, regularly and effectively taught in whole-class and group sessions. This also helps them with their spelling.
  6. Pupils' writing is also above average, and spelling, sentence structure and punctuation are particularly good. Pupils are able to sequence events and refine their extended writing, either by hand or on the computer. Handwriting and presentation are average. The school is working to make writing more interesting by improving the quality of stimuli and giving better reasons to write, e.g. so that they can read it to younger children in the school.
  7. Standards in mathematics are above average. Pupils' mental and written number calculation is above average and they are confident in using the four rules of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They apply these four rules to measures and money work effectively. Pupils progressively acquire mathematical vocabulary and use mathematical terms carefully and accurately because the use of mathematical language is carefully taught. They are less confident in devising their own methods for solving problems, however, or for suggesting alternative ways of working out calculations.
  8. Science standards are also above average. Pupils are particularly confident in the area of *living things* which is the aspect of science that the school's curriculum emphasises most. They have sound skills of investigation and use ICT well to present results in such forms as graphs and tables, but are quite reluctant to offer their own ideas as to how to find things out.
  9. Now that the school has improved ICT resources and because all staff have received training, ICT standards are in line with national averages and improving so that in lessons pupils can be seen making good progress. Keyboard skills are a little below average because the school's resources limit the scope for regular practice. Effective direct teaching helps pupils see how to use application programs such as word processors and art painting and drawing programs.
  10. Pupils' attainment in art and design and in design and technology is above average and pupils make good progress and achieve well in these subjects. In history, music, physical education and religious education pupils achieve satisfactory standards and make sound progress. It was not possible to make an evaluation of standards in geography during the inspection.
  11. The school effectively takes account of the learning of all pupils so that higher-attaining pupils, lower-attaining pupils, those with English as an additional language or special educational needs make good progress and achieve well, especially in English mathematics and science.

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

12. The last inspection report found much to commend in this area of the school's work. Parents say clearly that children enjoy school and are helped to make good progress in both their learning and personal development. Evidence from inspection supports these positive views in much of the school's work in this area. Overall, this area remains a strength of the school.
13. Pupils are able to learn in an environment that is free from oppressive behaviour such as racism, bullying and sexism. They show good standards of behaviour, good attitudes towards school and learning and the very good relationships amongst all members of the school community make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and development.
14. In the Reception Year all children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They are encouraged and supported well when starting school. They are quickly learning school routines and are settling well and enjoy the activities provided for them. They are learning to listen to adults and each other, as well as taking turns and working together.
15. Throughout the school, pupils, including those with special education needs and where English is not their first language, continue to display these positive attitudes to learning. They are interested in their work and share and co-operate with one another well.
16. Behaviour in the majority of lessons is good and on many occasions, very good. In no lesson was unsatisfactory behaviour seen. Examples of very good behaviour were seen in lessons in all year groups. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson very good behaviour was seen as pupils responded very well to stimulating work which ensured their interest was maintained throughout. In the Reception class, children showed very good concentration when beginning to learn about books. Pupils in a Year 2 English lesson about text writing worked well together, discussing their answers carefully before responding. However, these high standards of behaviour are not seen consistently throughout the school day. Whilst no unsatisfactory behaviour was seen, the general level of behaviour during the afternoon sessions was below that seen in the mornings. The structure of afternoon sessions means that lessons are sometimes over-long and pupils find it hard to sustain the good levels of concentration and positive attitudes to learning described. Overall however, teachers' management of behaviour is good and this, when linked to the pupils' generally positive attitudes to learning, is enabling them to develop good skills in concentration, of working together, and in taking turns.
17. Behaviour in and around the school is very good. Pupils are polite and friendly and enjoy learning, and sharing what they have learnt with adults. At break and lunch times they play well together. In the dining room they behave well, talking sensibly with one another. The school has a policy for behaviour which is consistently followed by staff but there is no anti-bullying policy. Parents express considerable confidence in the school's handling of these matters, however, and inspection evidence supports these views.
18. Pupils, including those who have special education needs and where English is not their first language, show good personal development because teachers and learning support assistants know pupils very well and use this knowledge to support their development. The school has a programme of personal, social and health education which is taught with support from visiting specialists from time to time. No pupils have been excluded in the last twelve months.



19. Pupils are beginning to learn to take responsibility by acting as monitors from time to time but overall, these opportunities are too few. Similarly pupils have too little opportunity to take responsibility for their own work and carry out research independently. Relationships throughout the school community are very good and are a major strength. Staff are committed to the welfare and development of pupils and they respond well to them in turn.
20. Levels of attendance are unsatisfactory. Overall they are well below those seen in similar schools nationally. Unauthorised absence is below that normally seen. High levels of authorised absence, mainly pupils taking holidays during term time, accounts for much of the overall low levels. The school insists on written requests for such absence and considers each carefully before agreeing them. It seeks to encourage parents not to take such absence during the periods when pupils are involved in national tests. It works with the Education Welfare Officer in any case where a pupil's absence gives cause for concern. Overall punctuality is good and sessions and lessons start promptly. The school has a sound system to check the reason for lateness and absence.

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

21. During the inspection, 28 lessons were observed. Of these, five were very good, 13 were good and the remaining ten were satisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. This means that the significant improvement noted in the June 2000 inspection has been consolidated and teaching remains good overall, despite a number of staffing changes. The quality of teaching is consistently good in all three year groups. This is the key reason why pupils make good progress in their learning during their time at the school.
22. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall. Lessons are planned well and all areas of the curriculum are given good coverage. Children's attainments on entry are carefully assessed and this information is used well by the teacher and learning support assistant (LSA) to ensure that activities match the learning needs of each individual child well. This enables all children to make good progress, and by the end of the Foundation Stage, many have already moved on to Year 1 work. The teacher's questioning is often very good and helps children develop their skills and understanding. For example, when the class were enjoying watching a TV programme, the teacher interjected with good questions such as "*how many sheep?*" or "*how many more to make four?*" Relationships are strong and this helps children be secure and confident in lessons and at school and this helps them achieve well. The teacher's and LSA's high expectations of behaviour means that children were aware of and also implemented the good class routines and were being very well prepared for their work later on in the school. Although the LSA worked very effectively with children when they were working in groups or individually, especially by supporting the learning of those with special educational needs and the less mature children, in whole class sessions she was under-used and was not able to help with the children's learning.
23. The quality of teaching is good overall in Years 1 and 2 and this helps all pupils, including those with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and higher attaining pupils to continue to make good progress. Because teachers have secure subject knowledge, they plan work well, taking account of the full range of ability in the class. Secure subject knowledge also enables teachers to hold appropriately high expectations and most pupils for

most of the time are doing work that is just hard enough for them. Behaviour and class management is often very good and relationships are mostly very good in lessons and very little time is wasted with sorting out behaviour problems or moving between various activities in lessons.

24. Learning support assistants are invariably used very well in group work in lessons when they often work with pupils who are finding the work more difficult or with pupils with special educational needs to enable them to keep up and make good progress. In some lessons, during whole class sessions, LSAs make an important contribution by helping pupils with special educational needs sustain concentration and follow the lesson. In other lessons, however, their contribution is less apparent during whole class sections of the lesson. The school has recognised the need to reconsider the allocation of LSAs in some classes, particularly in the context of the plan to provide additional literacy support to some Year 1 pupils after Christmas.
25. Although some parents were critical of the amount of work pupils are given to do at home this view was not upheld by the evidence gained during the inspection. The organisation of home reading is very effective and many parents hear their children read at home. This helps pupils learn to read and is an important factor, along with the good teaching in school, in ensuring the high reading standards evident throughout the school.
26. Pupils' learning is often noticeably better in the morning than the afternoon. There are a number of factors that cause this. The first is that the majority of morning lessons are literacy and numeracy lessons and the school has placed more resources into monitoring, evaluating and improving teaching in these subjects. The school's very successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy has also helped teachers develop their skills and confidence in these subjects. A second factor is that the afternoon is a two hour period without a break and pupils' concentration and participation in the afternoon wanes, especially when they are in lessons where they are sitting and listening and are less active. A third factor is that the balance of activities is not effectively planned or monitored so that pupils receive periods of more active work between periods of passive work. On days where they receive a similar diet of activities throughout the day, for example, in a Year 2 class where they were taught literacy and numeracy all morning and then had a lesson in the afternoon where they were sitting and listening for too long, they became a little restless and lost concentration. The school has already recognised these findings and is keen to consider what changes can be brought about to make further improvements in the quality of pupils' learning in the afternoon.
27. English is well taught overall and reading is very well taught. The teaching of phonics is particularly good and in Years 1 and 2 all pupils receive regular teaching of phonics using national guidance. This helps pupils achieve above average standards in reading. Mathematics is also taught well. The teaching of English and mathematics has benefited from the training provided as part of the school's very successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy.
28. ICT teaching is good because teachers have undertaken training and have secure subject knowledge and confidence. They are able to teach particular skills of ICT and also use ICT in other subjects, particularly in English, where pupils help develop their writing skills using word

processors, and in science and mathematics where information is clearly presented using graphs and tables that are constructed on the computer. Whole class teaching is good and the school's new data projector enables all pupils to follow the lesson easily. The lack of a computer suite means that it is more difficult to ensure that all pupils gain sufficient experience of using computers, but all classes organise turn-taking carefully to ensure that practice is undertaken. Science teaching is good overall and this helps pupils make good progress and attain above average standards. In science, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge in their planning. Interesting activities are planned, and teachers use effective methods to help pupils learn. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson on the effect of exercise on the body, pupils were shown how to find their own pulse and could see for themselves the effect of exercise on their own body.

29. Art and design is taught well and history, music and physical education are taught competently. It was not possible to evaluate the quality of teaching of geography during the inspection.
30. A particular strength in teaching is to be seen during whole class sessions when teachers give information very clearly and ask questions carefully to help pupils develop their knowledge and skills. Pupils are given a range of ways of answering questions, including using small white boards and holding up their answers. This ensures that all pupils participate and concentrate and enables the teacher to check the learning of all pupils so that she can modify her approach for particular individuals. Questions that help pupils develop their understanding are quite rare. In mathematics lessons, for example, pupils are often asked to give answers to problems that demonstrate their skills in calculation but are rarely asked questions that develop their understanding. Thus, they are rarely asked "*how did you work that out?*" or "*can you think of other ways of finding out that answer?*" or "*who can think of a quicker way to work that out?*"
31. There are some weaknesses in the use of ongoing assessment in some lessons. Pupils often show a lack of clarity as to which particular aspect of their work they need to try to improve. In writing, pupils are often given targets in an attempt to help them see where improvement is needed. Some pupils, for example, have as a target that they need to make their handwriting neater, but they are not clear about what that means or how to do it. In other lessons three or four targets are emphasised and this means that pupils are unclear about exactly where to focus their efforts. At the end of most lessons, pupils are asked to review the work they have completed in the lesson but often too many things are reviewed and so the ends of lessons lack a focus on improving one or two very specific aspects of their work. Even though teachers sometimes analyse pupils' work alongside them and show them how to improve, pupils are rarely asked to analyse their own and others' work to help them understand how to make particular improvements. There is a need to improve the use of ongoing assessment so that pupils have a clear idea of where and how to focus their efforts to learn.

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

32. The school's curriculum meets statutory requirements. It is broadly based and includes all subjects of the National Curriculum. Religious education is taught in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. The school identifies additional curriculum time which is allocated to

teaching personal, social and health education which contributes well to pupils' personal growth and development. The planned curriculum is reasonably balanced to ensure that subjects are allocated sufficient teaching time. In the time allocation, priority has been appropriately given to the core subjects of English, maths and science with particular emphasis on English. This time allocation is well reflected in teaching timetables, and subject allocation is "blocked" to ensure that subjects are covered in greater depth. This means that foundation subjects such as history and geography are sometimes taught in some terms and not in others. Scrutiny of the whole-school curriculum plan confirmed that there are sufficient opportunities to ensure the coverage of all the programmes of study for all National Curriculum subjects. Because standards have now risen considerably in the core subjects, the school is now well placed to give greater emphasis to the foundation subjects, developing basic skills within them.

33. The organisation of the school day does not maximise the use of teaching time. Observations of lessons during the inspection confirm that pupils learn better in the mornings rather than in the afternoons, which is usually when the foundation subjects are taught. The one and a half hour lunch break is too long, and pupils work the remaining two hour session without a break. These factors result in pupils' concentration, application and behaviour being less secure in the afternoons and this affects their progress in lessons.
34. Long-, medium-, and short-term planning is good and this is a strength throughout the school. Staff have worked very hard in this area, and this work has contributed significantly to the improvement in the quality of teaching and the rising standards. The school's overall curriculum plan is efficiently translated into half-termly blocks of work in all subjects. This planning is securely grounded in national schemes of work, and it gives teachers clear guidelines to plan their lessons, helping them ensure they are clear about what they want pupils to learn and activities are used across the school. It also contributes to the continuity of pupils' learning within year groups and from one year to the next. Much attention has been given to planning in English, mathematics and science but little monitoring of planning in the foundation subjects (e.g. history, religious education, geography etc.) has been undertaken to help the school develop an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in provision in these subjects.
35. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is rich and exciting, giving children a good start to their school life and helps them make good progress in Reception. There is appropriate emphasis on all the areas of learning which ensures the Early Learning Goals are met and, in many cases, exceeded by the end of the Reception Year. Good curriculum opportunities are also provided in science, ICT, art and design and design and technology.
36. The school's strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are very effective, and these are an important strength. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been adopted by all teachers and they teach these programmes skilfully. The introduction of these strategies, together with a high level of staff development work, has resulted in the rise in literacy and numeracy standards and this has positively influenced work in other subjects.
37. Some parents express the view that the provision the school makes for extra-curricular activities is unsatisfactory. During the inspection, extra-curricular provision was judged to be typical of that seen in similar schools. Also, the opportunities that are provided complement

work in lessons satisfactorily. The school has plans to extend its extra-curricular provision in the future. The inspection, therefore, does not support some parents' criticisms in this area.

38. The school ensures equality of access for all pupils to the curriculum. The school works hard to ensure that boys and girls achieve equally well. Sufficient challenge is provided for the more able pupils and the provision made for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is good. Learning support assistants ensure that these pupils are included well. Their support is particularly effective when they are working with small groups. Although individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs have improved, some targets for pupils are not always specific enough or based on a detailed analysis of need.
39. The provision made for pupils' personal, social and health education is good and makes a positive contribution to the very good relationships which are evident across the school. *Circle Time* is sometimes provided so that pupils can discuss personal and social issues in a secure environment effectively contributing to their personal development. *Golden Time* is awarded to pupils as a reward for a special contribution. It is designed to develop pupils' self-esteem and allows them to choose activities. The school places a strong emphasis on staying healthy. Pupils discuss the benefits of exercise in lessons and are encouraged to bring fruit to eat at playtime. They show a sound awareness of health issues. The school has an appropriate sex education policy and also has effective and sensitive ways of helping pupils consider issues of drugs misuse. In a health education lesson, for example, pupils considered how some drugs could help people stay healthy and how others could be harmful.
40. The school has established satisfactory links with the community. The Reception class has knowledge of the pre-school settings which many children attend before starting school and there has been satisfactory liaison with the neighbouring junior school. This liaison resulted, until last summer, in the infant school's pupils using the junior school's computer suite, which helped them gain practice on computers and prepare for work at the junior school. Local visitors such as a doctor, firefighter and musicians enrich the school's curriculum and the school undertakes a satisfactory range of visits for example, to local gardens, the theatre and the cinema.
41. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Children already have appropriate values when they enter school and these are reinforced effectively by staff, resulting in good behaviour enabling pupils to have a secure sense of right and wrong. Simple rules are displayed in classrooms and these help pupils understand what is expected and how to relate one to another.
42. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The school's assemblies are good and include collective worship. Assemblies are interesting to pupils and also make a good contribution to spiritual development through themes such as '*Welcoming babies into the world*'. Pupils respond positively in quiet moments given to them in assembly, and they talk about feelings, belonging, caring and taking responsibility. Overall, the subjects taught in class make a positive contribution to spiritual development. Displays in classrooms reflect this focusing on the beauty in the world, key questions to promote thinking of how Noah would feel when he was asked to build the Ark, and a collection of 'special' objects which pupils think are beautiful.

43. The provision for moral development is very good. The school provides a strong moral code as a basis for behaviour and pupils are encouraged to think of others. They have opportunities to discuss moral issues. For example, when Year 2 pupils wrote about a time when they had behaved badly and identified why this was wrong.
44. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. Teachers expect pupils to be helpful and to try their best, to be tolerant and to respect each other. They are taught to present their own ideas and listen to each others' views. Relationships between pupils are very good, and this helps them develop good attitudes to social behaviour and self-discipline. They are encouraged to take responsibility when they clean away resources or take the register to the office. However, they do not always have enough opportunities to plan their own investigations, undertake personal research and take control of their own learning. There are many occasions where pupils work collaboratively and they co-operate very well when working in pairs and small groups in class, sharing and taking turns.
45. Overall, provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have good opportunities to investigate their own culture through experiences such as the local music festival, yet the promotion of the understanding of other cultures and the multi-cultural dimension in the world is underdeveloped. Displays around the school do not sufficiently reflect cultural diversity, and attention to this area is insufficient across the curriculum.

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

46. The school provides a safe, secure and very caring environment for pupils. It has taken appropriate steps to meet its responsibilities in relation to health and safety principles and practices. Although the school site is far from compact the school has taken good care to ensure that it is accessible to pupils with disabilities. Security arrangements have also received attention. First aid has been well organised, with staff having received training. Staff take good care of pupils both on the school site and during trips. The school has adopted very good child protection arrangements, based on the advice of the local education authority. The headteacher acts as the named person, and has undertaken the relevant training. Staff are also aware of the school's child protection arrangements.
47. Pupils' behaviour is promoted and supported well by the school's policies and procedures. Although the school has not finalised its policy on promoting race equality, a draft is due to be considered by the governing body before Christmas. Teachers, who are well supported by other staff, manage behaviour well. The result is that behaviour in and around the school and in lessons is good overall. Pupils of all abilities and ages are learning to listen to the views of others and show care and concern for one another. Whilst the school does not have an anti-bullying policy, staff respond quickly to any incident where unsatisfactory behaviour occurs. Parents rightly express confidence in the school's promotion of good standards of behaviour.
48. The school also promotes pupils' personal development well. The school has a programme of personal social and health education, taught by staff, with support from visiting specialists as necessary. Pupils' experiences are enhanced by local visits. Although pupils act as monitors in classrooms and, on occasions, help to put out equipment and materials and enjoy doing these

jobs and take them seriously, overall too few opportunities for them to take responsibility are provided.

49. Staff know pupils well, are committed to their best interests and work hard to help them develop, both in their learning and their personal development. The school has satisfactory arrangements for recording and promoting attendance. Registers are maintained efficiently. When necessary, cases of absence are followed up with the support of the education welfare officer. Parents are aware of the school's requirements in ensuring attendance and as necessary explaining absence. Despite this, the school's overall level of attendance remains well below national levels. This is accounted for mainly by high levels of authorised absence, comprising mainly the absence of pupils on holiday during term time. Whilst the school insists on written requests from parents at such times the situation remains unsatisfactory.
50. Since the last inspection, the school has made satisfactory improvements in the assessment of pupils' learning. In the Foundation Stage, assessment is effective and the information gained is used well to help pupils learn. In Years 1 and 2, there is a regular programme of assessments in reading, writing, mathematics and science and teachers know the attainment of all pupils well. Much good work has been done in establishing challenging targets for the percentage of pupils who will achieve particular levels in English and mathematics and, in 2002, the school successfully exceeded these challenging targets. Based on the assessments they make, teachers set targets for the level of attainment that each pupil should achieve by the end of the year, but these are not in line with the whole-school targets and are often insufficiently challenging. An analysis of the outcomes of teacher assessment and national tests is undertaken at whole-school level, and the information gained is used to identify improvement.
51. A useful detailed analysis is undertaken in English and mathematics which evaluates which questions pupils find easy or difficult and if there is any difference between the performance of boys and girls. This identifies the particular areas where pupils are performing less well, and this information is used to guide subsequent teaching and curriculum development.
52. Ongoing assessment in lessons is not used sufficiently effectively to provide pupils with a clear view of what they are good at, what they are not so good at and what they need to do to improve. The teacher's intentions as to what pupils will learn in lessons are not always shared with pupils so that they understand exactly what they are learning as opposed to merely what they are doing. The ends of lessons (plenary sessions) are not used effectively to check up on what has been learnt in the lesson in order to inform future work. Teachers mark pupils' work diligently, but comments are usually positive reassurance rather than making it clear what was good and why, what was less good and why, and what pupils need to focus on next in their learning.
53. There is no assessment co-ordinator at present and the assessment policy is in need of review. However, there is evidence that the co-ordinator worked well with teachers and subject leaders in the past. In some subjects, such as science, teachers have undertaken useful activities to ensure that they all assess pupils' work consistently and accurately and there has been a range of staff training activities to support this work.

54. In the Reception class assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. Staff carefully observe pupils and discuss their progress and use this information effectively to guide future work. Pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals is tracked well and monitored.

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

55. Overall, the parents who returned the questionnaire or attended the meeting were very supportive of the school. They are very satisfied with the standards achieved by their children and say clearly that their children like going to school. The large majority feel that they are kept well informed about the progress their children make. Parents say that they feel comfortable in approaching the school on any matter. The governing body has sought to ascertain the views of parents by a questionnaire and has used the findings to plan improvement.
56. Prospective parents are provided with a good range of information about the school and its organisation together with good information about how they can prepare children for school and support their learning when they start school. In addition, staff visit many parents of pre-school age children at home to discuss and plan admission to the school. This helps children to settle quickly to school life and routines. The school prospectus meets requirements and contains useful information about the school. Induction arrangements for new entrants are also well handled. The school provides parents with regular information about both its activities and routine administrative matters by newsletter. Whilst these are helpful, the school could usefully review their format and style in order to ensure that they are accessible to all parents. The annual report made to parents by governors meets requirements and provides a clear picture of the school's work. Care has been taken in the last report to explain, in lay terms, the school's National Curriculum assessment results.
57. The school writes to parents each term to set out what pupils will be learning. In a number of subjects, for example in English, mathematics and science, teachers make useful suggestions as to how parents can help their children with their learning. Annual written reports to parents about individual pupils' progress and attainment meet requirements. They record information about what pupils can do, as well as information about pupils' personal development. Whilst teachers indicate some targets for pupils, generally these are not sufficiently detailed nor do they indicate clearly how parents can support the particular learning needs of their child. Parents have the opportunity to meet teachers formally on a termly basis to discuss their child's progress and development. Many parents also meet teachers informally at the beginning and end of the school day and take opportunity to raise any concerns or pass on information. Many examples of this were seen during inspection. Parents of pupils with statements of special education needs receive appropriate information about their children's progress and they are appropriately involved in the statutory reviews of progress.
58. The school does not have a written policy for homework. However, it is clear from inspection that homework is set regularly for pupils. Whilst it takes a number of forms, appropriately the work set mainly involves reading. Pupils have reading diaries and bring their books into class each morning. Teachers regularly check on their progress in reading and encourage them to select new books. Pupils know that they have to take work home and complete the tasks set. Some parents say that they would like more information about homework and how they could help their children. It is evident that the support already being given by parents with their



children's reading on a regular basis has made a significant contribution to the improvements seen in pupils' achievements recently. The school could now, with advantage, consider providing parents with both a clear statement about its policy and practice and information about how they can best support further improvements in their own child's learning.

59. The school welcomes support from parents and a number provide valued assistance, for example, by helping with visits and when children go swimming. In addition, pupils derive benefit and pleasure from the assistance with cooking offered by a parent on a regular basis as part of design and technology lessons. The school also benefits from the support offered by its Parent Teacher Association. Funds raised by them have been used to pay for the school's successful swimming programme.
60. The school's links with parents have improved well since the last inspection in June 2000 and this aspect is now judged as a strength of the school.

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

61. The leadership and management of the school are good overall because governors are very effective, the headteacher provides a good lead and manages well, subject co-ordinators in the key subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT lead and manage well and the coordination of special educational needs and of other subjects is satisfactory.
62. The whole school works to a common sense of direction and as an effective team. Methods of ascertaining the school's strengths and weaknesses in English, mathematics and science are effective and lead to good planning and well-judged actions that are raising standards throughout the school. Because of the appropriate focus on English mathematics and science, the school has not undertaken effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in other subjects. All staff know their roles and are provided with good support to help them improve their contributions. All staff have very positive attitudes to their own professional development and are prepared to continually reflect on their work and make improvements.
63. As a consequence:
- pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is improving well;
  - the teaching of literacy and numeracy is good and often very good;
  - relationships and team work at all levels are very good and the school is continually improving.
64. The headteacher has worked effectively and drawn well on support and advice, including that of the school's phase advisor, to lead the improvement of the school. Major national initiatives such as the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and New Opportunities Fund computer training have been used well to help bring about improvements in key areas. The headteacher effectively leads the preparation, implementation and monitoring of the school's improvement plan. The plan is based on an accurate evaluation and analysis of where improvements are needed. Ambitious but achievable goals are set, timescales are realistic and methods of monitoring progress towards the goals are clear. Because governors and all staff are involved in the preparation of the plan, they refer to it in their daily work and it guides the work of the school well and provides an important way of ensuring a team approach to improvement. All

know the part they need to play to ensure the plan is carried out, and the headteacher and governors, keep a careful eye on the implementation of the plan throughout the year. The school has effective procedures to check and improve teachers' professional performance. Teachers have clear objectives to guide their work and objectives are closely related to the school improvement plan. Training opportunities are provided to help staff achieve their objectives. The school has employed a newly qualified teacher from the beginning of the autumn term and her induction is very effective and she has already made a confident and successful start.

65. The school currently has a vacancy for a deputy headteacher and, consequently, a number of staff are taking on new roles as both managers and teachers. Effective arrangements have been made to help staff adapt to new jobs and staff are supporting each other well.
66. Within its planning, the school has appropriately concentrated on raising standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. ICT has also been given its proper priority. The leadership and management of all these subjects and of the Foundation Stage are good and, not only have improvements been made, but further improvements are planned. The co-ordination of all other subjects and of assessment and of special educational needs is satisfactory. The management of special educational needs has continued to improve. The revised Code of Practice for special educational needs is being effectively implemented. Although improvements have been made in individual education plans (IEPs), further work is needed. A useful feature of IEPs is that they are prepared by the class teacher who has responsibility for the pupil with a special need. This means that teachers use IEPs in their daily work. However, planned actions in some IEPs are not always based on a sufficiently rigorous or detailed analysis of the needs of the pupil and actions are sometimes unclear. The number of pupils with English as an additional language in the school has been very small over the last year. Nevertheless the learning of these pupils has been carefully considered and good provision made to enable them to make effective progress in their learning, and they work and play happily alongside other pupils.
67. The management of assessment is satisfactory overall, but further improvements are needed in the area of target setting so that all pupils have a clearer understanding of their own learning and where to focus their efforts to improve. Teachers' targets for the National Curriculum levels that each pupils should achieve is insufficiently connected with the school's targets for the percentage of pupils who will attain particular levels by the end of Year 2. Although the system for tracking the progress of children in the Reception Year is effective, the system in Years 1 and 2 does not provide the school with the information necessary to effectively monitor the progress of groups of pupils and year cohorts so that the school can evaluate whether it is on track to achieve its targets for pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2.
68. Some aspects of the curriculum are well managed. Long- and medium-term planning is very good so that teachers are always provided with clear guidance to inform their weekly and daily planning. However, pupils' learning is significantly better in the morning than in the afternoon and one cause of this deterioration after lunch is that the afternoon session is too long without a break. Also pupils experience too many consecutive lessons that comprise long periods of sitting, listening and writing. There is a need to monitor the types of activities and experiences that pupils are receiving in order to ensure a better balance.

69. The governing body is very effective both in carrying out its statutory role and in helping the school to improve. It is led effectively by the chair, committee chairs and the clerk, who have worked very well with the headteacher and staff to set up some very good ways of finding out about the school and supporting, monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. Governors have a very clear overview of the school's strengths and where improvements are needed. The governing body has a very detailed knowledge of the school because individual governors have special interests and links with such areas as literacy, numeracy and special educational needs. The well-organised programme of governors' visits leads to detailed reports that are fed back to the full governing body. Governors' knowledge of the school is further helped when subject co-ordinators consult and inform governors on various developments in their areas of responsibility. The school lacks a policy for promoting race equality but has a plan to deal with this issue before the end of this term when the governing body considers the draft policy that has been prepared by the headteacher.
70. Governors effectively apply the principles of '*best value*' to their work. The governing body has recently consulted parents through a questionnaire to find out parents' views and is using this information to help bring about improvements. The governors also ensure that the school's results are carefully compared with those of similar schools and they provide a continual challenge to the school to bring about improvements. There is a clear and effective policy concerning competitive tendering and governors seek to improve value for money in the services the school uses. For example, the school has recently decided to manage its own grounds in an attempt to obtain better value for money.
71. There are good financial and administrative practices in the school. Routine administration, led by the headteacher and school administrator are good and ICT is used well to support efficient ordering, monitoring of finances and budget setting. However, ICT is not used effectively to provide information in support of pupils' attendance. Good financial reporting and control systems are in place and basic financial reports of expenditure against income are provided monthly for the governing body. The school recently received a good auditor's report and any criticisms that were made in the report have either already been addressed or are in hand. Special grants are used well to improve learning and raise standards. For example, National Grid for Learning (NGfL) grants have been used well to extend the school's ICT resources and this has resulted in a rise in standards. Governors are effectively involved in financial management and have a very clear view of the school's current financial circumstances. Although the school's costs for educating each pupil were higher than average last year, these higher than average costs include the costs of running the assessment unit for pupils with special educational needs, which is no longer part of the school. In view of the good progress made by pupils, the school provides good value for money.
72. The teachers are an effective and appropriately qualified team, and all staff, including learning support assistants, work well to ensure that all pupils make good progress. Staff work hard to make the school's satisfactory accommodation a clean, attractive and well-organised place to learn. Displays in classrooms provide good support for pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy. For example, in a Year 2 class, a display was being built up during the week of all the words the pupils were being asked to learn and use in their writing. The Foundation Stage classrooms provide the best teaching spaces and provide children with a very good environment to start their school life. The newly-established specialist library now provides the

potential for establishing a good library resource. Although the school has improved ICT resources recently, the lack of a specialist suite means that teaching of ICT skills has to be largely by demonstration rather than allowing pupils to gain practice during ICT lessons and this slows their learning. The school made very good arrangements last year to use the ICT suite in the neighbouring junior school, but, unfortunately, this arrangement has come to an end. Resources for learning in all subjects are at least satisfactory and are good in the Foundation Stage, English, mathematics, science, art and design and design and technology. The school grounds are excellent and pupils benefit from a very pleasant garden-like area to play in at playtime and lunch times. The playground is marked out with games and there are benches for pupils to sit together. This helps support the very good behaviour and relationships that are evident at playtime and lunch time. The school uses the local swimming pool to ensure that pupils learn to swim.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

73. The governors, headteacher and staff should now:

- (1) Improve the quality of pupils' learning in the afternoon by:
  - reconsidering the timetabling of lessons to provide a better balance of types of activities; (*paras. 26, 68*)
  - reviewing the use of teaching time in the school day with a view to avoiding the two hour afternoon session without a break. (*paras. 16, 26, 33*)
- (2) Improve pupils' understanding of their own learning by:
  - improving the system of target setting for individual pupils so that they know exactly where to focus their efforts to improve, particularly in writing, reading and mathematics; (*paras. 31, 57, 67, 106, 121*)
  - improving the marking of pupils' work; (*paras. 106, 120, 134*)
  - improving the ends of lessons so that pupils are required to analyse particular aspects of their work to help them understand how to improve. (*paras. 54, 120, 134, 183*)
- (3) Improve the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in subjects other than English, mathematics and science by planning and implementing a programme that includes all subjects. (*paras. 34, 62, 147, 156, 161, 167, 179, 186*)
- (4) Improve the system for tracking pupils' learning in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - establishing a system that enables the school to analyse the good range of assessment information already available in the school in order to monitor progress towards whole school targets in reading, writing and mathematics. (*paras. 67, 137*)
- (5) Improve attendance levels by:
  - taking all possible steps to encourage parents to support improved rates of attendance. (*paras. 20, 49*)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	28
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

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

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	5	13	10	0	0	0
Percentage	0	18	46	36	0	0	0

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

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

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR– Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	-	140
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	23

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	-	11

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.8
National comparative data	5.6

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	31	29	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	30	30
	Girls	28	29	28
	Total	56	59	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (87)	98 (85)	97 (92)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	30	29
	Girls	29	27	28
	Total	57	57	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (87)	95 (90)	95 (92)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No. of pupils on roll</b>	<b>No. of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>No. of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	109	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

*The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*



### *Teachers and classes*

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.3
Average class size	28.0

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	4.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	92.0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### *Financial information*

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	422599
Total expenditure	72769
Expenditure per pupil	2402
Balance brought forward from previous year	-1205
Balance carried forward to next year	-1273

### *Recruitment of teachers*

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5.8
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## *Results of the survey of parents and carers*

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	174
Number of questionnaires returned	44

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	79.5	18.2	2.3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	70.4	25.0	2.3	2.3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	52.2	43.2	2.3	2.3	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40.9	40.9	18.2	0	0
The teaching is good.	70.4	27.3	0	2.3	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36.4	52.2	6.8	4.6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72.7	25.0	2.3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65.9	29.5	2.3	0	2.3
The school works closely with parents.	22.6	66.0	4.6	6.8	0
The school is well led and managed.	43.2	47.6	4.6	2.3	2.3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54.5	40.9	2.3	2.3	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16.0	22.6	40.9	6.8	13.7

Parents spoke very positively about the school. In particular they appreciated how well the school cared for their children's personal needs.

## **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**

74. Overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. On entry to the Reception class, almost all children demonstrate attainment in line with national expectations and a significant number are exceeding nationally expected standards in some areas such as communication skills, mark making and using equipment and their knowledge of numbers. By the time they enter Year 1, the majority exceed the nationally expected standards (the Early Learning Goals) and the others will be well on the way to attaining these. Children with special educational needs are identified early, are well supported and make good progress. Some parents, at the pre-inspection meeting with parents, expressed concern that their children didn't make enough progress in the Reception class, but the inspection evidence, which took account of the work covered during the last academic year, indicates that this is not the case, and that children make good progress when they start school. The last inspection, together with the inspection carried out in 1998, identified a picture of similar strength. The school has therefore maintained the good provision provided and is constantly seeking to develop and improve.
75. Children enter the school from a variety of pre-school settings, and the Reception class provides education for 30 children at present who began school on a part-time basis, attending mornings only. The week of the inspection was their first full-time week in school. The school has two Reception intakes, in line with the local admission arrangements, and a new class is to be established in January to accommodate the new children.
76. Good provision is made for children when they start school. Parents appreciate the home visits which serve as the beginning of a close partnership between home and school. As well as discussing the child's needs, the school also takes this opportunity to inform parents about school procedures such as the approach to reading. At the beginning and end of the school day parents are welcome in the classroom. They have the opportunity to talk to the teacher and share their child's experiences during the day. The positive comments parents make on their children's reports show they greatly value the work of the school.
77. On entry to Reception an assessment is carried out to ascertain what children can do in comparison with children of the same age. Progress is regularly assessed and monitored during the year to check up on their learning and the results children achieve and inspection evidence show that they progress well in all areas of learning.
78. Good teaching, high levels of teacher knowledge and expertise and high expectations contribute to the good standards and progress. Teaching in the basic skills of personal and social development is very good and of literacy and numeracy is good, and the teacher and learning support assistants know the children well. Relationships between staff and the children are very good and, because their contributions are valued, children appear confident, safe and secure which helps their learning.
79. The classroom environment is stimulating and reflects a balance of work across the six areas of learning which are well linked one to another. The Reception rooms are colourful and bright

and well organised into areas where children can learn quickly. The Reception children have the use of two rooms which are well resourced, and this increases flexibility in learning opportunities and contributes to the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage curriculum which is rich and exciting.

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

80. Children's personal, social and emotional development in Reception is given a high priority to very good effect. They enter school confident and keen to learn. They get on with each other and work well together. They have good relationships with other children and adults. They learn to take turns, choose appropriate equipment to do their work and tidy away afterwards. Behaviour is good, and they are polite and compliant. By the time they leave Reception, almost all will have exceeded the Early Learning Goals and show above average personal development. This shows good progress and reflects skilful teaching and good links with parents which help children feel positively about what they can achieve and enables them to quickly learn routines and enjoy school.
81. Children concentrate particularly well for sustained periods of time resulting in the amount of work completed both individually and in whole-class situations being greater than might be expected. This helps children progress quickly.
82. This area of learning is extremely well planned and provided for during *Circle Time* activities where children discuss the feelings of others and how they can help those who are in trouble. They refer to their own experiences when telling *Talking Ted* what they would show him when he started school, and what to do if he was hurt in the playground! The use of soft toys by the teacher brought the session alive and ensured that the children's interest was captured. Sensitive questioning helped children's understanding so that they could respond to the issues raised.

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

83. On entry to Reception, although most children's attainment is average, many demonstrate a higher level of skills than those expected of children of a similar age, especially in communication and speaking and listening. The quality of teaching and learning in this area is very good and this helps the children to make very good progress so that most pupils achieve above average standards by the end of Reception and exceed the expectations (the Early Learning Goals) for pupils of this age. The teacher and the learning support staff plan activities to take into account the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs, although children often spend too long sitting and listening. A particularly effective aspect of the teaching is seen when targeted questions are directed to individual children. This has a good effect on individual learning. In whole-class sessions, support staff are not always used to the best advantage when their input is not directly focused on individuals or groups. Very good opportunities are taken to increase all children's knowledge and develop a wider vocabulary.
84. Clear notices, labels and instructions related to the themes in the classroom help children to recognise the need for writing words and reading them. They are already seeing themselves as readers and writers. Every day, the whole class builds a sentence related to the day of the

week and the weather. Children fill in missing words, begin to use information in books to read unfamiliar words and know that sentences begin with a capital letter and end in a full stop. This is reflected in their individual mark making and early writing.

85. Books have a high profile in all work. Stories are chosen to link with other areas of work in the classroom and 'big books' are used effectively with the whole class. When sharing the story *The Little Red Hen*, the teacher gave the children the strategies to join in. They all read along with the text ' "Not I," said the pig'. ' "Not I," said the cat'. Their learning was consolidated by continual repetition. When the teacher covered up the text or the illustrations, they could anticipate what would happen next. Cards and pictures were used to recall key features of the story and order them correctly. The use of character puppets made the learning more active when the story was acted out. Children spoke with delight when they talked about what they liked best in the story. The skills children learn in these sessions help them to begin to read their first books well as they learn a number of words and letter sounds. There is a good selection of books in the classroom, and children choose to look at them if they have a free moment. This experience in Reception, the work parents do with their children and the good teaching of reading later in the school all make an important contribution to the high standards pupils achieve in reading by the age of seven.
86. Speaking and listening skills are developed well in all aspects of work. Children are able to listen for long periods of time. They explore meanings of new words, speak clearly and audibly and use talk to sequence events and retell stories.

### **Mathematical development**

87. When children enter Reception, their attainment in mathematics is in line with that of children of a similar age although many pupils' knowledge of numbers is above average. Provision for the development and awareness of mathematical language and the teaching of mathematics is good, which helps the children learn and make good progress. By the end of Foundation Stage most children will be online to exceed the Early Learning Goals in mathematics as a result of the good range of activities planned for them.
88. Well planned and structured lessons ensure that all children learn well. In a lesson where the number 4 was investigated, the variety of activities planned ensured that children's understanding was consolidated. In an active session, they pointed to the number 4 on number lines, acted out a fish rhyme, could talk about animals with 4 legs and say how many sides and corners there were in a variety of shapes. Resources were well used to enrich the learning experience and a flip-chart was used to record children's responses. When watching a video about the number 4, the teacher interjected with challenging questions 'How many sheep?'...(3). 'How many more to make 4?'...(1). By the end of the lesson, most children counted confidently forwards and backwards, recognised the number 4, could name objects with 4 features, and write the number 4. They also knew the name of shapes such as circles, squares, triangles and rectangles and the numbers of their sides and corners. Classroom displays encourage the understanding of number and reflect the work done by the children.

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

89. Provision and teaching for children to develop knowledge and understanding of the world around them are good. This helps children's learning and they make good progress so that, by the end of the Foundation Stage, many will have exceeded the Early Learning Goals. The majority of children enter school with average general knowledge for children of their age. The teacher builds on their natural curiosity and helps them develop an understanding of time and place well. The children show a good knowledge of their local environment, which is used to good effect. The children point out and explain different kinds of weather. The school grounds are a particularly useful resource which encourages children's knowledge of plants. A good display of autumnal objects help children to observe closely. Local gardens are visited, and sketch books are used to record observations. A garden centre in the role-play area involved the designing of cards and gift-tags and seed packets to sell, and the children planted seeds. A variety of visitors to the school, such as a doctor and a firefighter, enrich the children's learning.
90. In a session where the class was making bread, the children investigated the ingredients asking questions and volunteering information. They investigated change when the bread was rising and cooking and used a variety of kitchen utensils, talking about what they were doing and describing what was happening. The session was very directed by the teacher, and children's understanding could have been deepened by providing more opportunities for them to be more actively involved.
91. Children are given good opportunities to develop their skills in ICT. They gain knowledge of the computer and confidently control the mouse. They develop handling skills where they design and make a picture of a car and enter and store information using the keyboard. They make patterns and select shapes to construct pictures.
92. The relevant sections of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education are covered in Reception. A scheme of work has been identified and links well into the Foundation Stage curriculum.

### **Physical development**

93. On entering Reception, children demonstrate physical skills in line with children nationally. The planned teaching opportunities to develop children's skills are good and the children make good progress.
94. The outside play area is a good resource and is used every day. Children can ride a selection of wheeled vehicles, and are beginning to show awareness of space and play safely, avoiding crashes. In this situation, the pupils behave well and enjoy the activities. It was not possible to observe any physical education sessions during the inspection.
95. Dexterity is developed through the handling of objects such as threading, working in sand and water and cutting. Construction apparatus contributes well to the development of physical skills. Many of the activities provided increase children's confidence and develop skills in using brushes, pencils, crayons, scissors, paste spreaders and collage material. In all aspects of this area, the majority of children are on target to meet the standard expected at the end of the Foundation Stage, and many to exceed them.

## **Creative Development**

96. Children enter school with the expected skills and knowledge, and the rich environment and experiences provided by the staff ensure that they make good progress. This area of learning is well taught and the majority of children are set to have at least achieved the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. If they continue to progress at the rate they are now doing, many are likely to be working beyond them.
97. Children demonstrate increasing skill in controlling tools. In art and design, they explore colour, texture and shape in two- and three-dimensions. They use their imagination, communicate their ideas and use a wide range of materials. When children made the '*Hickory, Dickory, Dock, clock*' they investigated methods of cutting and sticking, decorated their clocks, and had fun making the mouse. Work of a particularly high standard was produced at Christmas time when drawings of angels were enlarged on a photocopier and decorated with shiny paper and glitter.
98. All the children enjoy singing nursery rhymes, joining in with enthusiasm and responding to the actions. These are used particularly effectively in mathematics sessions to reinforce counting and ordering.

## **ENGLISH**

99. Overall standards in English, by the end of Year 2, are above average. Pupils show above average standards in literacy both in English lessons and in other subjects. This reflects the good results the school's seven-year-olds achieved in National Curriculum tests in 2002. Taking account of the results of all pupils, 2002's results show that in reading seven-year-old pupils achieved well above both national averages and averages achieved by pupils in similar schools. In writing, Pilton's seven-year-olds achieved above national averages and the well above average levels attained by pupils in similar schools. The school's results were good at all levels. For example, in reading, a much higher number of pupils than the national average achieved the higher levels, and in writing a higher number of Pilton's seven-year-olds compared to the national average achieved the higher levels in writing. Based on teacher assessment in speaking and listening a higher number of the school's seven-year-olds compared to the national average achieved Level 2 and an average number of pupils achieved Level 3. The school's English results in 2002 show an improvement on the good results achieved in 2001 and mean that the school's trend of continuing improvement in reading and writing over the last four years has been maintained.
100. The school set itself challenging targets for its pupils to achieve in 2002 National Curriculum reading and writing tests and exceeded both of these. The pupils who took these tests entered the school with average to a little above average skills and left with well above average or above average results and this represents good progress during their time in the school.
101. Inspection evidence shows that pupils' speaking and listening are above average and that speaking and listening skills have improved since the last inspection in June 2000. In Years 1 and 2, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Over the last year, the school has had a very small percentage of its pupils with English as an additional language. Due to the good level of support provided by the class teacher and the learning

support assistant, these pupils make good progress. One six-year-old pupil for whom English is a second language, was able to enjoy and join in a game of guessing an object in a bag based on clues the group were given, which included the first letter sound. The pupil knew their first letter sounds in English and made good progress in their skills and confidence in spelling and speaking in the lesson. The school has identified the further improvement of teaching and learning of speaking and listening in its improvement plan, not only to improve pupils' speaking skills, but also to provide them with more experiences to enable their writing to become more interesting. A number of improvements are evident around the school in relation to this work and pupils are enjoying and benefiting from using such areas as the 'Pilton Hospital' area in a Year 2 classroom and role play in another Year 2 drama lesson based on work underway in history on Florence Nightingale. Most pupils listen very carefully to their teachers in lessons and answer questions sensibly and confidently. Some of the more able pupils make some quite extended contributions and show a good ability to adapt their choice of words to clarify meaning. In one lesson, pupils were asked a question in a whole class session and then allowed a short period to discuss their thoughts in pairs before being asked to answer. This meant that more pupils could speak and learn than in the more usual question and answer session.

102. Pupils' reading has continued to improve since the last inspection. Most pupils achieve above average standards in reading by the end of Year 2 and many achieve the higher levels (Levels 3 and 2b+). All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress in their reading because the teaching of reading, including the support that parents provide at home, is very well organised and given a high priority in the school. Pupils' skills of reading unfamiliar words using phonics are particularly good because these are carefully, regularly and effectively taught in whole class and group sessions. In Year 2, pupils use this knowledge to make good attempts at reading unfamiliar words such as '*tractor*', and '*balloon*'. Their phonics work also helps pupils develop their above average spelling skills. They enjoy reading the shared text in the literacy hour and some show good expression when doing so. Pupils also enjoy reading and using books at other times. At lunch times, groups of children can be seen enjoying hearing a book being read to them by midday supervisors. All pupils have a reading diary and most pupils are heard read at home by their parents and this helps them significantly with their progress. Resources for reading are satisfactory and the school has a useful plan to extend its collection of fiction books and sets of books for higher-attaining pupils. The newly-established library is well organised, using a simplified version of the Dewey system used in public libraries. The library provides an effective resource in helping the school achieve the objectives of the National Literacy Strategy. In literacy lessons, pupils show good interest in texts and are developing their knowledge and understanding of how texts are organised, but too few opportunities are provided for pupils to undertake personal study to help them develop their information finding skills to the same level as their skills in other aspects of reading.
103. Although pupils' writing is not quite as good as their reading, it is still above average and has improved since the last inspection in June 2000. Handwriting and presentation are satisfactory, spelling and punctuation are good and they are able to make the vocabulary they use more interesting. Even though the range of types of writing that pupils undertake is satisfactory, the school has recognised that pupils' writing could be more interesting. The carefully considered strategies that the school has for making writing more interesting, such as providing more opportunities to develop ideas in words before writing and using role play in drama, are



beginning to bear fruit. Pupils' writing in history about Florence Nightingale is interesting and lively. During writing sessions, pupils often take turns to use the computer in the classroom to compose and improve stories. This not only benefits their writing but also enables pupils to gain confidence and skills in using the computer as an everyday tool.

104. The quality of teaching and learning are good and there are some very good features in the teaching. The school has very successfully implemented the National Literacy Strategy and this has helped teachers improve the quality of their teaching. All staff show good subject knowledge in English, especially in the area of teaching reading and phonics. This also helps teachers plan well and have appropriately high expectations. Many methods are used to ensure that teaching meets the learning needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language. Teachers often focus questions in whole class sessions on particular pupils or groups so that pupils of all levels of ability can keep up and remain challenged. Pupils' attitudes to learning are mostly very good in English lessons. Expectations of behaviour are clear and relationships are very good and this helps pupils concentrate well and enjoy their work. In whole class sessions in some classes and in group work in all classes, learning support assistants work well with pupils with special educational needs to enable them to be fully involved in the lesson and this supports the concentration and learning of all pupils.
105. Pupils enjoy their English lessons and sustain good concentration in whole class sessions and in group and individual work. They enjoy speaking and listening work and this helps their personal development. They are encouraged to reflect on moral dilemmas and relationships issues that arise in texts. During discussions on books they develop their cultural understanding and some pupils know the name of the author of a book they are reading. The school has recognised that its library stock includes too few books reflecting life in other cultures.
106. Some aspects of assessment are good, but others need improvement. There is an effective programme of regular assessments that enable teachers to keep a close eye on pupils' progress in reading and writing. The National Curriculum level of attainment of each individual pupil is effectively assessed by teachers and targets are set for where each pupil should be at the end of the year. These targets are insufficiently demanding and do not reflect either the good progress that pupils typically make at the school, or the ambitious targets the school has set for pupils to achieve by the time they leave the school. The whole school targets and the targets that teachers set are insufficiently connected. Although the progress of individual pupils is effectively tracked, the school lacks an effective system to track the progress of groups of pupils and year cohorts to monitor progress towards whole school targets. This makes it difficult for the school to take early effective action if it is revealed that the school is not on track to reach its targets. Teachers mark pupils' work diligently, but the implementation of the school's marking policy is inconsistent. Often marking fails to show pupils clearly where or how to improve their work and marking is often not followed through. Although pupils are given targets in their writing, too few know and use these or show a clear awareness of which particular aspects of their writing they are working to improve. This is because targets are often either too general for pupils to be able to understand them or because there are too many targets given at one time.
107. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has observed the teaching and has provided guidance on how it can be improved. There is a clear knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and action is taken to bring about improvement.

The school has recognised the need to make pupils' writing more interesting and the staff are currently working on a range of ways of making improvements, including giving more attention to speaking and listening. The school, two years ago, recognised that boys' writing was significantly worse than girls'. A plan was made to make improvements. Special help was provided to groups of boys and, as a consequence, their writing has improved and there is now no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

## **MATHEMATICS**

108. During the inspection, lessons in mathematics were observed in all the five classes, pupils' work from the previous and present year was seen, and interviews took place with the previous deputy headteacher who, until the end of the summer term had been the mathematics co-ordinator. Discussions were also held with the headteacher about mathematics in the school. Discussions with pupils took place, and inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work in books and on worksheets, work on display and at teachers' planning.
109. According to the 2002 test results, standards in mathematics attained by seven-year-old pupils were above those expected when compared to schools nationally, and well above those attained by pupils in similar schools. The number of pupils gaining Level 3 in mathematics was well above both the national average and the average standards gained by pupils in similar schools. The school's results have improved steadily year on year, and there have been good improvements made since the last inspection in June 2000. The school sets challenging whole-school targets for mathematics and these were exceeded in 2002's National Curriculum mathematics tests.
110. The standards observed during the inspection reflect the above average standards indicated by the school's 2002 test results for seven-year-olds in mathematics. Standards are continuing to rise, and pupils make good progress in lessons, often producing a large amount of work.
111. Children enter the school with average ability in mathematical awareness, although some are above average especially in their knowledge of number. By the end of Reception, they have made good progress and are attaining standards which are above average, already working to Level 1 of the National Curriculum. By the age of seven, pupils' ability is again above average, with almost half achieving Level 3 or above.
112. Pupils achieve equally well across all areas of mathematics. There has been an appropriate emphasis on the development of skills in number work, which has contributed to the significant rise in standards over time. Pupils are confident to work out answers to number problems in their heads. They count reliably and use mental recall, which often involves money and measures.
113. Pupils work confidently with addition and subtraction, and solve problems involving multiplication and division. They develop a growing understanding of the values of numbers and by the end of Year 2 use hundreds, tens and units confidently. They record their work in a neat, structured way. In Year 1, pupils could double numbers. They explained that doubling was adding on the same number. They developed strategies for working out their answers

- quickly. They also used an abacus to carry out addition and subtraction problems up to 20 set by the teacher, and could explain how they had arrived at their answers.
114. In Year 2, most pupils knew how to make a two-digit number as large as possible by putting the higher digit in the tens column and the lower digit in the units column. The higher-attaining pupils playing a dice game understood that six in the tens column was worth 60. They knew the associated mathematical language (*'digit'*, *'unit'*, *'number'*, *'column'*). A significant number could quickly make a number that was 10 more than 12 and could use apparatus to represent numbers and carry out addition and subtraction tasks. They could add and subtract mentally to 100 to make numbers greater or smaller.
  115. Pupils sort objects into categories and record their results in simple lists, table and graphs to communicate their findings. They can find out information presented in a variety of ways.
  116. In Year 1, pupils were able to record two-dimensional shapes in one column, and three-dimensional shapes in another. They could talk about why they had recorded the shapes in their chosen way. In a science lesson, pupils carried out accurate measurements of how far toy cars had travelled and used ICT to create a variety of graphical records.
  117. When working with two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes, pupils can describe their properties, talking about sides, corners, and angles. By the end of Year 2, they work confidently with right angles. They measure time accurately, identifying minutes past the hour, use grams to estimate weight, weigh objects, and measure in centimetres.
  118. The school recognises that the area of problem solving, investigation and pupils' engagement in personal study is slightly weaker than the other areas of mathematics, although there have been significant improvements. Pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to solve real-life problems. Although they experiment and investigate in mathematics, such activities are often too closely directed by the teacher, discouraging pupils from devising their own problems and finding out the best way of solving them.
  119. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress because work is set appropriately for them to achieve at their own level and because adults give them sound support as part of the whole-class lesson. Progress for the significant number of higher-attaining pupils is good because they are given activities which extend and challenge their learning and teachers have higher expectations of them. They often receive support from learning support assistants, for example, when a more-able group working on tens and units were extended by using numbers to 1000. They rose to the challenge and were confidently adding and subtracting hundreds. No significant difference was observed between the performance of boys and girls.
  120. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good overall because teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of the subject and they have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Planning gives teachers a very effective structure in which to work at all levels, and is well linked to the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers sometimes plan carefully exactly what they want pupils to learn and these intentions are often outlined to pupils. However, there is sometimes too much emphasis on what pupils are doing rather on what they are learning. This

makes it harder for the teacher to check up on the learning both during and at the end of lessons. Activities are well prepared and include a range of exciting opportunities. Different work is planned to meet the needs of all pupils. Sometimes, the ways pupils record their work is not as stimulating as the activities themselves, and this results in the completion of a high number of worksheets which can lack individuality and challenging tasks. Lessons are well structured and time is used well. Appropriate attention is given to mental work, direct class teaching and individual or group tasks, but teachers' questions are sometimes too closed, restricting pupils' answers and insufficiently challenging their thinking. Pupils are too rarely asked to explain how they arrived at answers or to suggest other ways of carrying out calculations and this means that opportunities are sometimes missed to deepen understanding. The last few minutes of lessons (plenary session) is not always used well to assess what pupils know, understand and can do as a result of the lesson. Too often, pupils merely show their work to the rest of the class, saying what they liked best and describing what they have done, not what they've learnt, and they are often not encouraged to describe how their work could be improved. Teachers mark work diligently, but comments are often limited to positive confirmation rather than setting targets for the next stage in learning, telling pupils what they need to do to improve. ICT is used well to consolidate learning in mathematics lessons, for example, by recording results on graphs using the computer.

121. Pupils' attitudes in mathematics lessons are very good. They behave very well in lessons. Relationships between teachers and pupils are a particular strength and pupils work hard for them, often sitting and listening for long periods because lessons are interesting. They concentrate for sustained amounts of time on group and individual activities, because all pupils can do the work set for them, and they take pride in persevering to complete it. In so doing, they are developing independence. Pupils work together well, demonstrating respect for the needs of others when sharing equipment. They work collaboratively and share ideas, and teachers tell pupils how this should be done. They sometimes reflect on how they worked a problem out and talk about it, although opportunities for this kind of discussion are sometimes missed. Some pupils show real enjoyment and fascination in number patterns when undertaking mathematical activities as when Year 2 pupils were rolling a die to identify tens and units to work with. This interested them, and they participated keenly. Pupils show a limited understanding of their own learning in mathematics. Even though they are often aware of what learning is intended in the lesson, they rarely show a clear understanding of where they personally need to focus their efforts. The school is aware of this and is intending to introduce a system of target setting in mathematics. The use of mathematical concepts from other cultures is under developed, although mathematics contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral and social developments.
122. The leadership of mathematics is now with the responsibility of the headteacher until a new deputy headteacher takes up their appointment in January. The co-ordination of the subject has been good and the school has prioritised and focused wisely on the core subjects of English and mathematics. This has contributed strongly to progress in mathematics, and the successful adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy, together with a high level of staff training, has helped bring about good improvement in teaching and learning. Monitoring of the subject has been effective and lesson observations have been undertaken. This has ensured that the school has a satisfactory view of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, which has been extended through an analysis of pupils' answers in National Curriculum test papers. There is

evidence that this work has guided the development of the mathematics curriculum, for example, the school intends to look at the way pupils answer different types of questions and provide them with strategies to improve.

123. The school has introduced a useful range of half-termly assessments at the end of a block of work. Result from these assessments now needs to be analysed and evaluated to track pupils' progress against individual and group targets and linking this information to the targets the school sets for the percentage of pupils who will attain particular levels in National Curriculum tests in Year 2. The school lacks a portfolio of pupils' work to guide the work of class teachers in making accurate teacher assessments.
124. Resources in mathematics lessons are of a high quality and are used well by teachers to develop pupils' understanding across the curriculum. Parents are given helpful advice on what their children will be learning in mathematics so they can help them at home. Another booklet explains the broad targets for the year's work and suggests some fun activities to extend pupils' learning out of school.

## **SCIENCE**

125. In 2002, teachers assessed seven-year-olds' science standards as above average compared with those of other schools nationally. A high proportion of these pupils were assessed at the higher Level 3 which, again, is better than other schools nationally. Overall the school's seven-year-olds achieved results above the average achieved by pupils in similar schools.
126. Standards since the last inspection have improved because there is a well-planned curriculum which allows all the areas of science to be covered appropriately and because teaching has improved and pupils' well-developed skills of literacy and numeracy are supporting the work. Pupils' knowledge of science is good and their investigative skills are continuing to develop so that they demonstrate a sound scientific approach to their work. Results have steadily improved over time and the challenging targets set by the school have been exceeded.
127. During the inspection three science lessons were observed, pupils' work from the previous and present year was examined, and an interview took place with the science co-ordinator. Discussions with pupils were held and inspectors looked at work on display and at teachers' planning. Inspection evidence indicates standards attained by the end of Year 2 are above those expected nationally.
128. Pupils' attainment in science is similar across the different areas of the science curriculum but it is highest in the area dealing with living things. This is partly due to the very good use of the school environment which involves pupils growing a variety of plants including vegetables. Here they learn directly from first-hand experience and many are involved with the gardening club which is offered as an extra-curricular activity. They understand the basic conditions that animals and plants need to survive, including food, water, air and light. They know that living things grow and reproduce and they can sort them into groups using simple features. More able pupils describe differences between living and non-living things. During a science lesson in Year 1, pupils sorted objects into groups that were living, never having lived, and those which used to be alive. When questioned, pupils knew that living things needed to grow and

demonstrated knowledge about reproduction, senses and the need to get rid of waste products that were not essential to life. Higher-attaining pupils expressed in-depth views about things that used to be alive. For example, when a pupil was asked why a paper napkin had been placed in the “used to be alive” section, he replied that it is used to be part of a tree! Pupils with special educational needs worked with a learning support assistant and they categorised living and non-living things with help. Most pupils in the class were using sophisticated mathematical recording systems to make sense of their findings. In Year 2, pupils studied the effects of exercise on the body whilst exploring prediction and carrying out a fair test. Pupils could find their pulse and discovered that their heart beat fastest and their breathing became heavy when they were skipping. They predicted the outcomes of their experiments, recording their results on a chart. More able pupils attempted to reason why results might be different identifying different levels of activity and different bodies.

129. Pupils respond well to suggestions about how to find things out. They describe observations using scientific vocabulary and say whether what happened was as they expected. They measure quantities such as length using simple equipment, and carry out a fair test with some help. They try to explain their findings. However, pupils do not always put forward their own ideas as to how to find out the answer to a problem by devising an experiment. In Year 2, pupils conducted tests to find out the best ramp height for making cars operate as fast as possible using the same cars and starting point to provide a fair test. They also investigated which toaster setting was best for making golden brown toast.
130. Year 1 pupils predicted the order in which objects would roll down a slope being released at the same time. Some pupils were able to write reasons for the results related to size, shape and weight.
131. In science, pupils develop skills across the whole curriculum. Year 2 pupils made their own book about forces using their own examples. The books have contents pages, an index, a glossary and every chapter starts a new page. In art and design, pupils designed their own printed covers and word-processed the lettering for the cover using the computer. ICT is generally well used to record the results of experiments.
132. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in lessons especially when they are well supported by learning support assistants. Higher-attaining pupils are usually appropriately challenged so that they make good progress. No difference between the performance of boys and girls was reported. All pupils are supported in recording their findings, but the sheets provided sometimes limit the attainment of the more able. Also, on occasions, less able pupils do not receive enough support with recording, which results in their lack of literacy skills limiting their attainment in science because they can't write down their findings.
133. The standards of teaching in science observed was found to be satisfactory, but evidence gained from talking to teachers, scrutinising their planning and looking at work confirms that teaching is good overall. This is because they demonstrate good subject knowledge in their weekly planning which is drawn from a very good whole-school plan based on a national scheme of work. All the areas of science are well-covered, and teachers are clear about the intended learning. Appropriate and exciting activities are planned, and teachers know the most

effective way of delivering them. This good range of activities has been recorded over time using a digital camera, which shows that the range of the subject and the depth of pupils' experiences are of a higher quality than pupils of this age usually receive.

134. There are insufficient opportunities in lessons to assess pupils' progress. Although teachers clarify in their plans what learning is expected in lessons, during lessons there is insufficient emphasis on what they are actually learning and plenary sessions at the end of lessons are not always used effectively to find out what they know, understand and are able to do. There is no consistent process for setting individual targets, and teachers' marking does not give pupils a sufficiently clear indication of what they need to do in order to improve their work.
135. Teachers talk about pupils 'loving science', and inspection evidence confirms that this is the case. Behaviour in lessons is usually good and pupils work collaboratively when investigating. Varied and interesting activities promote motivation and pupils are confident to feed back their findings individually to an adult or in front of the whole class. Science contributes well to pupils' social and moral development, but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to reflect on their work.
136. There is an enthusiastic and committed co-ordinator for science who demonstrates very good subject knowledge. She ensures the subject is kept as a high priority for development, has a sound overview of strengths and weaknesses, and identifies priorities in a well-considered way. Every year the school operates a science week where all pupils concentrate on the same focus. During 'egg week', they investigated life-cycles from eggs, made and tested an 'egg run', and designed vehicles to carry eggs, ensuring that the testing was carried out fairly. Eggs were dyed and decorated, poems were written about imaginary creatures, lemon curd, meringues and pancakes were cooked, and computer graphs recorded pupils' favourite foods.
137. An analysis of achievement in science is carried out yearly, areas for development are identified and this is fed back to staff and governors. The co-ordinator introduced an effective system whereby pupils' understanding is assessed at the beginning of a topic and at the end to identify progress. Pupils within particular ability groups are focused on every half-term for assessment purposes but there is no system for accurately tracking pupils' progress, setting targets for individuals and groups or for linking this to the school's targets for Year 2 National Curriculum test results. The co-ordinator monitors the subject by reviewing samples of work and occasionally undertakes lesson observations. The planning of investigations is monitored and she works with teachers to ensure that all staff assess pupils' work consistently and accurately. Overall, the good leadership and management of science has had a significant effect on the recent improvements, and teachers are provided with a clear structure in which to work.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

138. During the inspection only two art and design lessons were observed, but an extensive range of art and design work and a large collection of photographs of pupils' work and pupils working were examined. The school's plans for the subject were scrutinised, and discussions were held with pupils.

139. Pupils achieve high standards in art and design across the school, and by the age of seven they achieve standards that are above those expected and pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress. When art and design was last reported on in the inspection in 1998, attainment was also found to be good. Considering the emphasis which has rightly been placed on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science over the last few years, the school, to its credit, has managed to maintain its high standards in art and design. The weakness in teachers' planning has now been rectified and the school has made satisfactory progress in improving the subject since the last inspection.
140. In Year 1, pupils are developing their expertise in drawing from observation; building on skills they have learnt in Reception. They make pencil drawing of faces, exploring line, tone and shading and recording light and darkness. They talk about their drawings in relation to the work of artists, discussing *The Girl with Pigtales* by Modigliani, and *Portrait of a Scholar* by Holbein. They investigate form and texture when making faces out of clay, experimenting with tools and techniques, selecting the right tools for the purpose. There is evidence that pupils have the opportunity to paint freely using their imagination, and they learn how to mix colours. They investigate a variety of brush techniques when painting sea pictures representing ripples and waves.
141. In Year 2, pupils experiment with a wide variety of materials. Well-developed designing skills are evident in felt pictures of autumn leaves. Particularly high standards can be seen in the drawings pupils have made from observation of the outside of the school. Having completed the drawings, the pictures are greatly enhanced through the addition of printing with paint to match the textures in the building. The results are aesthetically pleasing, and the activity gave pupils the opportunity to study a subject in depth. Texture and pattern in buildings are also investigated through sketching around the locality and from photographs, and pupils enjoy copying the patterns of tiles and bricks using pencils. One group worked on clay tiles, which again showed attention to detail. Pupils chose appropriate tools and understood a number of techniques to use with clay, for example, joining pieces together. Tone, pattern and design are investigated through appreciating the work of William Morris. This resulted in plant designs in black and white of a high quality.
142. Overall, the standards are high because of the rich opportunities provided for pupils, based on investigating the elements of art and design. Pupils work equally well in two-dimensions and three-dimensions and in different scales.
143. The teaching observed in lessons was good, and teachers have sound subject knowledge. Imaginative resources are selected to challenge pupils' learning. Lessons are well organised and teachers show pupils how to use a variety of tools and materials. In a lesson where Year 1 pupils were drawing faces, the teacher used good questioning to encourage pupils to identify details about each other, and to find out how they might go about the task "*Why would you use this brush?*" "*How would you make the colour?*" Opportunities to analyse work with pupils, showing them how to improve it, are underdeveloped.



144. There is satisfactory use of ICT in art and design indicated in curriculum plans. During the inspection lessons were observed where pupils were enjoying learning to use a computer-based paint program to draw designs.
145. All pupils work hard in lessons and enjoy the subject. Many say that it is their favourite subject. When working individually, they concentrate for sustained periods of time, and they collaborate well with each other, usefully talking about their work and focusing on how they feel about it. This helps their social development.
146. The art and design curriculum supports pupils' spiritual development well, and there is a school emphasis on reflecting on beauty. This is evident in the colourful and imaginative displays around the school. There are a few opportunities for pupils to investigate art from other cultures, as when Year 1 pupils decorated clay masks based on Aboriginal designs, but there is limited evidence of these happening often enough.
147. The school at present is without an art and design co-ordinator, but the school has planned development work for the subject which focuses on medium-term planning and the maintenance of resources. No formal monitoring of the subject takes place to identify strengths and weaknesses, but the range of booklets containing good examples of pupils' work and the excellent photographic evidence available provides effective ways of celebrating the school's achievements.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

148. During the inspection no lessons in design and technology were seen, but the school provided good evidence in the form of pupils' work and an excellent range of photographs of finished products and pupils working. Teachers' planning and a range of school documentation were also examined. This made it possible to make tentative judgements about the quality of teaching and secure judgements about the standards of work and the progress pupils make.
149. Standards in the work seen are good. By the time pupils are seven, they achieve standards above those expected nationally for pupils of their age. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the school. In the last inspection which reported on standards, teaching and progress in design and technology, which was in 1998, all were found to be unsatisfactory because pupils were not given appropriate opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and understanding in selecting suitable materials or in designing and making products for a variety of uses. The school has made good progress since then as all these elements are now well catered for.
150. By the age of seven, pupils generate ideas and plan work based on experiences of using a good variety of materials. They select tools and materials which are suitable for the task they are undertaking, and have a range of opportunities to assemble and join materials. There are very good links between design and technology and other subjects of the curriculum, as when pupils design and make character masks to illustrate their descriptive writing. They list cooking ingredients and write instructions for making biscuits that are decorated like faces. They recognise why it is important to handle food safely and hygienically.

151. Pupils investigate the needs of the end product of the object they are designing and making, understanding how products are made. They know that the function and appearance of the product is important. This is illustrated in the work produced when pupils were designing a bag to hold five specified items. Having designed and made their bag, they tested it and evaluated its effectiveness. When using construction kits, they model ideas and question why they might make their model differently next time. No evidence of using ICT in design and technology was seen during the inspection.
152. In Year 2, pupils designed a range of box vehicles and wrote books to explain their thoughts. Lorries, fire-engines, ambulances and army cars were made to a high standard with moving wheels and axles. Particular emphasis was given to the quality of the finished product. The vehicles were finally tested in the playground.
153. In Year 2 there is evidence of sustained, high quality work over time. The pupils were learning about the Great Fire of London in history, and they designed and constructed Tudor houses using a variety of materials such as card, balsa wood and bamboo. Rectangular box shapes were designed with a range of roof styles – some attempting to represent straw thatch. Rigid wooden frames were constructed using lolly sticks, some demonstrating a very good knowledge of how to make a three-dimensional shape rigid. The outsides of the models were finished with painted and crayoned designs. A significant feature of this work is that the models are all different, showing that pupils had been given choices in the designing and construction processes, and that they have the skills and confidence to plan and develop their own ideas.
154. Activities are planned to be interesting and exciting. Photographs of pupils working show that they all work with enthusiasm and sustain concentration from the conception of an idea through to the finished product, and that consideration is given to health and safety. Many tasks contain a ‘fun’ element, as when pupils designed and made outrageous glasses and modelled them. Pupils also designed and made houses out of sweets using rice paper and sugar icing to stick. The end product was edible!
155. Teachers’ planning in design and technology is of a high standard and this is firmly based on the national scheme of work. Teachers are clear in their plans what learning is intended and the varied activities are well designed to support the planned learning. Because of this, and taking account of the standards achieved by pupils who all achieve success, it would appear that the quality of teaching in the subject is at least satisfactory and probably good. The opportunities provided support pupils’ spiritual and social development because they work creatively, evaluating whether a finished product looks pleasing, and they work together in a variety of groupings. Cultural development is supported by school visits to local businesses, for example, when pupils visited a design business to look at Christmas cards.
156. The subject co-ordinator is a temporary teacher who has nevertheless made a significant impact on the subject. She has a high degree of subject knowledge. A new policy has been developed, and there is a ‘skills map’ which guides teachers in what to teach and when to teach it. It also ensures an appropriate focus on practical tasks. Some monitoring of standards is undertaken, but this area is not well developed.

157. The subject leader has a good overview of the strengths and weaknesses and has produced an action plan to prioritise developments. She recognises the need to further develop assessment procedures, and to develop the organisation of resources.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

158. During the inspection no lessons in geography were observed and the school provided very little organised work for inspectors to examine. There was therefore insufficient evidence available to make an overall judgement on standards or the quality of teaching. In the inspection of 1998, standards, teaching, and progress were found to be satisfactory and pupils acquired appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding. Weaknesses reported then were that there was no scheme of work or use of ICT in the subject. These weaknesses have now been rectified. Teachers' medium-term planning is now well linked to the national scheme of work, which ensures that all geographical programmes of study are covered. ICT is evident through the use of CD-ROMs, the Internet in Year 2 and mapping programs to develop mapping skills.
159. The school's scheme of work identifies appropriate blocks of work through which pupils can develop geographical skills such as finding out where places are and what they are like, and understanding the lifestyles of the people who live there. There are also planned opportunities for pupils to carry out geographical enquiry using maps, photographs and plans, and sometimes undertaking fieldwork. This involves them in undertaking a study of a contrasting country such as India so that they can compare and contrast lifestyles. There is good emphasis on local study in the school's geography curriculum. For example, pupils make maps of their journey to school and investigate maps of Barnstaple. They also draw plans of their houses and their bedrooms. The school uses its grounds and local environment well.
160. The co-ordinator is a part-time teacher and co-ordinates two other subjects. Despite this, however, she has a balanced overview of the subject and has recently written an updated policy. The leadership of geography is satisfactory. Because there has been a particular school focus on the core subjects of English, maths and science over the past few years, geography has not been highlighted for development recently.
161. The school recognises the need to provide opportunities to develop a monitoring programme which will identify strengths and weaknesses in the subject and guide curriculum priorities through focused action planning.

## **HISTORY**

162. Although only one history lesson was observed during the inspection, pupils' work that was completed last year and during this term was analysed. Photographic evidence of recent work was also considered.
163. Pupils' attainment in history is in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and all pupils make satisfactory progress in the subject during Years 1 and 2. Pupils' progress in the subject has improved well since the inspection of November 1998. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language make

satisfactory progress in their learning. In a Year 1 lesson, all pupils could respond sensibly to questions about transport and most pupils could order chronologically various means of transport. A few pupils knew that a trap was a small passenger vehicle. All pupils could see that a large van or lorry is the modern equivalent of a horse and cart. Pupils of different levels of ability are supported in their learning by being given tasks that are well selected to help them learn so that they are able to make satisfactory progress and enjoy the subject. Higher-attaining pupils, for example, were asked to make timelines of more types of dwellings than other pupils when learning about the way homes have changed from prehistoric to modern times. In Year 2, pupils are able to use photographs as sources of evidence and their work on display shows good attention to detail.

164. The lesson observed and the other inspection evidence indicates that history teaching is satisfactory and that pupils enjoy the subject. In the main part of the lesson observed the teacher showed effective questioning that helped pupils follow the video and carry out follow-up work. At the end of the lesson time was spent looking at too many pupils' work without indicating how to improve particular aspects of the work. Work shows that pupils are frequently asked to compare life in the past with present day life in areas that are relevant and interesting to them (e.g. homes, transport and family life). Pupils are thus able to reflect on their own lives and this supports their understanding of their own life now. Good opportunities are provided for them to reflect on whether things are easier or harder now than in the past and this helps pupils' personal and social development.
165. The improvements in pupils' learning are because there is now satisfactory leadership of the subject. The co-ordinator has led the development of a scheme of work for history based on national guidance, and all teachers are now effectively supported in planning the subject. Because planning is now effective, pupils are helped to build up their knowledge as they move through the school. Staff are also provided with satisfactory and well-selected resources to support their teaching and pupils' learning. There is satisfactory use of ICT in the subject through CD-ROMs on particular topics, such as the Fire of London and the video is well used to help pupils gain clearer insights into life in the past. The school library contains a satisfactory set of books to support the teaching of history. The school's own book stock is well augmented by borrowing sets of books from the County Library in relation to history topics that are being taught. Because the school has appropriately emphasised improving attainment in literacy and numeracy over the last few years, no time has been allocated to finding out how effective teaching and learning of history is across the school.

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

166. Two ICT lessons were observed and pupils were observed using ICT in around half of the other lessons observed. The school's very good ICT file was also examined, which contained a wide range of pupils' work. Work around the school was also inspected. Standards in ICT are improving and, by the end of Year 2, are well in line with national averages. Pupils are aware of a wide range of uses of ICT and see it as one of a range of ways of helping them learn and present and organise their work. Most Year 2 pupils know how to use a computer mouse and can double click, drag and drop within programs although they find the intricate movements required difficult and have not had enough practice. They know how to save and retrieve work and to enter and exit *Colour Magic*, a painting and graphics program. They can use word

processors to compose and refine work on-screen and show understanding of the advantages of using a computer when writing. Keyboard skills are below average because the lack of a computer suite precludes frequent practice. Some pupils who have a computer at home show above average skills and knowledge of computers. In Year 2, pupils used ICT well in mathematics and science when they created graphs on a healthy eating topic. In whole class lessons the use of the school's new data projector means that all pupils can follow the lesson very well and make good progress in knowledge and understanding. Although progress in the acquisition of skills is satisfactory, learning is sometimes limited by opportunities to practice. Although staff ensure pupils use ICT in most lessons, mostly, only two pupils work on the computer and so practice and use are limited by the resources available. When working in pairs, pupils invariably work quietly and co-operatively with enjoyment and good concentration. Lower-attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language make good progress because their needs are well considered and catered for both during direct teaching, when the teacher and the learning support assistant ensure they are fully included in the lesson and during group work, when they are supported by staff or by a partner. Pupils are able to control *Roamer*, a programmable floor robot. The school has recognised that this is often too challenging for some pupils and so are planning to purchase a simpler device for younger and lower attaining pupils to ensure that their needs are better met.

167. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic, hard-working and very able co-ordinator who has worked very well with staff to build up their skills and confidence in using ICT in other subjects. She has led training for staff funded by New Opportunities Fund special grant very well and this has helped all staff see opportunities for using ICT and ensure that pupils are making good progress. Effective leadership and management of the subject have ensured that there has been good improvement in standards and the quality of provision since the June 2000 inspection. Little priority has been given to monitoring teaching and learning in ICT however, because the school has directed its monitoring effort to the subjects of English, mathematics and science.
168. Teaching overall is good with some very good elements. Direct instructions are very well provided using the new computer projector. Teachers' subject knowledge and confidence is secure and this enables teachers to plan effectively and assess pupils' learning so that tasks can be modified. Learning support assistants support pupils learning well during ICT lessons and in other subjects.
169. ICT resources are satisfactory overall. Resources for whole-class teaching and instruction are now good since the school acquired a data projector. An interactive whiteboard is on order which will support further improvement. During last year the school successfully arranged with the neighbouring junior school to use their computer suite to enable all pupils to gain more practice, but this arrangement has now unfortunately ended. Consequently, although computer resources in classrooms are satisfactory, sometimes the lack of a suite limits the use of ICT and the practice of skills in some lessons.

## MUSIC

170. During the inspection only one music lesson was observed and no pupils' work was available. However, music was observed in assembly. Teachers' planning was also examined, and this

indicates that the subject receives an appropriate amount of time and that there is an appropriate balance across the National Curriculum programmes of study. Planning is good, supporting teachers in what to teach and how to teach it, and it is based on the national scheme of work.

171. In the inspection of 1998 when music was last reported on, standards, progress and teaching in music were found to be unsatisfactory because pupils' skills were not sufficiently well developed. Teachers' planning indicates that the programme is now well designed to ensure progression in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Standards observed indicate that pupils attain standards by the end of Year 2 that are in line with expectations nationally for pupils of their age, and that pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress.
172. In Year 1, pupils developed the confident use of their voices in learning a new song about a train. They played percussion instruments to make sound effects of a train based on repeated rhythms from the song. They discussed the sound patterns and described what they sounded like, for example, "clickety clack" "clickety clack". Pupils had been taught how the instruments should be played and they talked about the type of sound they produced. They then composed their own song '*Wheels on the train*' based on another song they knew well, and words were well chosen to add to the musical effect.
173. The teacher demonstrated satisfactory subject knowledge through effective questioning and by encouraging pupils to stand correctly when singing. The lesson was well-planned and structured so that all parts were linked together under a train theme, and there was a good variety of activities to allow pupils to sing, perform, listen and compose. When pupils were encouraged to evaluate their work, they could describe why they liked the whistle playing "Whoo! whoo! whoo!" but not how they might improve their contributions. The group of pupils, which contained both Year 1 classes, was too large, which meant that the lesson was very closely directed by the teacher, and pupils did not have enough opportunities to feel part of the group or investigate instruments in small groups.
174. Pupils enjoy music. When they sing, they are enthusiastic and keen to join in, and often respond using rhythms and actions, for example, during the song '*Magic Penny*' they particularly enjoyed clapping a rhythm to enhance their singing. They listen in a satisfactory way, for example, when Bachabel's Canon was played in assembly. They interpreted the mood of the music, and walked into the hall quietly and calmly. Music contributes to pupils' spiritual development as it provides opportunities for reflection as when the prayer '*The Lord is good to me*' was sung in assembly. Pupils' cultural development is enhanced through Christmas performances and the local music festival. Visiting musicians from the local community college play for the pupils, but the multi-cultural dimension of music is underdeveloped.
175. There is no co-ordinator for music at present and the subject does not have any development priorities identified within the school development plan. Although the school has a pianist at present, staff lack confidence in teaching music. The headteacher has a watching brief for the subject at present and is aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. The co-ordination of music is satisfactory at present.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)**

176. Two Year 1 games lessons were observed and evidence on pupils' attainment in swimming was also considered. No gymnastics lessons were observed. Evidence suggest that pupils' attainment in games is in line with standards expected for their ages and above average in swimming. All pupils are included in normal class activities and there are no differences in the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs and lower-attaining pupils are supported well by the teacher and learning support assistant and this helps them make satisfactory progress. These findings broadly reflect those of the November 1998 inspection and standards in and provision for the subject has continued to be satisfactory.
177. Curriculum plans and other evidence indicates that in Years 1 and 2 pupils receive a broad and balanced PE curriculum. Much emphasis is placed on swimming and all pupils visit the local swimming pool each week for a term per year and are taught in groups according to their ability as swimmers by qualified instructors. All Year 2 pupils except one are confident in the water at the moment and, by Christmas, it is reasonably estimated that three quarters will be confident swimmers. In games lessons in Year 1, most pupils are able to roll a large ball accurately and some are beginning to dribble a ball with their feet around obstacles and chip it into a hoop. They understand and follow simple rules and are able to recall teaching points from previous lessons. Although no dance or gymnastics lessons were observed, they are appropriately included in curriculum plans during each year.
178. Teaching is satisfactory overall and this helps pupils make sound progress in lessons. In one lesson the teacher effectively ensured that the task of passing a ball to a partner between two bean bags was adapted to be easier or harder for each pair so that they found it just hard enough to help them develop their skills. Sometimes the pace of the lesson is a little slow and pupils are given insufficient chance to practise work before moving on to a new activity. Relationships are invariably good in lessons and all pupils enjoy games and this helps them make sound progress. Although teachers analyse pupils' work and show them how to improve, too few chances are given for pupils to evaluate or talk about their own and others' work to help them understand how they might improve.
179. There is a designated co-ordinator who provides satisfactory leadership of the subject. The staff and governors have agreed what aspects of PE will be covered and when and how it will be taught. Resources for the subject are mainly satisfactory but the school is aware that some resources are lacking, e.g. medium level apparatus for gymnastics. Some of the large balls are no longer completely round and this meant that, in one lesson observed, some pupils' passing was inaccurate because the balls would not roll in a straight line. This inhibited some pupils' performance in this lesson. There is a large indoor hall that provides good accommodation for the subject and the playground and lawns provide good areas for games and PE. No resources have been allocated to monitoring and improving teaching and therefore this is underdeveloped.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

180. During the inspection, two religious education lessons were observed, together with acts of worship. Teachers' planning was scrutinised and discussions were held with the co-ordinator. The previous inspection of 2000 reported that the school had made sound progress, but there were no judgements related to standards. The previous 1998 inspection found the subject to be unsatisfactory because standards were low and too little time was spent on it. Teaching was evaluated as unsatisfactory overall and there were no procedures for assessment and recording. The school has undergone satisfactory improvement since then. The subject now receives the appropriate time allocation and standards are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and teaching is satisfactory. Procedures for assessment and recording continue to require further improvement. In Year 2, pupils began a unit of work about God communicating with Moses. They heard the story about Moses in the bulrushes. They understood that God saved Moses to become a special leader. They discussed the role of his mother, sister and the daughter of the Pharaoh. They then recalled the story by drawing pictures on a grid, placing the key events in chronological order. The more able pupils wrote captions under their illustrations. All pupils could answer questions about the Moses story, some were confident to retell the story with prompts, and higher attaining pupils recalled a large amount of detail. All pupils were able to complete the tasks set for them and pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language were well supported.
181. Pupils make sound progress in gaining both knowledge and understanding of religious education although the latter is less developed. In Year 2, some pupils are able to identify some features of religious practices. For example, they write about some of the things that Christians do (such as pray, sing, dance, celebrate) and some of the things that happen in a church (such as baptism, marriage, funerals, finding out about God and praising God). Some are able to identify meanings in religious symbols such as the Fileks worn by Sikhs. Some understand that a christening is a Christian ceremony to welcome babies into God's family. Pupils are able to relate religious teachings to their own experience. For example, writing about a time when they behaved badly and were forgiven.
182. Younger pupils in Year 1 also retell religious stories such as examples from the life of Jesus, stories about characters in the Old Testament and traditional Hindu and Buddhist stories. They are able to think about what is of value by suggesting gifts such as a cuddle or helping their mum, which do not cost money.
183. The teaching of religious education is satisfactory. Teachers' planning is good and a model scheme of work giving all staff clear guidance in how the subject should be taught is available and used effectively. Stories are read well, and discussions are well led ensuring that all pupils are included in whole-class discussions. Work is set for pupils at different levels so they can all achieve success, but some activities are over directed by the teacher which limits the progress of more able pupils because they have to record their work in a certain way. Recording activities are sometimes unstimulating. Less able pupils are supported in their writing by being given key words, but this restricted the creativity of others. Although pupils' behaviour was satisfactorily in the lesson observed, because the pupils had been sitting all morning and concentrating hard on literacy and numeracy, interest and concentration in this lesson was not as good as that observed in the morning. There is a lack of planned opportunities in lessons to assess pupils' progress in order to inform future learning. There is too much emphasis on what pupils are going to **do** rather than on what they are going to **learn**. Plenary sessions at the end



of lessons are limited to pupils sharing their work with others rather than being used to check up on what pupils have learnt. Pupils don't receive enough feedback on their work or guidance on where and how they need to make improvements.

184. Pupils were generally well behaved in the lessons observed and they were keen to answer questions and concentrated hard when undertaking independent tasks. However, there was little excitement in their response because the teaching lacked inspiration. The teaching provided satisfactory support for pupils' spiritual development when pupils were asked how Moses' mother might have felt when Moses was left in the bulrushes. Moral dilemmas were investigated when the subject of 'killing all the baby boys' was raised. Social skills were developed as pupils took turns to answer questions and listened well to each other when they were talking to the class about their work.
185. The daily act of collective worship contributes to pupils' religious education, for example, by reinforcing teaching in traditions and festivals, and reflecting on the 'big questions' in life. ICT is satisfactorily used in the subject, for example when making designs for 'Joseph's Coat'.
186. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactorily carried out by a temporary co-ordinator. She has already made good progress in gaining an overview of the subject across the school. At the end of each block of work a useful evaluation is undertaken by the teacher which identifies areas for improvement. The school has already identified that multi-faith artefacts are under resourced and more multi-faith books for the library need to be acquired to match to the scheme of work. The school also needs to identify monitoring procedures which will clarify specific areas of strengths and weaknesses in standards, teaching and learning in order to further develop the subject.