

INSPECTION REPORT

CHURCHWOOD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

St Leonards-on-Sea

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114470

Headteacher: Mr Colin Campbell

Reporting inspector: Dr Vivien Johnston

8402

Dates of inspection: 5 – 8 November 2002

Inspection number: 250269

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 and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Church-in-the-Wood Lane St Leonards-on-Sea East Sussex
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G Thomas
Date of previous inspection:	November 2000

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9391	Norma Ball	Lay inspector		What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20760	Sheila Roberts	Team inspector	English as an additional language Art and design Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
27225	Anna Sketchley	Team inspector	English Design and technology Religious education	
10226	Susan Senior	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Special educational needs Science	
20506	Kate Sheraton	Team inspector	Geography History Music Physical education	How well does the school care for its pupils?
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Churchwood is an average-size community primary school in a residential area to the north west of St Leonards. It has 245 boys and girls aged from three to eleven, including 25 children who attend the nursery class on a part-time basis. The reception class includes ten children who also still attend part-time. A few pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school has an above-average proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs, and an average proportion of pupils with a statement of special need. The pupils' needs relate to learning and behaviour difficulties. A few pupils speak English as an additional language, several of whom are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils who join the school after the start of the Year 1 or leave before the end of Year 6 is much higher than in most schools. The pupils come from backgrounds that, overall, are very disadvantaged socially and economically, as is indicated by the high proportion who are known to be eligible for free school meals. Overall, children's attainment when they start school is low. Classes in the infants have children from both year groups. The school is part of an education action zone.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The effectiveness of the school is good. Standards are well below average at the end of the Foundation Stage and Year 2, but by Year 6 standards are below average. Pupils' achievement is good in the juniors, and satisfactory overall. Teaching and learning are very good in the juniors, and good overall. The Foundation Stage is not good enough, however. The school promotes pupils' personal development very well, and has a very strong ethos that is reflected in the pupils' very positive attitudes and behaviour. The school is well led and managed, with a clear focus on raising standards. Overall, it provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching and learning are very good in the juniors because the work is challenging.
- Pupils enjoy school and their lessons, and they behave very well.
- The provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is very good, which helps to create a strong ethos in which personal development is valued.
- Pupils with special educational needs are given good support by teachers and teaching assistants.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and together with other key staff has created a very good shared commitment to raise standards further.

What could be improved

- Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage, particularly in the reception class.
- The teaching of reading and writing, especially in the younger classes.
- Teachers' use of assessment information, to help them meet the full range of pupils' needs.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 2000. Its improvement since then is good. The standards pupils attain are rising, with the greatest improvement in the juniors. Here, test results have risen fast and teaching and learning are now very good. Teachers' expectations of children's learning in Nursery are satisfactory. However, teaching and learning in the reception class are now a weakness. The school has an effective senior management team, development planning is very good, the budget is managed efficiently and governors are increasingly involved in evaluating the school's work. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are much improved. The school has clear plans to deal with the remaining areas of weakness, including raising standards in literacy. Its capacity for further improvement is very good as staff share the headteacher's commitment to making the school very successful.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6, based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	E	E*	E	C	very high A* well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E very low E*
mathematics	E	E	D	A	
science	E*	E	E	B	

Children enter school with standards of attainment that are well below the expectation for their age. Their achievement is unsatisfactory overall during the Foundation Stage, because of weaknesses in teaching and learning during the reception year. At the start of Year 1, the standards attained are well below expectations, with a weakness in language and literacy.

The results of the Year 2 national assessments in reading and writing were well below average. Mathematics results were very low, that is in the lowest five per cent nationally. The standards attained by pupils now in Year 2 are well below average. Their achievement is satisfactory, however.

Test results for Year 6 pupils have risen over the past few years, at a faster rate than nationally. The targets for Year 6 results have been ambitious. They were exceeded in mathematics but not met in English in 2002. Like the test results, the standards pupils attain by the end of Year 6 are rising. Standards are now below average in mathematics and science, but still well below average in English. Pupils' achievement during their four years in the juniors is now good, because of the very effective teaching. Pupils are doing better in mathematics and science than in English.

In most other subjects, too little evidence was gathered to evaluate standards and pupils' achievement. However, the indications are that they do well in music and physical education. Standards in information and communication technology are below average. Although pupils' achievement over time has been unsatisfactory, they are now learning well and so standards are rising. Generally, pupils do better orally than in writing because of the difficulties they have with literacy.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic about learning and enjoy school life. Most pupils work hard and are proud of their achievements.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in lessons and around the school, though better in the juniors than for younger pupils. The six fixed-period exclusions in the last school year were for inappropriate behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils show a high level of respect for each other and for adults. They are supportive of each other, and carry out their responsibilities very well.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Despite the school's best efforts, the overall attendance rate remains well below average and there is more unauthorised absence than in most schools.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Very 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.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Nursery. They are unsatisfactory in Reception mainly because of weaknesses in the teaching of basic skills, particularly literacy. In the infants, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and some teaching is good. Pupils' behaviour is managed well and resources are well used in lessons, which usually have a good pace. Pupils learn to concentrate on their work. Sometimes the work provided for high attainers in these classes is not sufficiently challenging.

The quality of teaching of English and mathematics, including numeracy and literacy, is good overall, although much stronger in the juniors than the infants. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are well supported in class, and their learning is good.

Features of the good and very good teaching were that the teachers had good subject knowledge and set high expectations for their pupils. They had planned the lesson well and led class discussions in a way that involved all of pupils in answering challenging questions. Good relationships promoted a happy and productive learning environment. The work was well planned to meet the full range of pupils' needs, and so the class worked hard and made very good gains in their learning.

The main weakness in teaching was that teachers' planning of lesson activities paid too little attention to what pupils were to learn. In these lessons, the pupils' work lacked a focus, the pace was slow, and too little learning took place. Also, the younger pupils make slow gains in learning to read confidently and independently as teachers do too little to develop these skills, including sending reading books home regularly.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory, except that not enough time is given to history and geography. School clubs, visits and visitors to the school provide good enrichment to the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The support provided for pupils is managed efficiently. Work in lessons is matched well to pupils' needs, takes account of their individual targets, and is monitored well by teaching assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The pupils are given extra support to learn English, which helps their learning throughout the curriculum. Teachers and teaching assistants are very aware of these pupils' needs. The very good relationships between pupils enable new pupils to settle in and make friends quickly.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. The school promotes pupils' moral, social and cultural development very strongly, and the provision for their spiritual development is good. The staffs are excellent role models for pupils, and give them a wide range of opportunities to take responsibility and play an active part in life of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good provision for pupils' welfare. The procedures for monitoring their behaviour and attendance are very good. Academic and personal targets are set for pupils and their personal development is appropriately monitored. Assessment information has not been used well enough to track pupils' learning over time and to inform teachers' planning. Procedures for assessment are satisfactory, and being further improved.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Satisfactorily. The school has established good links with parents and provides them with a sound range of information. Many parents not sufficiently involved in helping their children with schoolwork at home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and has managed the school's improvement very well, with the support of the other senior staff. Many subject leaders are new to this level of responsibility but are carrying out their responsibility satisfactorily. The Foundation Stage is not managed effectively enough.
How well the governors fulfill their responsibilities	Satisfactorily. The governors are very supportive of the school, and are well informed as they are given good information about its work. Governors are beginning to monitor the school's work and to fulfill the role of critical friend.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher monitors the school's work very carefully and uses the information to guide its improvement. The school improvement plan, which has covered one year at a time, has provided a good blueprint for developments.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The budget is managed very effectively. Extra grants have been used very well to improve facilities. The accommodation is good, and attractively maintained. Resources and staffing are good, with a particular strength in the quality of the teaching assistants and other support staff. The school applies the principles of best value very well. It consults widely on ways to improve, sets itself ambitious targets, and seeks the best outcomes for all it does.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and are making good progress. • Behaviour is good, and their children are helped to become mature and responsible. • The teaching is good, and their children are expected to work hard and do their best. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities which is provided outside lessons.

Inspectors agree that the positive views expressed by parents are strengths, and judge that the school provides a good range of activities outside lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

1. Children enter the school with standards that are well below what is expected nationally for their age. They are particularly weak in the area of language and communication. Nursery children's achievement is satisfactory. The children make satisfactory gains in their personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and mathematical, physical and creative development. However, children's skills in communication, language and literacy are insufficiently developed. Opportunities for encouraging children to speak, explore language and extend their vocabulary are missed, and the skills of reading and writing are not introduced well enough. These weaknesses are more marked in the reception year. In Reception, achievement is unsatisfactory because of weaknesses in teaching that mean that most children do not attain the early learning goals by the end of the year. Consequently, standards are well below average at the end of the Foundation Stage, and children's achievement is unsatisfactory.

2. In the infants, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Although standards remain well below average overall, the pupils make satisfactory gains in reading, writing and mathematics. They do less well in science, partly because literacy difficulties hinder their learning. The school's results in the Year 2 national assessments in reading, writing and mathematics were well below average in 2002. The reading and writing results were average compared to similar schools (similar in the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) but in mathematics they were well below the average for similar schools. The reading results were about the same as those gained at the time of the last inspection (in 2000), whereas the writing results were better and the mathematics results worse. In 2002, the latter were very low. Boys have tended to do better than girls but, during the inspection, no factors were apparent which explained this discrepancy.

3. In the juniors, pupils' achievement is good. The main reasons are that the quality of teaching is now very good and the pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning. The standards they attain are below average compared with the national picture. Standards are rising because of the improvements within the school, which were recognized by the last inspection and have continued. For example, a recent whole-school focus on handwriting and good-quality presentation of written work is beginning to show through in pupils' written work. Pupils are doing better in mathematics and science than in English. Standards in reading and writing are still too low, and limit the pupils' attainment in some subjects.

4. The results of the tests at the end of Year 6 national tests were well below average overall in 2002. However, they have risen at a faster rate than nationally. This rapid rise was recognized in 2002 by the school being given a national achievement award for the improvement in its results. In the tests in 2002, pupils did better in mathematics than in English and science. In mathematics, results were below average whereas they were well below average in English and science. The fastest and most consistent rise has been in science, but in all three subjects the 2002 results are higher than those reported by the last inspection. There has not been a consistent pattern of difference in boys' and girls' results over the past three years.

5. The school has set itself challenging targets for Year 6 results. In English, the target of 70% gaining level 4 or above was not met. However, in mathematics the target of 75% gaining level 4 or above was exceeded.

6. Compared with similar schools, the 2002 results were average in English, above average in science and well above average in mathematics. This comparison indicates that pupils' achievement was satisfactory in English, good in science and very good in mathematics. A comparison based on schools in which the Year 6 pupils had gained similar results at the end of Year 2 four years earlier suggests a similar pattern of pupils doing reasonably well in science and well in mathematics, but less well than expected in English. However, the school has a very high level of pupil mobility. Over half the pupils who took Year 6 national tests in 2002 joined the school during the juniors. The school's analysis of the results of those pupils who took the Year 2 tests at Churchwood showed that they had done at least as well as predicted from their Year 2 results, and in many cases they had done better.

7. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors. The same is true of the pupils who speak English as an additional language. Both

groups of pupils are given suitable help, and the work is well matched to their needs especially in the juniors. Gifted and talented pupils are less well catered for, and as some work is unchallenging they do not progress as well as they should. This is reflected in the low proportion of pupils who gain a level higher than that expected for their age, in the tests at the end of Years 2 and 6.

8. As was also noted by the last inspection, standards are rising. The most improvement is now taking place in the juniors because of the challenges set by the teachers. As in the Year 6 test results, standards are higher in mathematics and science than in English. This reflects the general weakness in language and literacy that holds back pupils' learning from the start of their time in the school. In particular, pupils are not doing as well as they should in their independent reading, which has been given too little attention by teachers. As well as working to improve these three subjects, the school has focused on information and communication technology (ICT) as it was identified among the key issues by the last inspection. Standards in ICT remain below those expected for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory because they have done too little work in the subject in previous years. However, pupils' learning was generally good in the ICT lessons seen during the inspection, indicating that standards and achievement are starting to improve. In the Foundation Stage, standards in the six areas of learning are lower than they should be. This stage continues to have weaknesses.

9. Few lessons were observed in the other subjects in the infants and juniors, and little previously-completed work was seen. This meant that the inspectors were generally not able to make valid judgements on the standards attained in other subjects nor on pupils' achievement. However, the evidence indicated that they do well in music and physical education.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, BEHAVIOUR AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

10. Pupils of all ages show very good attitudes to school and their behaviour in class and around the school is also very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. In most (three-quarters) of the lessons seen during the inspection, pupils showed good or better attitudes and behaviour. In almost two-thirds of the lessons, their attitudes and behaviour were very good or excellent. These proportions are higher than in many schools inspected.

11. Pupils of all ages respond well to the school's strong moral and social ethos and to teachers' calm and encouraging management of their behaviour. In the playground, pupils mix well and enjoy playing together. They are very aware of how they are expected to behave and most respond to the school's expectations very well. For example, they understand and value the rewards for good behaviour and are especially keen to earn points and gain certificates for what they do well. Pupils' behaviour reflects the good example that staff show to them in respect for and kindness to others. There is very little oppressive behaviour or bullying. Pupils know that they should report unkind behaviour and bullying and are clear that this behaviour is not acceptable. There were six fixed-period exclusions in the last school year involving three pupils and one fixed-period exclusion in the current school year for dangerous behaviour. The incidence of exclusions has decreased in recent years, reflecting the calmer atmosphere that is now characteristic of the school.

12. Pupils show a very positive attitude to their work. They are keen to answer questions and contribute their ideas in class and group discussions. Their very good attitudes and behaviour make an important contribution to the good learning atmosphere within the school, enabling pupils to focus well on their work. For some pupils, however, extended periods of concentration are not easy. Pupils share resources well and co-operate sensibly. For example, Year 3 pupils contributed well to a class discussion building up patterns of numbers in blocks of two, were keen to answer questions and listened attentively to the ideas of others. In individual work, they tried hard and responded well to the encouragement and praise they received for their efforts. Pupils with special educational needs behave very well. They show interest in taking part in lessons and co-operate with others in pair or group work. They are fully integrated into class activities.

13. Pupils' personal development and relationships are very good. Pupils show kindness and concern for each other and relationships among pupils are happy and relaxed. This was especially evident during two wet playtimes seen during the inspection and during the lunch breaks. Pupils were happily engaged in games and discussions in classrooms and around the school when they could not go out to play. Pupils show a good understanding of how their actions can affect others,

and are concerned for others' feelings and welfare. For example, new pupils are made to feel welcome, and pupils who are learning English are helped and supported. Pupils are also trustworthy when given responsibility. In lessons, they carry out any tasks requested of them with simple efficiency. Monitors and school council representatives take their responsibilities very seriously and show a sense of pride in their school and in their duties. Pupils feel they have a real role in what happens in school. They appreciate being consulted on issues relating to the school, for example the colour schemes when areas are redecorated.

14. Attendance is unsatisfactory. Although it has improved in the last school year, attendance is still well below the average for primary schools. Unauthorised absence is well above the national average but has also improved recently. Frequent absence from school has been a contributory factor in a minority of pupils not doing as well as they should in their school work.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. Teaching and learning are good in the school as a whole. They were very good or, occasionally, excellent in four out of every ten lessons seen during the inspection. They were good or better in two-thirds of the lessons seen. These are higher proportions of effective teaching than reported by the last inspection. Teaching and learning have improved most in the juniors, where over half the lessons had very good or excellent teaching. The few lessons that were not satisfactory were in the Foundation Stage.

16. The teaching of children in Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory overall. There has been an improvement in the nursery class since the last inspection, and here the teaching is now satisfactory. However, the teaching of children in the reception year is unsatisfactory. The key weaknesses were that the lessons were poorly organised, with little clarity about the purpose of the planned activities in terms of what the children were expected to learn from them. Consequently, the lessons lacked direction and so the children made few gains in their knowledge and skills. A general weakness in the Foundation Stage is that teachers do not plan well enough how to teach specific skills, particularly in the area of language and literacy. Pupils enter Year 1 with poorly-developed language and literacy skills because of this. Assessment information is not used to identify the next steps in children's learning, and so lesson planning sets out broad intentions for the class without considering individuals' needs.

17. In the infants, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Good features are that the pupils are encouraged to concentrate on their tasks, they learn to co-operate in groups, and they complete their work quietly and sensibly. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and make good use of lesson time. Pupils respond well to their teachers and there are good relationships between adults and pupils, which help pupils learn and enjoy their work.

18. The most successful lessons seen in the infants were in history and physical education. In these lessons, teachers had high expectations of the pupils, and set a fast pace for their learning. The enthusiasm of teachers and teaching assistants was an important element in keeping the pupils focused on their learning. The work was well planned to meet the needs of all in the classes, which had pupils from both year groups. Demonstrations as well as clear explanations helped all in the class to understand what to do.

19. In the juniors, teaching and learning are very good. Clear planning reflected the teachers' secure subject knowledge and provided well for the needs of the different pupils in the class. At the start of the lessons, teachers explained to pupils what they were expected to learn, which helped them understand the purpose of the lesson activities and feel involved. In the best lessons, teachers had high expectations of pupils' achievement. The calm atmosphere in classes helped pupils to concentrate on their tasks for quite long periods of time. The enthusiasm of the staff and their use of praise motivated the pupils. Their behaviour was managed well, and relationships were very good. Teachers' questioning of pupils was also very effective as it prompted them to think for themselves and involved pupils of all levels of attainment fully in whole-class discussions. In most lessons, resources were used well, and there was also often good use of ICT. Pupils were sensitively encouraged to work individually and in pairs and small groups, and did so well.

20. In the juniors, homework is set regularly and is used appropriately to support pupils' learning. However, in the infants insufficient emphasis is placed upon developing reading skills through regular reading homeworks.

21. Weaknesses were seen in a few lessons which were nevertheless satisfactory overall. The activities and tasks were sometimes insufficiently well matched to the needs of all in the class, and some pupils did less well than they should because of this. The lack of on-going assessment records contributed to this weakness as it made it harder for teachers to know exactly what pupils and groups of pupils needed to learn next. This weakness affected some lessons in the infants, where the presence of pupils from two year groups made it particularly important that teachers build systematically on the needs of pupils of different ages and levels of attainment. It meant that higher-attaining pupils were sometimes set work that was too easy for them.

22. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Teachers know these pupils' needs and adapt the work appropriately, and involve the pupils well in lessons. They make good progress towards their learning targets, helped by good additional support from learning assistants.

23. Pupils who are at the early stage of learning English are also well supported in class and so they make good progress. Teachers and teaching assistants are very aware of their needs and do their best to ensure that the pupils understand the work.

24. Literacy and numeracy are taught well in the junior classes and satisfactorily in the infant classes. A recent whole-school focus on writing and spelling has led to an improvement in the promotion of this aspect of literacy. For example, pupils are expected to present their work well. The provision for developing pupils' skills in reading has had insufficient attention. Pupils are given too few planned opportunities to use books in subjects other than English and to enjoy independent reading. Teachers reinforce pupils' basic knowledge of numbers and multiplication tables well, giving them a secure foundation in numeracy. The teaching of numeracy was particularly effective in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, in which pupils were learning to add up in blocks of two and to build an array. Pupils explored several different ways of looking at the mathematical activity, each deepening their understanding and keeping them fully involved in the lesson.

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

25. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that meets statutory requirements, including those for sex education. Strengths in the range and quality of the curriculum include good provision for person, social and health education, the use of the local community to broaden the range of experiences provided, and the good range of extra-curricular activities.

26. The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes is satisfactory. It covers the six areas of experience for the Foundation Stage, but with insufficient emphasis on the development of language and literacy skills.

27. The school has developed a curriculum map to plan the coverage of the National Curriculum in the infants and juniors. The focus has been on the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT. The time allocation for most subjects is appropriate, but insufficient for history and geography. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented satisfactorily. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has helped to raise standards in mathematics in the juniors.

28. The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum, taking account of their individual circumstances. It is most successful in its provision for the pupils with special educational needs. This was found to be sound in the previous inspection, and is now good. Pupils' needs are carefully identified and their progress is well monitored, so that the curriculum can be adapted for them. A particular strength is in the very good support provided through the 'nurture' groups for pupils who have behavioural difficulties. Teachers of parallel classes plan well together, to ensure equivalent provision for the pupils in each year group. However, in the infants teachers have not focused enough on planning for the needs of the pupils in both year groups in the mixed-age

classes, using assessment information to help with this. Also, the needs of high-attaining pupils are not consistently provided for within the curriculum planning.

29. A good variety of extra-curricular activities is provided, many of which provide worthwhile enhancements to what pupils learn in lessons. There are after-school clubs and activities, a good range of visits made by pupils to support their learning as well as musical and sporting events. For older junior pupils there are also opportunities to go on residential trips which extend both their social skills and their classroom work. A Samba music club is particularly popular as about a fifth of the school attends this weekly activity. Visitors and visits also contribute well to the curriculum. Visits range from trips to farms and animal centres, the sea and places of historical interest, to theatre trips and a trip to museums and art galleries in London for the juniors. Good links with the community such as local visitors in the school and visits to the local church enrich the curriculum. Summer holiday activities which included trips to a local library, face painting, circus workshops and teepee making were much appreciated by parents and pupils.

30. The school's liaison with other schools and institutions is good. There are very good arrangements to help Year 6 pupils make a successful transfer to secondary education. For example, the school has drawn up a booklet to guide parents and pupils. Year 6 pupils go each week to the YMCA for woodworking classes on Friday afternoons. The school has good links with other local primary schools and they share their expertise, such as when training teaching assistants and in providing a full health-care package to assist families in the area.

31. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very strong. Led by the example of the headteacher, both teaching and non-teaching staff provide very positive role models for pupils. The adults set very clear expectations for pupils' behaviour, and apply the school rules consistently. Staff make good use of opportunities to reinforce pupils' understanding of right and wrong, such as through insisting on good behaviour in lessons. They also take advantage of opportunities to consider moral issues in lessons. For example, pupils in Year 6 have discussed the question of third world debt and whether it is fair. In lessons, pupils of all ages are encouraged to work together co-operatively, and teachers insist that they listen to and respect each others' views.

32. A wide range of additional activities also promotes pupils' personal and social development well. These include the 'nurture' group for pupils who need extra help with learning and social interaction, residential visits, and weekly assemblies in which achievements are celebrated. The school council involves pupils particularly successfully in considering issues that concern how the school runs, and gives real responsibility to those involved. Some pupils act as hosts and helpers to visitors, further developing their confidence and skills in interacting with adults as well as each other.

33. Pupils' cultural development is promoted well, in a variety of ways. Music is played in assemblies, and pupils have good opportunities to take part in school plays and performances. They are also taken on school visits that broaden the range of their cultural experience. Pupils are introduced to other cultures through their work in several subjects, for example looking at Indian styles of art. An assembly during the inspection illustrated the way pupils are encouraged to develop cultural knowledge and appreciation, when the first verse of the hymn was sung solo, and the work of Mozart and Beethoven was referred to. The school environment itself encourages an aesthetic awareness through displays of pupils' work and through the decoration scheme, the colours for which the pupils helped to choose.

34. Pupils' spiritual development is also promoted well. Although daily assemblies are not held for the whole school, class teachers provide time for reflection each day. The whole-school planning for collective worship is very good as it gives class teachers clear guidance on the values to be explored. In lessons, teachers make good use of opportunities to stimulate a sense of wonder. For example, in a religious education exploring the Jewish Shabbat ceremony, the use of candles created an atmosphere of awe. In an art lesson, pupils were amazed at seeing a PowerPoint projection of a painting by Seurat, and remembered seeing the original in a visit to an art gallery. The general ethos of respect and consideration for others and the high quality of the visual environment also reinforce pupils' spiritual development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are good. Staff place a high priority on the care of pupils and are very alert to matters that affect their safety. There are sensible procedures for the care of pupils who are unwell, and for inducting new pupils.

36. Very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for eliminating bullying have brought about further improvement in pupils' behaviour since the last inspection. Where incidents of poor behaviour still happen, they are recorded well and good support is provided by specialist staff as well as class teachers and all support staff. The management of behaviour in the classrooms and around the school is carefully structured and well managed by the headteacher. A very firm line is taken on the increasingly rare incidents of serious misbehaviour. The behaviour code is clear and well followed in the school. Points and certificates are consistently used by adults to promote and reward good behaviour.

37. The school has developed very good procedures for monitoring attendance, and follows them consistently. The procedures include good use of outside agencies. The strong links between the school and the agencies further reinforce the school message to parents of the importance of prompt and regular attendance at school. These procedures, including careful monitoring of individual cases, have had only limited success as yet and so attendance figures have not risen significantly. However, a small decrease in unauthorised absence has been brought about by efficient monitoring procedures and rapid follow-up of all pupil absences. The attendance statistics are adversely affected by the number of pupils who are kept on roll after they have left the school, as well as by families who continue to take holidays in term time despite the school's advice.

38. Staff know the pupils well. Their personal development, their successes and their problems are shared. Overall the monitoring and support of pupils' personal development is good. Each individual pupil is valued and his or her care and development is well planned. Good use is made of outside agencies to extend the work of the school staff, to provide very good quality support for pupils with specific needs.

39. The school is good at identifying pupils with special educational needs and determining the appropriate strategies for helping them. Class teachers and teaching assistants work together to implement the individual education plans, so that there is continuity in meeting the needs of each child. Both parents and pupils are invited to have an input into new targets, and to attend the regular reviews of progress towards existing targets.

40. There are similarly good procedures for the care and support of pupils at the early stage of learning English. Staff encourage them to make good relationships with other pupils and to settle in quickly.

41. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory overall, with some strengths but a number of weaknesses that the school is working to improve. The use of assessment information to monitor pupils' academic progress and to provide them with guidance is unsatisfactory. The teachers use different approaches to assessing pupils' learning, and so the school does not have a consistent record of how well pupils have done. This is making it difficult for staff to track pupils' attainment from year to year. Lesson evaluations and reading records do not always provide sufficient information to identify the next steps in learning. Writing assessments, while detailed and informative, are not used systematically to monitor pupils' progress over time. However, assessment and record keeping for pupils with special educational needs are very good, with pupils involved in evaluating their own progress towards their targets.

42. Reading and writing assessments are used to set targets for pupils, for example using capital letters correctly, and these are displayed prominently in classrooms. This is a good system. The targets provide a powerful reminder of the specific things that pupils need to do to improve their work when they are referred to in lessons and in marking. However, the targets are not used consistently and pupils are not always clear about how long it should take them to reach their target.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. Overall, the parents who responded to the questionnaire or attended the meeting before the inspection have a very positive view of the school. They regard the school as a caring place in which their children are well taught and encouraged to do their best and work hard. Parents feel very welcome in the school and are pleased that their children behave well and enjoy school. Parents feel that the school is well led and managed and that their children are helped to be mature and responsible. Some parents felt that there are insufficient extra-curricular activities, whereas the inspection found the range of extra-curricular activities to be good.

44. The school has worked hard to improve its links with parents, and these links are now good. There are regular informal activities such as coffee mornings, and two consultation evenings for parents each year. The headteacher and staff assign a high priority to being available to meet parents to discuss any problems or concerns they may have. The school is very efficient in responding to parents' enquiries. Through school productions, invitations to assemblies and other events, parents are regularly welcomed into school. Attendance at these events is increasing. The school makes good efforts to include parents and to consult them to gain their views, for example with questionnaire surveys. Encouragement has also been given for the formation of a parents and teachers association.

45. Parents and their children come into school to look around before they start school in Nursery, and home visits are also organised. These visits are helpful in establishing good links between home and school. The school has developed good arrangements for liaison with the parents of pupils who join the school at a later stage. Suitable support is also available to help parents who do not speak English or who cannot read English. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed about their children's progress. They are invited to contribute to the individual education plan review and are given many opportunities for consultation with staff. Parents have regular access to a file of additional information about special educational needs, which is made available in the school foyer.

46. The school provides a satisfactory range of information for parents, and is taking good measures to develop it further. The annual reports prepared for parents give a clear picture of what their children have covered in lessons and how they can improve. Targets are clearly identified in the reports. The school is aware that there are inconsistencies in the quality and type of information class teachers provide about the work to be done in the class, and is looking at how to improve the information given to parents. Staff and governors have also identified other areas in which parents would find more information helpful. For example, a booklet to guide parents in how to help their children with their school work is planned. Information for parents is attractively displayed in the entrance area. Monthly newsletters are well presented and helpful to parents.

47. A few parents help in school on a regular basis, especially in infant classes, and their contribution to the school is valued. Some parents are able to offer help with trips and visits out of school, such as an expedition to London to visit the museums. However, overall parents make too little contribution to children's learning at home and at school. A significant minority of parents does not regard regular attendance at school as important, and continues to ignore the school's efforts in this area. Parents are given some basic guidance on how to help their children at home, but reading books are not sent home regularly for infant pupils and so parents are not making enough contribution to helping their children learn to read.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. As reported by the last inspection, overall the school is led well and managed effectively. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is the major driving force behind the school's continued improvement since the last inspection. He is regarded highly by parents, staff and pupils, and has motivated the staff, many of them new in post, to have a strong shared commitment to the school's future development.

49. Other senior staff provide the headteacher with good support, and together they make an effective team with complementary strengths. The provision for pupils in the juniors is especially well

led and managed, as is that for pupils with special educational needs. However, the leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory.

50. Most subjects are managed satisfactorily. Although the subject leaders are generally new to this responsibility and have undertaken it for a comparatively short time, they have worked hard to improve the weaknesses caused by the previous lack of subject managers. The new subject leaders have a good focus on raising standards, and generally know where the weaknesses in their subjects lie. These include a lack of curriculum planning and assessment procedures. However, the subject leaders are inexperienced in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, which remains largely the responsibility of the headteacher and other senior staff.

51. The headteacher has established good procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching. This has contributed much to the systematic improvement in teaching since the last inspection as monitoring information has been used very well to identify where improvements most needed to be made. In addition to his own regular classroom observations, the headteacher has made good use of local authority advisory staff to support teachers and improve the quality of their teaching. This has been successful overall, although there is still work to do to raise the quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage.

52. The aims of the school are well embedded in its work. Central to these aims is the concern for the individual, which ensures all groups of pupils and staff are supported.

53. Planning for the school's future development is very good. The headteacher consults widely and staff, governors, parents and pupils have been involved in the planning. The school improvement plan is clear, well structured and easy to follow. It identifies areas for development succinctly, with costs and clear priorities. Responsibilities are assigned for each area of the plan, shared between staff and governors so that all have a role in the management of change.

54. The work of the governing body has improved since the last inspection. The governors are now suitably involved in policy and decision-making. Governors carry out their role in a positive and very supportive way. They have made a sound contribution to the school's improvement, and are well focused on the targets identified in the school improvement plan. Governors are aware of the need to develop further their role as a critical friend of the school, and to challenge the school more.

55. The principles of best value are now applied very well. The headteacher consults widely on proposed changes and improvements, and weighs up their potential benefits carefully. He has set high challenges to staff and pupils, which is how the school has been enabled to improve and now to provide good value for money. Although the school has yet to be as successful academically as the headteacher and staff would like, informed by comparisons with other schools' performance, it has become a calm and orderly community in which most pupils learn well. The budget has been managed very well to reduce a deficit that had built up in previous years, and the indications are that it will be eliminated by the end of the current financial year. Specific grants are very well used. Very enterprising use is made of initiatives and funding to support the development of the school. For example, the school has made very good use of an EAZ (Education Action Zone) project to improve teaching and learning. The school is well supported by efficient administrative staff, and makes very good use of new technology.

56. The school has been very successful in appointing well-qualified teachers since the last inspection, which has contributed to the improvement in teaching and learning. New teachers are carefully inducted into school and have a very clear handbook to support them in their early days in school. The arrangements for performance management are good, and used well to help the school meet the targets for improvement it sets itself.

57. The building now provides a well-resourced and attractive learning environment, having been recently refurbished. Although the school hall and some classrooms are small, they are used well. The provision for teaching ICT has improved now that a newly-equipped computer suite is available for class lessons. The library areas have been made attractive for pupils. Altogether, the accommodation and resources for learning are good, and contribute to the school ethos that values pupils' needs and interests, and encourages learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. In order to further improve the school and raise standards, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) improve the quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage, especially in the reception class, by:
 - planning for what pupils are expected to learn from the planned activities;
 - providing more focused teaching of basic skills, especially in language and literacy;
 - assessing children's attainment more accurately, and using assessment information to help identify what they need to learn next;
 - improving the effectiveness of leadership and management, particularly in raising standards and improving children's learning.(paragraphs 1, 16, 60-64)

- (2) improve the teaching of reading and writing through:
 - making more use of opportunities to encourage pupils to read as part of their work throughout the curriculum;
 - encouraging younger pupils to read more widely at home, and keeping a better record of their progress as independent readers;
 - providing more planned opportunities for pupils to learn how to write well within subjects such as science.(paragraphs 8, 80, 81, 83, 96)

- (3) making better use of assessment information, by:
 - keeping consistent records systematically, so that the school has an overview of pupils' learning from year to year and can intervene when insufficient progress is made;
 - making use of assessment information to match the work to pupils' levels of attainment, especially in ensuring that work is challenging for all pupils including the higher attainers.(paragraphs 21, 28, 41, 42, 86, 93, 96, 100)

59. In addition to the above issues, the governors may wish to include the following minor points for development in the action plan to be drawn up after the inspection:

- further improving levels of attendance and reducing unauthorised absence (paragraphs 14, 47);
- giving more time for history and geography (paragraphs 92 and 97);
- providing more consistent information to parents on what their children will be doing in lessons each term (paragraph 46);
- improving aspects of subject management such as the provision of a subject policy and curriculum planning in art, and assessment arrangements in most subjects; and developing subject leaders' skills in carrying out their responsibilities (paragraphs 50, 106, 113, 118)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

51

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

22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	18	13	15	0	2	0
Percentage	6	35	25	29	0	4	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 two percentage points. The percentages do not add up to 100 because they have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	12	213
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	134

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	68

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	33
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	39

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	11	20	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	13	14	15
	Total	22	23	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (67)	76 (73)	77 (79)
	National	84 (85)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	9	10
	Girls	13	15	16
	Total	21	24	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68 (73)	77 (82)	84 (73)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	19	19	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	15	18
	Girls	13	16	16
	Total	20	31	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	53 (51)	82 (56)	89 (65)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	15	13
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	20	29	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	53 (51)	76 (56)	71 (47)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
194	6	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
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-Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR-Y4

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	288

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	621,066
Total expenditure	647,523
Expenditure per pupil	2452.73
Balance brought forward from previous year	-30,355
Balance carried forward to next year	-26,457

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	248
Number of questionnaires returned	49

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	22	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	43	0	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	51	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	51	36	9	0	4
The teaching is good.	59	39	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	39	14	0	10
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	20	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	35	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	42	42	16	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	53	47	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	42	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	49	14	6	6

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

60. Children enter Nursery with skills that are well below those expected for their age, and particularly weak in the area of language and communication. Staff visit children and parents in their homes before they start in the nursery class. Children visit the reception class before joining and parents attend an introductory meeting. There is a good partnership with parents and so children generally start school happily.

61. By the end of the reception year, standards are well below expectations in all areas of learning. Overall children's learning and their achievement are unsatisfactory during the Foundation Stage, though better than in the reception class. Some children remain part-time in the reception class for two terms and this contributes to their slow rate of progress compared to those who attend school full-time.

62. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory overall in the Foundation Stage, although it is satisfactory in Nursery. Here, staff work hard to engage the children in their learning and to help them learn to concentrate on the activities provided. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in Reception. The major weakness is that opportunities to reinforce and extend children's learning in communication, language and literacy are missed. This is also the case, but to a lesser extent, in Nursery. However, teaching is satisfactory in both the nursery and reception classes in the other areas of learning.

63. Teachers' planning and assessment of children's learning are unsatisfactory. Assessment records provide a summary of what each child knows and can do, but teachers do not use the information to help them identify the next step in the child's learning. The result is that planning tends to show broad learning intentions, but does not plan systematically for building children's skills and knowledge. Daily plans do not show in sufficient detail what groups of children of differing attainment will do and what, precisely, they are expected to learn from the activities. These weaknesses have a particularly marked effect upon learning in the area of communication, language and literacy. They also mean that the higher-attaining children are not given work that is challenging enough.

64. There is a lack of clear and incisive leadership of the Foundation Stage, focused upon raising standards. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in the quality of teaching in Nursery but a decline in Reception. Overall, the provision in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory.

Personal, social and emotional development

65. Most children start school happily in the nursery class. They show increasing independence in selecting and carrying out activities, but find it difficult to sustain concentration and listen in group sessions. By the time they move to the reception class, children have learned to join with others and to share experiences. Clear rules and routines promote children's ability to take turns, tidy up and, with support, listen to others' ideas. Many children in Nursery are unadventurous and adapt slowly to change, but the older children are willing to tackle problems and take the initiative.

66. Role-play areas provide valuable opportunities for children to form good relationships and work together harmoniously. For example, children worked well together in a role-play activity in a 'doctor's surgery', taking different roles of mother, receptionist, doctor and nurse to care for a doll patient who was sick.

67. Opportunities are missed to encourage the children to think for themselves, particularly in the reception class. Many free-choice activities are made available, but the children are not given enough clues or purposeful stimuli about how to get the most out of them. Although children play independently, teachers do not record or review the free-choice activities. This contributes to the lack of planned provision for developing the skills of independent learning.

Communication, language and literacy

68. On entry to the nursery, children have very low skills in speaking and listening. They are reluctant to communicate with adults. Nursery staff work hard to involve the children in question-and-answer activities in small groups, but their responses are limited because they are unwilling to participate. Children are given too few planned opportunities for one-to-one interaction with an adult, to improve their articulation, model new vocabulary and help them gain the confidence to respond more fully. Adult intervention to extend children's use of language in role-play situations is more successful. Songs and rhymes are well used, and the older children particularly enjoy listening to stories.

69. Children's progress in learning to read and write is too slow. Those in the nursery class are at a very early stage of recognising their name. Reception children are beginning to write some letters of their name for themselves. The role-play area has provision for children to communicate through making marks on paper, but teachers miss the opportunity for developing writing skills in other meaningful situations and for demonstrating how to write. Children do not have regular practice in forming the letters for themselves, and only limited experience of adults acting as scribes for their ideas. For example, a group of Reception children who were asked to make a book about animals received no stimulus to their ideas or structured adult support. The result was that they achieved very little.

70. Early reading skills and phonics are not taught in a sufficiently methodical way, with regular planned reinforcement. The teaching of most commonly used words as sight vocabulary is not successful. As a result of the unsatisfactory teaching of literacy, many children start Year 1 with reading and writing skills at a low level and their achievement in this area of learning is unsatisfactory.

Mathematical development

71. Children in Nursery learn to count and to recognize numerals to five. They show an interest in numbers and the rhythm of counting. Several recognize numerals beyond those taught in class. For example, two children recognized numbers beyond five when they were asked to identify, by the number, which trike they were riding during outside play. Counting and singing rhymes are used well as incidental opportunities for reinforcing counting and number recognition. Structured activities of cooking and model rocket making successfully develop an understanding of mathematical language such as 'heavy', 'more', 'less', 'longer' and 'shorter'. Children in Reception learn to count, recognize and sequence numbers to nine. They respond positively to the challenge of identifying when the order of numbers has been changed but struggle to understand odd and even numbers. Opportunities are missed for older or more able children to develop their number skills systematically, both in independent and adult led activities, and so some children achieve less than they could.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

72. Through outdoor play activities, children are encouraged to show an interest in the local area by listening for familiar and unfamiliar sounds and examining the seasonal changes. Indoors, children have suitable opportunities to explore the properties of magnifiers and materials, such as wet and dry sand, and corn flour mixed with water. This growing knowledge of changing materials is reinforced by regular cooking activities. The good range of construction toys provides sound opportunities for children to construct for their own purposes. A very popular "car", which has many interlocking cogs and levers, successfully stimulates enquiry and encourages children to try to find out how things work. Successful adult intervention develops children's observational skills as they try to explain which cog is causing the others to turn. Children show confidence in mouse control when they use computers to complete number and counting reinforcement programs and to play games. However, the computers are not used to develop children's literacy or listening skills.

Physical development

73. The climbing apparatus is very popular and provides the children with a good element of challenge whilst they develop their self-confidence. They show respect for others by waiting their turn to climb the apparatus and judge their body space so that they can duck under or weave through the apparatus. Children successfully develop their body movements in twisting, climbing, balancing and sliding. They show a good awareness of space as they run around and push and ride a variety of wheeled and hand operated toys. They develop increasing control over balls by kicking them around obstacles and throwing and catching balls and quoits. Children show pleasure in mixing, rolling and cutting gingerbread dough. They develop their dexterity well through bead threading, sewing, cutting, tracing and using pencils and crayons.

Creative development

74. The attractive and well-resourced role-play areas encourage children to engage in imaginative play and dressing up. They enjoy singing songs, listening to and making music with musical instruments. Opportunities for exploring colour and form are too limited, which reduces the progress children make in developing their creativity. Adults read stories well and this helps children to develop their imagination.

ENGLISH

75. Results in the national assessments of reading and writing at the end of Year 2 were well below the national average in 2002, but average compared with similar schools. Very few pupils gained level 3, which is above the national expectation, and only in reading. Boys did better than girls, contrary to the national trend. Over the last few years, the school's results in reading have remained at a similar level, whereas writing results have been higher than reported by the last inspection.

76. Pupils start Year 1 with standards well below the national expectation for their age, partly because of the slow start they make in the Foundation Stage. By the end of Year 2, their attainment is still well below average. Their achievement during the infants is satisfactory overall. Because of the recent improvements in English teaching, pupils' learning is now good in lessons and this is slowly raising standards and improving pupils' achievement over time.

77. Test results at the end of Year 6 were well below the national average in 2002. In comparison with similar schools, the results were average. The trend over the last few years is of an improvement, narrowing the gap between the school's results and those nationally, except for 2001 when the school's results were very low (in the bottom 5 per cent nationally). Boys have tended to do less well than girls, compared to boys' and girls' results nationally.

78. At the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is also well below average. However, as in the infants standards are rising because of the school's successful focus on improving teaching and learning. Pupils' achievement during the juniors is satisfactory.

79. Pupils start Year 1 with poor speaking skills and have difficulty in expressing themselves clearly and at any length. Overall, pupils' achievement in speaking is satisfactory, although standards by the end of Year 6 are below those expected nationally. Some good opportunities for practising speaking were seen in lessons throughout the school. These included poetry lessons where pupils were asked to express their feelings, and to explain the meanings of, and distinguish between similes and metaphors. In other subjects, pupils were sometimes given good opportunities to explain what they had been learning about and to join in discussions. Most pupils listen well. They are attentive in lessons, especially when the teacher is speaking to them and giving them instructions. Pupils are usually sure of what is required and this helps them to remain on task when working alone or in small groups. The very good behaviour strategies used by teachers and the settled and quiet atmosphere in lessons have contributed significantly to pupils' good achievement in listening.

80. Standards in reading are well below expectations, particularly in the infants. By Year 2, well over half the pupils do not reaching the standard expected nationally, whereas by Year 6 one-third do not reach the national expectation. Most Year 1 pupils have a good knowledge of the sounds of letters, but the range of words they recognise immediately is small and they find building words difficult. By Year 3, pupils have learned to use a variety of ways to read unfamiliar words. The higher

attainers have a good understanding of what they have read, and are able to predict what might happen next. Higher-attaining pupils in the juniors read with expression, and correct their mistakes. However, many other pupils find reading very difficult. Consequently they do not want to read for pleasure and are reluctant to read at school and at home. A weakness in the teaching of reading is that independent reading is not planned for and encouraged systematically. Although some pupils do take books home, there is no system to encourage parents to help their children practise their reading. Some pupils know how to find a book in a library, but few visit either the school library or the public library regularly. The school library is well resourced but under-used. Each classroom has a very good selection of fiction books for pupils to choose from and they are guided in their choice by a colour-coded system.

81. Standards of writing are well below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This low attainment reflects past weaknesses in the teaching of writing, and the low standards on entry to Year 1. The focus that the school has placed upon writing over the last year is leading to a slow but sure rise in standards. Pupils in the infants are now learning how to write in a wide variety of styles and for different purposes. They have good opportunities to use well-known stories and poems as models for their own work. Weaknesses in their vocabulary, punctuation and spelling are being helped by activities such as compiling word banks and reading their work back to the teacher. Scrutiny of pupils' work showed that spelling and handwriting are taught consistently, and that good attention is paid to the correct use of capital letters and full stops. However, pupils' presentation of written work is too variable and tasks are occasionally not completed.

82. In the juniors, standards in writing are also rising. By Years 5 and 6, pupils present their work neatly. Their handwriting is fluent and joined in most cases, and the punctuation and spelling of about two-thirds of the Year 6 pupils are at the standard expected. During the juniors, pupils learn to write in simple, well-constructed sentences but they have difficulty in sustaining longer pieces of independent writing. Much attention is being given to improving their vocabulary. As in the infants, pupils are learning to write in a wide variety of styles and for a range of audiences, though they are most confident in personal recount and narrative. Pupils have used ICT successfully to present some of their work.

83. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to develop their writing skills in other subjects. For example, writing links have been successfully made between English and science, religious education, geography and history. However, too little attention is paid to taking opportunities to develop pupils' reading skills in other subjects, such as through reading and research activities. Weaknesses in literacy are holding back pupils' learning across the curriculum. In subjects such as mathematics and science, pupils show greater knowledge and understanding orally than in their written work.

84. The teaching of English is now good overall, and particularly effective in the junior classes. This is a significant factor in the steadily rising standards. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and high expectations of pupils' work. They plan thoroughly, ask searching questions which recap on previous learning, prepare and use appropriate resources which interest and motivate the pupils to learn and keep up a good pace throughout the lessons. In an excellent poetry lesson, pupils were helped to practise all the new skills learned throughout the week. Use of different tenses, improving vocabulary and extending poems were all combined into an inspirational lesson. By making deliberate mistakes in a known text and by using this as a model, pupils were encouraged to spot the errors in tenses and to improve the way in which the poem was written. Pupils enjoyed the opportunity to change the poem and add their own new words. In all the lessons seen, pupils behaved well and had good attitudes to learning. This is because teachers have good relationships with their pupils, insist on good behaviour and ensure all pupils are fully included in learning.

85. Pupils with special educational needs are usually very well supported by a teaching assistant and make good progress overall. The few pupils who are learning English as an additional language are equally well supported by specialist staff and make good gains in their learning.

86. Overall there has been satisfactory improvement in English since the last inspection. Standards have risen in the juniors. Much has been done in the last year, including improvements in teaching based on the recommendations of the National Literacy Strategy. English is well led and managed. Standards are being monitored carefully, and the school has a clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Current priorities for development are appropriate, and include

raising standards in reading and improving the assessment of pupils' work. Assessment procedures are not yet used sufficiently to identify strengths and rectify weaknesses in learning. However, pupils' individual targets are used well to inform lesson planning. Resources are good and organised well to support the work in classes.

MATHEMATICS

87. The school's results in the 2002 national assessments at the end of Year 2 were very low, in the lowest five per cent nationally. Compared with similar schools, the results were well below average. This was not as good as in the previous year, but until 2002 there had been a steady trend of improvement. Very few pupils attained the higher level 3. The work seen during the inspection showed that the pupils' attainment is now well below national expectations. The low level of literacy skills in the infants hinders pupils' progress in numeracy.

88. Pupils enter Year 1 with low standards in mathematics. Their achievement in the infants is satisfactory even though their attainment is well below expectations by the end of Year 2. Pupils have learned to do simple addition and subtraction, understand place value of tens and units, and order numbers up to a hundred. They know their two, five and ten times tables. Higher-attaining pupils count on in threes using number boards. Most pupils have a basic understanding of the properties of shapes such as triangles, circles and rectangles. Pupils answer better orally than when required to read questions and write their answers down. The school has recognized that literacy difficulties have impeded pupils' mathematical learning and contributed to the low test results in 2002. Opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills and knowledge of correct mathematical language are now planned and provided for in every lesson, which is helping to raise standards.

89. The 2002 test results for Year 6 pupils were below the national average, and well above those of similar schools. There was no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. The trend in results has been of improvement at a rate faster than that nationally, and pupils do better in mathematics than in English and science. The mathematics results were better than those of schools in which the pupils had gained similar results when they were in Year 2.

90. Standards of attainment are below average at the end of Year 6. Throughout the juniors, pupils achieve well. Their written work showed a notable improvement in quality during the last school year. Their mental maths skills develop well due to the daily practice of counting forwards and backwards, doubling and halving numbers, and recalling multiplication tables. By Year 6, pupils have a sound understanding of multiplication and division, including decimals. Average and high-attaining pupils convert fractions to decimals and calculate percentages correctly. They use the correct names for different quadrilaterals and triangles, and describe their properties clearly. Pupils apply their mathematical knowledge to solve problems, such as in a Year 4 lesson during which they had to choose appropriate number operations to solve real-life word problems related to multiplication and division.

91. Pupils with special educational needs, and the few pupils who speak English as an additional language, are well supported in their classes throughout the school. After a satisfactory start in the infants, they make good progress in the juniors because of the effectiveness of the teaching.

92. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is very good in the juniors and satisfactory in the infants. Teachers have high expectations and very good relationships with the pupils, and make the lessons fun. Pupils are therefore keen to learn. In the best lessons observed during the inspection, the work was well planned to ensure it challenged pupils of all levels of attainment. For example, in a Year 4 lesson the higher-attaining pupils were set the difficult task of designing a function machine for multiplying by twenty. Teachers usually used the last session of lessons effectively. For example, in a Year 6 lesson the higher-attaining pupils had to write descriptions of the properties of various quadrilaterals. These were well used at the end of the lesson, where the rest of the class had to identify the shape described and draw it on their white boards. During this lesson, the pupils with special educational needs were given very good support as they identified and sorted shapes using the classroom computer.

93. Planning does not always take sufficient account of the range of pupils' needs in the mixed-aged infant classes. This is the reason why teaching and learning are not as good in the infants as in

the juniors. In the infant classes, pupils begin to learn to concentrate and remain on task for longer periods, although their ability to do so is still limited. Behaviour management is sound and teachers have good subject knowledge. In the juniors, the pace of work and the variety of activities and strategies used are very well matched to pupils' varying needs. This, together with their very good behaviour and attitudes, enables pupils to make very good learning gains. Marking of pupils' work is good, with positive and encouraging comments to pupils. Pupils are given homework which reinforces the work they have been doing in class, although this is not always completed.

94. The subject is well managed, with a clear focus on raising standards. Clear, appropriate priorities for action have been identified. These include the implementation of a good assessment and pupil tracking system, which will be used to help promote higher standards. Resources for mathematics are very good and are used effectively. A key issue at the last inspection was to raise standards throughout the school, with particular attention to the infants. Overall there has been satisfactory improvement since then. Higher standards have been attained in the junior classes but not yet in the infants.

SCIENCE

95. Results of the 2002 teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 were well below average. Pupils did best in their work on living things, changing materials and electricity because these are the areas focused on most in teaching. The results are higher than reported by the last inspection. In comparison to similar schools, the 2002 results were average.

96. Standards are well below average at the end of Year 2 and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. This is mainly because pupils have done too little independent written work during their time in the infants, and what has been produced is of a low level of accuracy and presentation. Standards in science are affected by the weaknesses in pupils' literacy skills. Pupils show greater knowledge and understanding in their oral work than in writing. For example, pupils spoken to during the inspection could explain about everyday appliances which use electricity, and how to make a simple electrical circuit involving wires, batteries and bulbs. An additional weakness is that pupils have too little experience of investigative work. The lack of careful assessment to establish what pupils already know and can do means that teachers do not extend pupils' existing knowledge and understanding sufficiently.

97. There has been sustained, rapid rise in Year 6 results over recent years. Even though the 2002 results were still well below average, the gap between the school and national results was much narrower than at the time of the last inspection. Results have risen because of increasingly effective teaching. In comparison to similar schools, the 2002 results are average, whereas they are above the average for schools in which pupils had gained similar Year 2 results four years earlier.

98. Standards of attainment are below the expectation for pupils at this stage of Year 6. Standards are higher than the 2002 results because of increasingly effective teaching. Pupils cover all areas of the science curriculum thoroughly. Pupils have a good understanding of the attraction and repulsion of magnets, and identify friction and air resistance as forces that slow things down. Their written work is well presented. They draw and label diagrams clearly and use a good range of graphical representations including the use of ICT to record data from a light sensor. However, as in the infants, pupils' weakness in literacy and oral impedes their development of independent recording and their acquisition and understanding of scientific vocabulary.

99. Achievement is good during the juniors. Pupils make good gains in investigative work and learn how to carry out fair testing, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils also learn to classify and record features. For example, Year 4 pupils have recorded their identification of materials that conduct electricity in a simple way, by diagram and label. Year 5 pupils record the information in more detail, although they still have difficulty in explaining in their own words.

100. Teaching and learning are now satisfactory in the infants. Teachers are now focusing more on developing pupil as writers and investigators. For example, infants had each completed an illustrated diary of the growth of a bean, and had carried out investigations with other plants to find out which are the best conditions for growth. Pupils know the main parts of a plant and have learned that plants

need light and water to live. The main weakness in teaching is that assessment is not used well enough to match work closely to the needs of the pupils in each class.

101. Teaching is good in the juniors, with some strong features. Teachers plan and prepare lessons well. They have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and very good strategies for managing it. They give clear explanations, and question pupils skillfully to check and extend their understanding. For example, in a very good lesson pupils investigated the changes caused by mixing materials. Their ideas were discussed, with the teacher constantly asking the pupils to explain their reasoning by drawing on their existing experience. Whilst the pupils mixed the materials the teacher continued to question them to draw out their use of scientific vocabulary and to predict whether the changes occurring were reversible or irreversible. Pupils were encouraged to make hypotheses about whether evaporation would reverse the process.

102. Pupils' numeracy skills are encouraged in a satisfactory way, for example in recording results from investigations in tables. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. As a result, the pupils respond positively, work confidently, stay on task and make appropriate progress. Work is not always matched well to different levels of attainment and this occasionally limits the challenge for the higher-attaining pupils in planning and carrying out their own experiments independently. ICT is used well as a working tool to record and display results and to gather information through the use of sensors and data logging equipment.

103. Science is led and managed satisfactorily, and its improvement since the last inspection is also satisfactory. Because of the higher quality of teaching, standards are rising. Appropriate plans are now in place for improved assessments of pupils' work and for a more active monitoring of teaching and learning in lessons. Given its current emphasis on rigorous evaluation, the school is well placed to continue to raise standards.

104. In the subject reports that follow, the evidence is based on a sample of pupils' work, information from teachers and observations of some lessons. Overall evaluations are given where inspectors were able to gather enough evidence to make a reliable judgement. Judgements on improvement since the last inspection are made where the last report made comments that enable comparisons to be drawn.

ART AND DESIGN

105. The evidence indicated that standards are below what is expected nationally at the end of Year 2, whereas at the end of Year 6 standards are in line with national expectations and pupils' achievement is good. The infant classes are using both natural and man-made materials to produce original pictures and sculptures. Year 3 pupils have produced some good soap carvings, clay Indian models and examples of Indian embroidery. Older juniors have designed, made and decorated some very good Greek style vases, using wire frames and papier-mache. In the Year 5 lesson seen, the teaching and learning were very good. The topic was the work of Georges Seurat and his Pointillism style. Pupils were very interested and enthusiastic, particularly as they had seen some of the painter's work on their visit to a London art gallery. They experimented and took care when trying to copy the style and colour effect into their own books. A parallel class worked on the same theme and also produced careful examples of the style. Pupils have good opportunities to study the work of other famous artists, such as William Morris, Paul Klee and Georgia O'Keefe.

106. Art has not been managed well enough. There is no overall policy, assessment procedure or scheme of work for the subject. This makes it difficult for teachers to ensure that pupils build on the skills they learned in previous years. Resources are good, and the work done in the juniors makes a good contribution to the pupils' cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

107. In the one lesson seen, pupils investigated product packaging and the materials used. The lesson was carefully planned and well organised. The pupils were well behaved and demonstrated a good attitude towards their work. Very effective questioning encouraged their interest and guided their investigations. The lower-attaining pupils were given good, extra support.

108. Evidence from a scrutiny of work and displays showed that pupils contribute their own ideas to their designs prior to making them, but have not learned to evaluate their work. In the infants, the few models seen were poorly finished and lacked the attention to skills expected for the pupils' age. In Years 3 and 4, pupils study food technology through designing and making Christmas biscuits. They also make moving monsters using books for initial ideas. Other junior projects include designing and making a torch, which is linked to extending their understanding of electricity. Visiting specialists have provided good ideas for other projects, for example using different materials such as cane and paper to make 'walking' fish.

109. The subject is managed satisfactorily, with a focus on the action needed to raise standards. For example, a system for assessing pupils' learning is in preparation and future development includes monitoring standards through teachers' planning and examples of pupils' work.

GEOGRAPHY

110. Pupils in Year 2 know about some of the human features of the local area near their homes and the school but have less awareness of the physical features of the area such as the woodland and hills. The majority of the pupils show an awareness of places that are further away and a few pupils are beginning to identify some features that might be different. Most of the pupils draw simple plans based on the layout of the classroom and show an awareness of area and space.

111. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 know about some of the features of places further away such as differences in the climate and they are aware of how these physical features, including climate and soil, can affect day-to-day life. For example, they know that people live in different types of houses and eat different foods. Pupils in Year 6 use atlases confidently and have some awareness of the symbols used on maps.

112. The teaching was satisfactory in the one geography lesson observed. In this lesson, the teacher's enthusiasm captured the pupils' interest through the use of a globe and postcards. The pupils showed considerable enjoyment of the subject and had a keen interest in using maps and atlases.

113. Staffing changes have meant a change in the allocation of responsibility for geography, and the subject is not yet satisfactorily managed. However, areas for immediate development have been correctly identified. The subject receives a low allocation of teaching time, which contributes to pupils making slower gains than expected nationally as the National Curriculum requirements are not covered well enough. The lack of procedures for assessing pupils' work makes it difficult for teachers to check how well they are learning and to fill any obvious gaps in their geographical knowledge and understanding. Overall, resources are adequate but there are insufficient materials for younger pupils, for example simple atlases.

HISTORY

114. The standards attained by the pupils by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are below national expectations, mainly because of the pupils' low literacy skills. However, achievement is satisfactory, and the pupils with special educational needs are also making satisfactory progress.

115. By Year 2, pupils have an awareness of some past events. For example, they know the key parts of the story of Guy Fawkes. However, their knowledge about people and events is limited, and many pupils cannot distinguish between things in the recent past and those from a long time ago.

116. By Year 6, pupils know about aspects of life in Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece. They find out information from a range of sources including books and pictures, but many are not confident about asking historical questions and making deductions from evidence. Timelines have helped them to

understand the sequence of historical events. Pupils enjoy history and they are eager to find out new facts and to share what they have learnt.

117. Overall, the evidence indicates that teaching and learning are good. The lessons observed during the inspection were well planned, with a specific focus which was explained to the pupils. This meant that they had a clear understanding of the purpose of the work. In most of the lessons, the teachers had planned for the work to be covered in small, easy-to-understand steps and so kept pupils' attention. The explanations and activities were matched to the pupils' previous attainment, and the teachers used questioning effectively to check individuals' level of understanding and to extend their thinking. The teachers managed the lesson activities very well. They used praise, included a variety of tasks, and maintained a brisk pace, all of which helped to keep the pupils working well throughout the lessons.

118. As for geography, changes in staff responsibilities have meant that the subject is being managed differently from the last school year. Although a clear action plan has recently been developed, identifying the steps that need to be taken to improve the provision for history, the subject is not yet managed satisfactorily. Pupils' learning is not assessed and reviewed regularly enough, and so their strengths and weaknesses are not clearly identified. The time spent on history is low, and so pupils do not always have regular opportunities to practice and extend their understanding of the subject. The curriculum is based on nationally-produced units of work, giving appropriate breadth in what is covered within history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

119. The standards pupils attain in ICT are below those expected for their age at the end of Years 2 and 6. This is because, until recently, the pupils did too little work in ICT, staff lacked expertise in teaching the subject and the school's equipment was not as up-to-date as it needed to be. All these weaknesses have now been resolved, and so pupils of all ages are now beginning to develop the skills they need in order to do well in the future. The evidence of the lessons observed during the inspection and of some printouts of their work showed that pupils' learning is now often good, because of effective teaching. However, standards are still lower than they should be because pupils' achievement over time is unsatisfactory, even though their learning was generally good in the lessons observed during the inspection.

120. Several lessons for pupils in the juniors were observed in the new ICT suite. Strengths in the teaching were that the skills to be learned during the lesson were focused on very clearly, in a step-by-step way that enabled all in the class to carry out the task set. Some pupils have computers at home and are familiar with basic skills such as how to change the size and style of a font, and they got on quickly with the work set. However, many in the Year 3 and 4 classes observed needed help with highlighting text and selecting commands from the menu bar, and were unskilled in using the mouse and keyboard. Year 6 pupils learning how to enter data into a spreadsheet showed a similar range of competence, with higher-attaining pupils beginning to apply formulae to add up the costs of shopping items. However, most were able only to enter the cost of the various items. In all the lessons, teachers made the links to real-life situations very clear, which helped the pupils to see the relevance of their learning. They enjoyed the work, and tried hard although most needed a great deal of help and encouragement. Teaching assistants often gave good support, and were sometimes deployed well to support pupils with the special educational needs who found the work particularly challenging. Extension activities were provided for the highest-attaining pupils, but they often found the initial tasks very easy and could have been given more demanding tasks from the outset.

121. Some examples of good use of computers in other subjects were found during the inspection. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have learned to make repeating patterns as part of their work in art. In design and technology and science, pupils in Years 3 and 4 have entered the results of surveys into a database and printed out graphs and charts showing their findings. Year 5 pupils were observed making very good use of ICT in sorting mathematical shapes according to their number of sides and corners. Information from the Internet was used in religious education, to help Year 6 pupils learn about mosques. These links have been made systematically, through good whole-school planning for the use of ICT in other subjects.

122. ICT is led and managed very well. The co-ordinator has sorted out the weaknesses in the subject, by setting up new equipment in the ICT suite, introducing planning that covers the National Curriculum, developing a system for assessing the standard of pupils' work each term, and training staff in the skills needed to teach the subject effectively. As a result, the pupils are now beginning to attain higher standards and the improvement in ICT since the last inspection is good.

MUSIC

123. A good range of work is covered in music lessons. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make compositions with their voices and instruments and most pupils learn to distinguish between long and short sounds. By Year 6, pupils sing well in rounds and know how to improve the quality of singing through changing their posture. They listen well and recognise beats, variations in rhythm, phrases and several identify discords. Many pupils know musical terminology such as 'ostinato' and 'improvisation'.

124. The teaching of music observed was very good in most of the lessons observed. Strengths were the way in which the pupils' interest was engaged by an enthusiastic presentation of the lesson. Excellent subject knowledge meant that new ideas were introduced and explained clearly and in a way that was understandable for all the pupils. Pupils were given helpful guidance on how to improve their work, and the higher-attaining pupils were set extra challenges. There were high expectations of behaviour in all the lessons. Consequently, pupils participated extremely well and treated the instruments with respect.

125. Music is promoted very effectively throughout the school, with a high level of subject expertise and passion. Non-specialist teachers are given very good support. This is leading to rapid improvements within the subject and to music becoming a central element of the school's work. The music club is particularly popular. Opportunities to share and celebrate music, such as a recent concert, are a source of pride for the pupils. A good variety of resources and instruments ensure that pupils have a wide range of opportunities to hear and create music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

126. A few lessons were observed, in which the teaching was generally very good. The lessons were well planned, matched to the pupils' levels of attainment and linked to previous work. They included lively warm-up activities, enhanced in one lesson by using music. There were high levels of activity for all pupils with many opportunities for them to practice and improve their skills. Teachers made good use of demonstrations by pupils, to encourage others to extend the variety of movements. Teachers gave very clear explanations about the tasks and used subject vocabulary well. There were high expectations of behaviour in the lessons and pupils responded well. Teachers gave due attention to safety, such as reminding pupils how to jump safely.

127. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 explored movements and linked actions as part of a dance sequence. They included a variety of shapes and varied the speed of their movements. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 balanced well and were imaginative in their choice of shapes. They had a good sense of space and showed awareness of other pupils as they moved around the hall. They listened well and applied themselves to their tasks. Pupils co-operated well when working in pairs. This helped their learning and supported their social development. The pupils were keen to watch the work of others but many do not have the skills to evaluate this or their own work effectively. Pupils with special educational needs made satisfactory progress in the lessons observed because they were fully involved in all aspects of learning.

128. Physical education is managed satisfactorily. The curriculum is based on a national scheme, which is used effectively as the starting point for lessons. However, pupils' learning is not yet monitored regularly, and so their strengths and weaknesses are not clearly identified. A well-run football club that is thoroughly enjoyed by the pupils enhances the curriculum. There are some exciting new developments in the use of new technology, such as the use of digital cameras to record a skipping workshop. Pupils have also used computers to record their achievements in tables and graphs.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

129. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are close to those expected by the Local Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils develop a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of a range of religious beliefs and practices through the study of Christianity and several other world faiths. Younger pupils visit the local church and learn about Christian symbols. In class, activities such as role-play are used well to help pupils understand the Jewish Sabbath. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 have researched world faiths through a "What is faith?" project. They have made notes and used a computer program to create interesting presentations of their findings, including scanning in pictures they found on the Internet. They added an index to the finished booklets. Very good links with other subjects help pupils to practise successfully their literacy and ICT skills. By Year 6, pupils are extending their skills by designing play scripts and making story tapes for younger pupils using creation stories. They discuss moral issues thoughtfully from a Christian viewpoint, for example asking what it means to be a Christian. The pupils discuss issues such as Third World debt, and have written letters to Tony Blair about the fairness of the world. However, the weaknesses in pupils' skills in reading and writing hinder them in fully exploring the subject and recording their findings.

130. The evidence indicates that teaching is good in the juniors. In a very good lesson about the Islamic faith the teacher's good subject knowledge and use of very good resources enabled pupils to be actively involved in finding out about mosques and Muslim worship. The teacher encouraged and praised pupils' speaking and listening skills and many recalled facts from previous lessons. However, a significant number of lower attaining pupils confused characteristics from other faiths and needed considerable support in discussion. There was a good spiritual feeling in the lesson and everyone's views were treated with respect. Pupils exhibit good behaviour and attitudes towards the subject and most of their work is neatly presented and completed. Tasks are not always specifically tailored to meet the needs of lower attaining pupils so they do not make the progress they could in a few lessons.

131. Management of the subject is good. An action plan to assist further development of the subject has clear priorities. Teachers' planning and pupil's work are regularly monitored and through this the subject leader is informed about standards and as a result planning is improving well. Ways of assessing whether pupils have been successful in their learning are also being developed appropriately. Resources are good and support pupils learning in a variety of faiths.