

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **DURRINGTON FIRST SCHOOL**

Worthing

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 125862

Headteacher: Mrs Alison Cornell

Reporting inspector: Dr Brian Male  
14906

Dates of inspection: 25-28 November 2002

Inspection number: 248717

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 8
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Salvington Road Worthing
Postcode:	BN13 2JD
Telephone number:	01903 260138
Fax number:	01903 693057
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ged Harbinson
Date of previous inspection:	11/7/00

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
14906	Brian Male	Registered inspector	English Art and design Geography History	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19419	Sue Boyle	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion	Attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
32123	Penny Price	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Religious education	
16492	Brian Lever	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

The inspection contractor was:

Full Circle division of Parkman  
The Brow  
35 Trewartha Park  
Weston-Super-Mare  
North Somerset  
BS23 2RT

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This community first school takes pupils from three to eight years old, and is maintained by the West Sussex County Council. At the time of the inspection there were 242 full-time pupils in ten classes, and a further 46 pupils attending the nursery on a part-time basis. Many pupils start school with standards of attainment below those usually found. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above the national average. There are few pupils from an ethnic minority and or for whom English is an additional language. These proportions are much lower than in most schools.

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

This is a good school with some outstanding features, particularly its strong and valuing ethos. There has been remarkable improvement over recent years due to the exceptionally good leadership of the headteacher, and the positive way in which teachers have responded to this. Standards of attainment and of educational provision have improved significantly. The rise in attainment has resulted from the good quality of the teaching, the pupils' exceptionally positive attitudes to school and the very clear educational direction given by the headteacher. Standards of attainment are now in line with the national average, and are still rising. Standards of behaviour are excellent. The partnership with parents is very positive. The school gives very good value for money.

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

- Children receive an excellent start to their education in the nursery.
- The quality of teaching is good across the school.
- Standards of attainment have risen significantly over recent years.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent, and they have outstandingly positive attitudes to school.
- There is very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development.
- The school has a very good partnership with parents.
- The governing body has provided particularly good support to the school.
- The leadership of the headteacher is exceptionally good, and has underpinned the recent improvements in the school.

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

- There could be a more consistent approach to educational provision at the Foundation Stage.
- Arrangements could be made to ensure that the very good provision of support for pupils who have special educational needs, allows them balanced access to the curriculum.

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

The above areas for development are to build on what is already a good standard of provision across the school.

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

The school was last inspected in July 2000 and has made very good progress since then. Standards of attainment have continued to rise and are now in line with the national average in English and science and above average in mathematics. Standards of behaviour are now excellent, and pupils have exceptionally positive attitudes to school. The quality of teaching has improved and is now good overall. The quality of leadership and management is even

stronger with extremely good leadership from the headteacher, and this has underpinned the improvements. The school has addressed very thoroughly all of the key issues raised by the previous inspection. The provision for information technology has been improved significantly. There is a very good shared commitment to continue the trend of improvements, and the last two years have shown a particularly strong capacity to improve.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	E	D	D	D
Writing	E	D	B	B
Mathematics	C	C	C	C

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

The school's scores in national tests for seven year olds in 2002 were below the national and similar schools' average in reading, in line with the average in mathematics and above average in writing. The scores in all three subjects were higher than in previous years. This continues the trend of improvement since the 1999 inspection. Inspection evidence indicates that present standards in Year 2 are broadly average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards are also broadly average in English and science in Year 3, and above average in mathematics. Standards are well above average in art, above average in information technology and generally in line with the average in other subjects. Pupils are making good progress across Key Stages 1 and 2.

Pupils make very good progress through the nursery, particularly in the personal, social and emotional aspects of development. There is appropriate progress through the reception classes, and standards are generally at least in line with the expected 'Early Learning Goals' by the time children move to Year 1.

Pupils with special education needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress.

The overall standards represent good achievement for the pupils and a significant improvement over recent years.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have excellent attitudes to school. They take a lively interest in their work and are very keen to learn. Even the youngest children sustain their concentration very well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Standards of behaviour are excellent. Children are very friendly and polite and respectful to adults. Their behaviour is exceptionally good in class and around the school.

Personal development and relationships	Relationships are excellent across the school. Staff provide very good role models for relationships and children respond very well to these. Children are particularly thoughtful and concerned for others.
Attendance	The rate of attendance is in line with the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection, and underpins the recent rise in standards of attainment. Teachers have excellent relationships with their pupils, and these help promote the pupils' excellent attitudes and behaviour. Teachers are very hardworking and committed to raising standards. There is a significant amount of excellent teaching in the school, particularly in the nursery, and no unsatisfactory teaching. The circumstances of the school over the last three years have not been easy, and teachers are to be commended on the way in which they have worked so positively with the children's best interests always central.

In the best lessons, there is a sense of excitement, and the level of challenge for pupils is high. A feature of many lessons is the range of interesting activities that hold pupils' interest and involve them in a range of practical tasks that extend their understanding as well as their knowledge. This is particularly the case in the nursery where children are given wonderful independence to engage in an exciting range of practical activities, and adults build very skilfully on the learning opportunities that arise. There is a different, more structured approach in the reception classes where there is not so much independence in learning. The approach across the Foundation Stage needs to be more consistent.

There is good teaching of literacy and numeracy within English and mathematics, and some very good support for pupils who have special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language. There is some very good support for children's learning from teaching assistants across the school.

The quality of pupils' learning is good. They engage enthusiastically in their tasks and are confident learners.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and enhanced by a range of visits and visitors, and by the many interesting activities within lessons. There are occasions when some pupils miss aspects of the curriculum whilst receiving extra support for reading and other areas of learning.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is some very good support for these pupils from the specialist teacher and from teaching assistants. Individual education plans are helpful in setting appropriate targets. The school needs to ensure that its programme of support leaves pupils with balanced access to the rest of the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is very good support for the small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language, and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development. There is particularly good provision for social development starting in the nursery. There is very good provision for spiritual and moral development and good provision for cultural development where the multicultural aspect needs more emphasis.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is a particularly caring ethos in the school, and children are very well valued within a very supportive environment. There is very good support and guidance for the pupils and assessment is used effectively to support learning.

The school has a very good partnership with parents. Parents were very supportive of the school in their meeting with inspectors and their replies to the questionnaire. They hold the headteacher in very high esteem.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides exceptionally good leadership for the school. She has brought a very clear educational direction, created a very positive ethos, and ensured a remarkable trend of improvements in educational provision. She is to be congratulated on her achievements.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors, led by a very active chair, have made a significant contribution to the recent improvements in the school. They have a very good overview of the school and its needs, and monitor its work closely. They have been particularly successful in ensuring that there has been adequate funding for improvements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is taking many valuable steps to monitor and evaluate its performance. A wide range of data is analysed very rigorously and targets set from this analysis. These targets are then used to promote improvement. The thoroughness of these procedures has underpinned the trend of improvements.
The strategic use of resources	The budget is managed very well indeed and linked very effectively to the school's needs.

The school building is spacious and has recently been significantly improved. Although seven of the classes are housed in 'mobile' classrooms these are clustered together and provide good accommodation. The grounds are not extensive, but the under-fives' play areas have been very well developed. The level of staffing is good. Resources have been much improved, particularly for information technology, and the library is being developed.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Behaviour is good.</li><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li><li>• Teaching is good.</li><li>• Children make good progress.</li><li>• Children like coming to school.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is no area where a significant number of parents would like to see improvement.</li></ul>

Parents were very supportive of the school in their responses to the questionnaire, and in the meeting with inspectors. The inspection endorses their positive opinions.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. There has been a strong trend of improving standards over the last three years, and this trend is continuing. The trend of improvements is due to the improved quality of teaching, the pupils' exceptionally positive attitudes to learning, and the particularly clear educational direction provided by the headteacher. The school's strong and valuing ethos promote the very positive attitudes and, together with the interesting activities in lessons, underpin the standards attained.
2. When children enter the school, they are at a variety of stages of development, but many are at a lower stage than usual. They make good overall progress across the school to attain standards that are at least in line with the national average by the time they leave at the age of eight. There are signs that the trend of improvement is now taking standards to above average, and has already done so in mathematics.

#### *Children under five*

3. Children receive an excellent start to their education in the nursery, and make very good progress, particularly in the personal and creative aspects. The independence given to children to select activities, and the very skilful way in which adults use these experiences to promote learning, builds children's self-confidence and understanding. A more structured approach in the reception classes ensures that children make the expected progress through the reception classes, and standards of attainment are at least in line with those usually found in all areas of learning by the time children move to Year 1.

#### *Years 1-3*

4. In national tests for seven year olds in 2002, the overall standards, as measured by average point scores, were above average in writing, average in mathematics and below average in reading. This was a significant improvement over previous years, particularly in writing. A good number of pupils attained the higher level (Level 3).
5. Inspection evidence shows that by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 3, standards are in line with the national average in English and science and above average in mathematics. Standards are well above average in art, above average in information technology, and broadly average in all other subjects.

#### *Progress of different groups*

6. Some very good support for pupils with special educational needs ensures that they make good progress in meeting the targets set in their individual education plans. There is a small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language, and they also make good progress. Some targeted support for higher attaining pupils, together with high expectations in lessons, ensures that they make good progress.

#### *Literacy and numeracy*

7. Within English, standards of writing have been higher than reading. A significant focus on reading, with a great deal of extra help is beginning to address this. Most pupils develop good skills in word recognition and can read appropriate texts with some fluency. It is in the areas of understanding main points and making interpretations that some need to make more progress. Standards of numeracy

within mathematics are above average at the end of Year 3. Many pupils have a good understanding of number and are confident and accurate in performing calculations.

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

8. Pupils have excellent attitudes to school. These attitudes are quickly established in the nursery where children are very enthused by the learning, and are keen to work. Throughout the school, pupils work hard, demonstrate a strong commitment to learning and tackle tasks confidently. They are interested in their work and discuss with other pupils the best way of working. This is because they want to achieve their best.
9. Behaviour is excellent. This stems from the pupils' attitudes and from the excellent relationships that they have with their teachers. Pupils like and respect their teachers and this together with their excellent involvement and commitment to their work means that issues to do with behaviour just do not arise. They are interested in other people, and are open and very friendly. Behaviour in the dining hall is exceptionally good. There have been no exclusions in the school.
10. Pupils' personal development is excellent. They are confident and outgoing. There is a good emphasis in the school on giving children independence and responsibility, and opportunities that arise are used well. Pupils are keen to volunteer for tasks and they respond very well when given responsibility. They are thoughtful in their approach, recognising difficulties and finding their own solutions. This was apparent when the school council found that giving up all their playtimes to befriend and support the new children was becoming burdensome. Their solution was to devise a rota to ensure that they had time off so that they had time to play with their own friends. Pupils in pairs are often given responsibility to move around the school unaccompanied, but lining up arrangements at the end of break do not give such scope for independence.
11. Relationships in the school are excellent. The excellent relationships mean that children feel comfortable in school and have developed a good sense of belonging. Staff are also very good role models in their approach to pupils. They listen to them and value what they say. Pupils respond well to these models and they in turn are valuing, polite, and thoughtful to adults and to each other. For example, one child said that he needed a rubber, and the boy sitting next to him immediately said, "Here, have mine".
12. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are much improved since the previous report.

### **Attendance**

13. Attendance at school is in line with other schools. The registers are called particularly quickly and efficiently with no time wasted. This means that lessons start promptly.

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

14. The quality of teaching is good overall, and there is a significant amount of excellent teaching, particularly in the nursery. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection, and underpins the recent rise in standards of attainment. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen.

15. Teachers have excellent relationships with their pupils, and these help promote the pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour. Teachers are very hardworking and committed to raising standards. Lessons are well planned and the learning activities are interesting and so hold the attention of the children. The circumstances of the school over the last three years have not been easy, and teachers are to be commended on the way in which they have worked so positively, and with the children's best interests always central to their endeavours.

#### *Foundation Stage*

16. Teaching is good overall across the stage, and often excellent in the nursery. The approaches to teaching differ between the nursery and reception classes in a number of features. The nursery approach offers the children considerable independence to select activities, materials and methods, and the teacher and teaching assistants build very carefully on these activities. There is a free flow of activities, with children given choice to move to indoor or outdoor activities and to stay with an activity as long as they wish. It is the way in which the adults monitor this so closely that makes the system so effective, always focusing on learning and keeping pertinent notes which are assembled each day to provide an overview. The structure is provided in the reception classes through a timetable of activities and children being put into groups for different areas of learning. These arrangements do not give the same degree of independence in learning or allow the same range of activities within the session.

#### *Years 1-3*

17. Teaching is good overall in Years 1 to 3, and there is a significant amount of very good and some excellent teaching. Teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, information technology, design and technology, and history. There is some very good teaching of art and appropriate teaching for other subjects.

#### *General*

18. In the best lessons, the level of challenge for pupils is high and work is well planned for different groups of pupils. For example, in a very good Year 1 English lesson, pupils were given boxes of objects to list. As the boxes were supposed to have been found in a loft and contained some intriguing objects, there was an immediate sense of interest. As the teacher had carefully selected objects to reinforce spellings being learned by different groups, the lesson was all the more valuable. There was even extra challenge for the highest attaining pupils who had to group the objects and list them in categories, and extra support for those still unable to spell independently. Teachers make good use of their assessments in planning these 'differentiated' activities, and ensure that work builds on what has already been learned by different groups of pupils.
19. In many lessons, there is a sense of excitement, and pupils are enthused by their learning. The range of activities in the nursery is a good example of this, from the "Incy Wincy Spider" operated by pulleys to the complex series of water courses and taps dispensing coloured waters into the water tray. The children are stimulated and enthralled by such a range. There were some very successful lessons during the inspection in which teachers took the role of an historical character and an artist. These excited the pupils and were very effective in making their teaching points. The pupils were caught up in an intriguing state between belief and disbelief in the characters. They whispered to inspectors, "It's not really an artist!", but then used the artist's name without self-consciousness, praised him for his work, and asked about details of constructions, quite forgetting that it was not actually the artist they were questioning. It was the planning of these lessons that made them so successful.

The pupils had researched the characters concerned, using the Internet, and had prepared questions to ask. The teachers had also done their research and were able to answer the questions with confidence, even if the Internet does not reveal the names of Samuel Morse's five children!

20. A feature of many lessons is the range of interesting activities that holds pupils' interest and give them independence to engage in a range of practical tasks that extend their understanding as well as their knowledge. This is particularly the case in the nursery where children are given wonderful independence to engage in an exciting range of practical activities, and adults build very skilfully on the learning opportunities that arise.
21. Many teachers use a good range of techniques to promote learning. For example, there is good use of paired discussion in many subjects to extend pupils' understanding and their speaking and listening skills. The use of individual whiteboards in many lessons allows all pupils to be engaged during class question and answer sessions, and where these whiteboards are shared, valuable discussion takes place. Some teachers have their own very valuable methods of assisting learning such as writing a word on a piece of paper and lighting it from behind with a moving torch so that pupils focus on the individual letters. All these methods and techniques assist learning and promote understanding.
22. Pupils in Years 1-3 are divided into groups according to their attainment for mathematics, and this is working successfully allowing good focus of work on the different needs. The grouping by ability in the reception classes is not so successful because the teaching does not need to be so specific as to content, and the same groups are held for a range of learning areas. It also restricts the opportunities for pupils to learn from each other in both practical activities and discussions.
23. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good or very good, it is usually because the pace of learning is slower or the level of challenge not so high.
24. The school has a good number of teaching assistants and they make a very valuable contribution to learning across the school.

#### *Teaching of different groups*

25. There is some very good support for pupils who have special educational needs that enables them to make good progress. There is some very good focused support for higher attaining pupils both within lessons and in special groups. There is also very good support for pupils for whom English is an additional language.

#### *The quality of learning*

26. The quality of pupils' learning is good. They engage enthusiastically in their tasks and are confident learners. For many pupils, this stems from the exceptionally good start they receive in the nursery where the great deal of independence that they are given builds their self-confidence and very positive attitudes to learning. The quality of learning is also promoted by the quality of learning activities across the school which give pupils the opportunity to explore different ideas, materials and methods.
27. Learning is particularly good in those lessons where learning objectives are shared with the pupils and returned to in the final 'plenary' session. When pupils are made aware of the purpose of the activities and how they can improve, they are keen to learn and find out more.

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

28. The school plans a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes the aims of the school well, but the organisational arrangements for withdrawing pupils with special educational needs mean that there can be an imbalance with some pupils missing parts of other subjects.
29. Provision is good for pupils' personal development. Health education and the use and misuse of medicines and drugs are taught as part of the PSHE (personal, social and health education) and science curriculum. No formal sex education is taught but the governors have a clear policy. Pupils are provided with accurate information, which promotes positive attitudes to a healthy lifestyle. There is very good support for pupils with special educational needs and for those identified as higher attainers. The school provides very well for pupils with English as an additional language and is sensitive to the beliefs of children with particular religious beliefs, so that they can access the curriculum as fully as possible.
30. Appropriate policies and schemes of work are in place and there is an acceptable amount of time given to all subjects. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is now good and shows improvement since the last inspection. The support of the ICT learning support assistant and improved teacher skills mean that provision is more consistent across all classes. The provision for homework is satisfactory and is appropriate to pupils' ages.
31. Long-term and medium-term planning are good and provide for the coverage of all Programmes of Study. Weekly plans are detailed, focusing on key objectives, which groups of pupils are to learn. The headteacher and subject co-ordinators monitor planning of the curriculum well.
32. The Foundation Stage curriculum is at least good in all areas of learning and provision has been improved significantly since the previous inspection. All classrooms have been refurbished and now provide a stimulating environment for learning. Very well equipped and secure outdoor areas have been developed for children in both the nursery and reception. The nursery's environment and resources are outstanding.
33. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been successfully implemented. They have been appropriately resourced and are having a good impact on helping to raise standards throughout the school.
34. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational needs. Provision is good in English and mathematics, both in terms of support and work which are well matched to pupils' needs. Arrangements for using individual education plans are effective in ensuring needs are met but the organisational arrangements for withdrawing pupils mean that there can be an imbalance with some pupils missing parts of other subjects.
35. The school provides an appropriate range of opportunities to enhance the curriculum. Boys and girls can take part in a football club for a small payment and there are valuable computer clubs at lunchtimes and after school on a daily basis. Pupils visit different places of interest such as local churches, local facilities and the beach. The school has visits from ministers of religion, the local police and the school nurse. There is a valuable link with BT, which provides trained reading helpers, and children visit a home for the elderly to give concerts and sing carols.

36. There are good links by pupils and staff with partner institutions, such as the middle schools. These good links help to prepare pupils well for their transfer to their next stage of education. There are good links with outside agencies for pupils with special educational needs. The school benefits well from its involvement in the local family group of schools that feed the high school.

#### *Personal development*

37. Provision for personal development is very good, and much stronger than at the time of the previous inspection. The strongly valuing and supportive ethos, which is such a feature of the school, is particularly effective and makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development.
38. Provision for spiritual and moral development is very good. This is because the headteacher, in particular, has worked hard to improve the environment and set a very good tone for relationships. Her very valuing approach is very effective because it raises pupils' sense of self worth and is such a good model for relating to others. Lessons very often enthuse pupils, and opportunities to give children experiences that help develop their appreciation of the world around them are very well developed, particularly in the nursery. A good example is the Golden Room, which provides an almost magical setting for children to explore and to reflect. Acts of collective worship are used well to give pupils opportunities to think about issues that are relevant to them and to reflect on their behaviour towards others. Provision for moral development is so effective because it is not explicit but is intrinsic to the school ethos, and this ethos is so strongly supportive and valuing that pupils want to do what is right.
39. Provision for social development is very good. Pupils are given many opportunities to work together in lessons and they do this very well. They play a very active part in school life with even the youngest children taking the register to the office. Lunchtimes have been well organised to provide a particularly pleasant social occasion where pupils can sit and chat quietly to one another whilst they eat their lunch. The fairly recently formed school council will, as it develops, give older pupils the opportunities to have a greater say in what they would like for their school.
40. Provision for cultural development is good. Pupils have a wide range of experiences that help to broaden their understanding and appreciation of the world around them, with a good emphasis throughout the school on art, music and poetry. Opportunities for the sorts of experiences that will equip pupils for living in a multicultural society are underdeveloped.

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

#### *Welfare*

41. Arrangements for the welfare and support of pupils are very good, and the school is very committed to the welfare of its pupils. The school environment is very caring and within such a very supportive framework pupils feel secure and confident. Pupils know that adults are there for them and do not hesitate to ask when they need help. The quality of support underpins the pupils' excellent behaviour.
42. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is very effective because teachers know the pupils well. The school has developed a reward system to try to raise attendance levels although it is as yet too soon to assess its impact. There is

- rigorous monitoring of attendance and effective systems for picking up on those children who arrive late for school.
43. Arrangements for health and safety and child protection are good. The school has recently appointed a welfare assistant and she provides a useful contact for pupils and means of support.
  44. The playground is barely adequate for the numbers of children using it. There is some seating and some equipment for pupils to use but there is scope to extend this to provide more equipment and activities.

#### *Academic*

45. The school has very good procedures in place for assessing pupils' attainment. Teachers carry out regular assessments in English, mathematics and science. Yearly tests also provide good information on standards in English and mathematics. In other subjects, teachers make good use of assessment at the end of a unit of work to inform them of pupils' achievements. Extensive portfolios of work have been put together to show the highest standards in each subject and regular moderation of pupils' work has had a very positive impact on expectations. The nursery uses a format suggested by the local education authority for assessing each area of learning, using the national 'Stepping Stones' towards achieving the Early Learning Goals, while the reception classes use a different system based on the national baseline assessment scheme. The baseline assessment is helpful for evaluating overall progress in the long term, but the national Stepping Stones are more helpful for deciding what a child should learn next.
46. Assessment is used effectively to support learning. Teachers evaluate lessons well and this information is used well to plan future lessons. In English and mathematics teachers change their teaching in response to ongoing assessments during lessons. The plenary session at the end of English and mathematics lessons is now well used to assess whether pupils have achieved the learning intention. Observations of children in the nursery are used very well to plan future learning opportunities and meet their differing needs.
47. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are very good. Assessment data for English and mathematics are analysed very well to identify strengths and areas for development such as problem solving and the use of specific vocabulary in mathematics. Targets are set for pupils of differing levels of attainment, and these are reviewed regularly so they bring about significant improvement. Marking is good, relates to the intended learning and helps pupils know what they need to do to improve.

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

48. Parents are outstandingly supportive in their views of the school. They feel the school has improved considerably since the headteacher's arrival and there is no aspect about which a significant number are dissatisfied. The school's relationship with parents is very much stronger than it was at the time of the last inspection.
49. The school has quickly established a very effective relationship with parents. The school is very open and friendly and parents feel welcome. The headteacher is very approachable and is always available at times when parents might wish to see her. There are many good opportunities for parents to come into school to see the work children have done and to meet or to talk with the class teacher. Most parents listen

to their children read and the school gives them appropriate information to help them with this. Through curriculum evening,s parents find out what is going to be taught for the next term, and what they can do to support the learning at home. The quality of information for parents is generally very good, although some reports do not make clear the progress that has been made.

50. The support for the school by parents is very good. Very many parents volunteer their help in classes and for visits. They raise large amounts of money which are well used by the school to enhance provision for pupils. Parents have also supported the school in more practical ways, such as constructing a covered area, so that there is somewhere dry to wait in wet weather.

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

### *The headteacher and senior staff*

51. The headteacher provides exceptionally good leadership for the school. She took over the school at a time when it was failing to provide an acceptable standard of education, and she has transformed it in many ways. She has brought a very clear educational direction, and ensured a remarkable trend of improvements in educational provision. Her impact is perhaps seen most clearly in the very positive ethos of the school for staff and children. Within this very supportive and caring ethos, children are valued as individuals and are treated with respect. This encourages their very positive attitudes and has built the relationships that underpin the children's progress and attainment. The headteacher is to be congratulated on her achievements.
52. Subjects are managed effectively, particularly English and mathematics where some very good progress has been made in recent years in terms of provision and standards of attainment. Provision has also been improved significantly for information technology where there is now some very good equipment and a clear programme of work.

### *The governors*

53. The governors, with the very active leadership of their chair, have made a significant contribution to the recent improvements in the school. They have a very good overview of the school and its needs, and monitor its work closely. They have a good committee system and have been able to provide the support and leadership that the school has needed during a difficult period. They have been particularly successful in ensuring that there has been adequate funding for improvements.

### *Monitoring, evaluation and targets*

54. The school is taking many valuable steps to monitor and evaluate its performance. A wide range of data is analysed very rigorously and targets set from this analysis. These targets are then used to promote improvement. The thoroughness of these procedures has underpinned the trend of improvements.

### *The budget and best value*

55. The school's budget is very well managed. It has been successful in attracting extra funding and this has been used very effectively along with the normal budget to support the school's priorities.

### *Staffing, accommodation and learning resources*

56. There is a good number of teachers and support staff who are suitably qualified to teach the curriculum. The school building has been significantly improved in recent

years and provides a good standard of accommodation. Although six of the classes are accommodated in 'outside' classrooms, the way these are clustered together and maintained means that they also provide good accommodation. The playground space is restricted, but good facilities have been provided for children under five. The level of resources has been improved recently, especially in information technology and there are some particularly good resources in the nursery and mathematics and art.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

57. In order to build on its recent trend of improving standards, the next steps for the school are to:
- take a more consistent approach at the Foundation Stage by building more directly on the excellent provision in the nursery in such features as the independence given to children, the free flow of activities and the way learning follows the national 'Stepping Stones'. (see paragraphs 16 & 63)
  - ensure that the very good provision of support for children who have special educational needs allows them balanced access to the curriculum. (see paragraph 34)
58. The school will also wish to address the following minor issue:
- continue its development of the multicultural aspect of cultural education. (see paragraph 40)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	70
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	11	31	24	0	0	0
Percentage	6	16	44	34	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y3
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	23	242
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	49

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y3
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	18	83

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

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	31

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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*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	32	33	65

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	28	30
	Girls	25	31	31
	Total	52	59	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (80)	91 (88)	94 (89)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	30	30
	Girls	30	30	31
	Total	58	60	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (78)	92 (80)	94 (84)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	211	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	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 – Y3**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	22

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y3**

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	258

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	72
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5.1

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.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001
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	£
Total income	582,776
Total expenditure	579,042
Expenditure per pupil	1,976
Balance brought forward from previous year	7,796
Balance carried forward to next year	11,530

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	265
Number of questionnaires returned	110

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	30	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	35	1	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	50	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	41	6	1	4
The teaching is good.	70	29	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	37	8	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	18	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	27	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	61	31	5	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	77	22	1	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	66	31	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	39	10	0	14

## **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**

59. In general, children enter the school with standards of attainment slightly below those expected for children of this age. They make very good progress through the nursery, particularly in the personal, social and emotional aspects of development, and make the expected progress through the reception classes. Standards are at least in line with the nationally expected Early Learning Goals by the time children move to Year 1.
60. Provision has been improved significantly since the 1999 inspection. All classrooms have been refurbished and now provide a stimulating environment for learning. Very well equipped and secure outdoor areas have been developed for children in both the nursery and reception. The curriculum is at least good in all areas of learning. The nursery's environment and resources are outstanding.
61. The quality of teaching is good overall in the Foundation Stage in all areas of learning, and is often excellent in the nursery. The approaches to teaching differ between the nursery and reception classes in a number of features that have already been mentioned: in particular the degree of independence and the free-flow of activities. Children in the nursery are given wonderful independence to engage in an exciting range of practical activities, and adults build very skilfully on the learning opportunities that arise. Teachers in the reception classes work hard to provide interesting activities and good resources to support play, and this ensures that pupils make sound progress.
62. In the best lessons, it is the way that adults talk to children about their work, basing learning on children's interests that makes it so good; for example, discussing the way water flows through the pipes into the water tray. In some cases in the reception classes, the learning intention of some of the activities, such as the cars and play mat, could be more precise, and so make the conversations between adults and children more focused on learning.
63. Grouping arrangements in the reception classes ensure pupils are given access to the whole curriculum over the week, but the arrangements are slightly more formalised than might be expected for children of this age. Pupils are told where they will work and when, and this restricts their independence and also means that learning is curtailed as children sometimes need to move on before completing an activity of interest. There is also some restriction of independence in the reception classes compared to the nursery when adults fasten the children's coats and select paint brushes and materials for them to use instead of encouraging children to do things for themselves.

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

64. Children settle very quickly into the nursery and make very good progress in developing their personal, social and emotional skills. All children become independent very quickly, choosing and using resources in their extended play because all adults expect and support them in this. For example, children spend a long time exploring water flowing through an arrangement of pipes, choosing to work together, filling watering cans and taking calculated risks when climbing onto a cart to fill a bucket above the pipes. They are engrossed in what is happening and are very well supported by the adults. Children are very good at changing their shoes and

clothes as necessary, depending on the weather outside or if they get wet or dirty because it is expected and seen as important. Children become very confident and develop very positive attitudes to learning because all adults are very caring. "Toby", a puppet who the children treat as a real person, very skilfully encourages more timid children to take part in activities. He can be seen riding on the bikes, playing in the sand pit or encouraging children to talk. There is a very real sense that the nursery belongs to the children and they take a very active role in looking after it. Most children achieve the Early Learning Goal before leaving the nursery.

65. In the reception classes, children settle well into a very different system, meeting new children who did not attend the nursery. Children continue to behave well and concentrate for long periods of time on the activities offered to them. They are proud of their achievements, and make choices about their learning when given the opportunity. There could be more opportunities to build on the independence children learnt in the nursery and to develop collaborative play.

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

66. Provision for the speaking and listening is very good in the nursery. Children make very good use of talk for thinking and communicating because teachers ask questions like, "What shall we do about it?" and listen and act on the children's responses. Children in the reception classes continue to listen well, but there are fewer opportunities for them to develop their own ideas; for example, through making use of the writing areas to draw and create pictures.
67. Children are interested, enjoy and listen well to stories. They make good progress over the two years. They often choose to read books and older children can recognise simple words from pictures in familiar stories. Children in the nursery can identify their name using a matching photo and recognise the initial letter sound. This is built on in reception but many children are not yet confident saying initial letter sounds. The regular teaching of phonics in reception should enable most children to achieve this Early Learning Goal.
68. Children make good progress in writing. Good use is made in the reception classes of handwriting letter cards to practise letters on whiteboards with the support of an adult. However, they do not always take these skills into their independent writing. It is likely that most children should achieve the expected standard in this Early Learning Goal by the end of reception.

### **Mathematical development**

69. By the time they enter Year 1, most children achieve the Early Learning Goal in this area of learning. However, a significant minority do not. This is because of their low attainment on entry to the reception classes and restricted chances to learn from higher attaining children. Children have good access to all aspects of number, calculation, shape and measures across the Foundation Stage.
70. Children in the nursery make very good progress because the activities provided are very interesting and provide a context for mathematical thinking. For example, the 'Elmer' stories are used to introduce pattern and squares. Children recognise squares when using shape cutters to make square jam sandwiches, some can count to up to four sandwiches, others only one or two. In a homemade game of 'Incy Wincy Spider' children recognised numerals one to five and could count up to four squares correctly pointing with their finger as they counted. The adult provides a very

good model of counting to ten and uses assessment very effectively to change the game to meet the needs of the children playing. Teaching generally meets the needs of children in reception and they make satisfactory progress. There could be more opportunities to challenge the higher attaining children who are already achieving many aspects of the Early Learning Goal for mathematics.

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

71. Children make very good progress in the nursery and this is consolidated in the reception classes where children make the expected progress. By the time they reach Year 1, most children have achieved this Early Learning Goal.
72. The nursery is a workshop of exploration and investigation. It provides magical experiences which develop children's skills, knowledge and understanding in all areas. For example, as a result of one of the children's parents fixing a flat tyre on the nursery cart, children become very interested in air flow. They are engrossed in blowing up balloons using a wide variety of pumps, including their own breath. They observe very closely what happens and can talk about how and why the air is going in and out. Children use computers as a matter of routine throughout the Foundation Stage. Many children in reception can access and use programs on their own, including "Roamer" programmable toy. They use listening centres well to listen to tapes. Their sense of time and place continues to develop and they design and make things such as sewing calendars.

### **Physical development**

73. Both nursery and reception classes now have access to a wide range of indoor and outdoor equipment, although the free-flow of activities in the nursery gives children more time to make use of the very valuable experiences on offer. All children develop a good level of awareness of how to use large spaces and move with confidence. Many are beginning to understand health and safety aspects. Careful teaching, using a wide range of tools and equipment, means that many children develop very good fine manipulative skills, seen in their drawings and paintings. Many will exceed the Early Learning Goal for this area of learning.

### **Creative development**

74. The provision for creative development has improved since the last inspection. Children in the nursery make very good progress in all aspects, exploring materials, music and in developing their imaginations and children in reception consolidate this. Most children achieve well and by the end of reception are likely to achieve most of the outcomes of the Early Learning Goal for this area. Some will exceed these in their art work. A stimulating under-sea role-play area in the reception classes provides the opportunity to develop children's imaginations. However, adults do not always allow children sufficient scope to develop their own ideas.

## **ENGLISH**

75. Pupils are making good progress across the school, and by the end of Year 3, standards remain generally average with writing somewhat better than reading. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. It is the good quality of the teaching together with the clear educational direction and the pupils' very positive attitudes to learning that have raised standards.

## **Speaking and listening**

76. Most pupils are open and confident in their speech, and are always willing to take part in discussions and express their ideas. By the end of Year 3, almost all reach the expected level where they listen carefully and respond accordingly. There are some good opportunities across the school for pupils to discuss things, especially when working in pairs and small groups and this helps promote their ability to explain. These opportunities occur in English and in other subjects. Teachers provide very good role models for listening and valuing the contributions of others, and this is very important in developing listening skills.

## **Reading**

77. The school's scores in national tests for seven year olds have been improving over recent years, although they were still just below the national average in 2002. Inspection evidence suggests that this trend of improvement is continuing, although overall standards in the present Year 2 may be similar to 2002. This is within the expected variation from one year group to the next. Standards in Year 3 are in line with the national average, and a good number of pupils attain the higher level (Level 3), although there is a significant number still at the beginning of Level 2. Pupils enjoy reading and are keen to talk about their books. There is considerable support for reading which is raising standards. There are extra reading sessions outside of the national literacy hour and a large number of volunteer parents and 'reading buddies' from local firms hear children read individually and in groups. This is very valuable, and has produced a good level of reading in terms of word recognition and early fluency. The focus now needs to be on the next stage where pupils are expected to understand the main points and make some interpretation of what they read.

## **Writing**

78. The school's scores in national tests for seven year olds rose significantly in 2002 and were above the national average. Inspection evidence suggests that standards this year's Year 2 may not be so high but are still broadly in line with the national average, and higher than previous years. At Year 3, standards remain above average, with a good number of pupils attaining the higher level (Level 3), and there is evidence that Year 1 pupils are also on line to do well. There is some very good teaching of writing through which pupils gain in confidence and accuracy. A Year 1 lesson where children made lists that has already been mentioned was a good example of the way in which skills are developed in an interesting and stimulating way. Other subjects are also used well to extend pupils' skills and to give a context for writing. For example, there were some good opportunities in Year 3 lessons for pupils to write about the ancient Egyptians in the history topic, and high challenge in these lessons with pupils sorting their information into paragraphs with sub-headings. History was also used well in Year 2 lessons with pupils writing about Samuel Morse. Again, the excitement of the role play added stimulation for pupils' writing.
79. The subject is very well led by an experienced and knowledgeable co-ordinator who has set a clear direction. There are some good reading resources that provide good models of writing to the pupils, and engender a love of literature. All the necessary steps have been taken to improve provision, and standards are rising.

## MATHEMATICS

80. Pupils attain standards in line with the national average by the end of Year 2 when compared with all schools and similar schools. The trends in scores in national tests for seven year olds have continued to rise since the 1999 inspection. This represents a significant improvement in standards since the previous inspection.
81. Inspection evidence suggests that standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2 and are just above average by the end of Year 3. Good subject management, improvements in teaching and a problem-solving approach in almost every lesson have contributed to this.
82. Pupils enter Year 1 with broadly average attainment. They build effectively on their use of number and calculating skills, and their understanding of shapes and measures. In Year 2 they continue to make reasonable progress and by the end of the year many pupils know the addition and subtraction facts to 20 and learn multiplication facts. They identify and describe the properties of two and three dimensional shapes and their measuring skills become more accurate. In Year 3 pupils continue to develop their skills and knowledge in shapes and measures. Most pupils can use a variety of mental strategies to add two and three digit numbers. For example, average pupils can calculate  $\text{£}4.50 + 24\text{p}$  accurately while higher attaining pupils can solve problems such as "I think of a number and add 45 and the answer is 261. What is my number?" Pupils of all ages can solve relevant problems in all areas of mathematics.
83. The quality of teaching is good overall, and this is promoting the rising standards. Teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy effectively. Good explanations from teachers improve pupils' mathematical understanding. Teachers plan interesting activities which engage pupils and help them achieve well; for example, Year 1 pupils worked very well in pairs to calculate how much the teddy bears picnic would cost. Teachers use questioning skilfully to involve all pupils in discussion sessions and the use of resources such as individual clock faces or whiteboards help check understanding. Teachers model appropriate strategies well so that pupils are able to solve problems. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, the teacher showed the pupils how to use a number line to count back accurately when solving subtraction problems. This enabled pupils to develop a strategy for solving similar problems. Teachers use ongoing assessment and daily assessment well. It was evident in at least half of the lessons that teachers amended their plans in the light of how well the pupils were achieving. Teachers use the plenary well to assess whether the learning objectives have been achieved. This has improved since the last inspection.
84. Pupils are very interested in mathematics, concentrate and behave very well. The subject makes a significant impact on their social and moral development. Pupils negotiate and work well with a partner or in groups. Speaking and listening skills are well developed because they discuss each other's methods and strategies, such as when Year 2 pupils decide whether a word problem is an addition or subtraction calculation.
85. The next steps for the school are to ensure all teaching is consistently high so that all pupils are challenged and have opportunities to explain their methods. Teaching assistants need to ensure that their own subject knowledge is good so that they can help pupils make good progress in their mathematical understanding. The school could further develop pupils' mathematical reasoning by encouraging the use of jottings such as an empty number line to help pupils develop their thinking and solve

problems efficiently. Opportunities to teach number operations such as multiplication and division together could be further developed so that pupils understand the relationship between them.

86. The close liaison between teachers, teaching assistants and the special educational needs co-ordinator contributes to the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs. The next step is to support those pupils who are just below average, particularly in Year 3, so that they achieve as well as can be expected for their age.
87. The subject is well led by an experienced co-ordinator. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and subject performance are very good and areas for development have been correctly identified. The use of assessment has improved since the last inspection. Using the key objectives from the National Numeracy Strategy has improved teacher assessment and enabled areas of weakness for particular groups of pupils to be identified and appropriate changes to be made to medium-term planning. The sharing of targets with individual pupils in their mathematics books is good. Pupils are well challenged, have an increased knowledge of their own learning and celebrate their own achievements.
88. Mathematics displays in classrooms are high quality, provide good support in the use of mathematical vocabulary and help make learning objectives very clear. Various interactive displays such as the teddy bears' picnic in Year 1 present maths as a "fun activity" and promote good problem-solving skills. Learning resources are very good.

## **SCIENCE**

89. In Years 2 and 3, standards are average and have been maintained since the previous inspection. The pupils also attained average standards in the 2002 end of key stage assessments by teachers when compared with schools nationally. This showed a marked improvement on the previous year when they were below average. This maintains the rising trend from the 1999 inspection when they had deteriorated significantly.
90. The "blocking" arrangements, in which a class focuses on a particular subject during a week, meant that science was only taught in Year 1 during the inspection. Here the quality of teaching and learning was consistently good. Lessons were well planned, resourced and executed. Teachers managed behaviour very well, and pupils behaved impeccably, and conducted their investigations very sensibly. They co-operated well and discussed their work enthusiastically. Pupils obviously enjoy science. They tried hard to concentrate on their work and made effective use of the time available. They were fully engaged in investigating "sound and hearing" and could talk about what they were discovering from the good range of activities that teachers provided. The scrutiny of previous work shows an appropriate amount at an appropriate level across all aspects of the subject. In Year 2, pupils have conducted interesting investigations into forces, the melting of ice, absorbency tests and reflective materials. They have looked at where sea horses live and have identified parts of its body. They have identified food groups in their study of healthy eating. In Year 3, they have built well on previous work to conduct a beach study on what was washed ashore and have studied magnetic attraction. They record their work using charts, diagrams and graphs and make good use of computers in this aspect. They have looked at growth and have investigated the root systems of plants.

91. The co-ordinator has improved resources and ensured that national guidelines are in place. She has begun to analyse data and identify what needs to be worked on. She monitors planning but has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching or sample pupils' work. Good links with numeracy and ICT are evident as pupils display findings in graphs and charts and they make accurate measurements. Planning of the work is linked to national guidelines and assessment opportunities are built into the scheme. The science curriculum is well balanced, all required aspects are covered across the school and there is a good emphasis on investigations.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

92. It was only possible to see art being taught in one class during the inspection, but evidence from pupils' work shows that standards of attainment are well above average across the school. Pupils are involved in a very wide range of techniques and materials, and levels of expertise are high. Standards are even higher than at the time of the previous inspection.
93. Pupils work confidently with a range of two and three-dimensional materials. There is a high level of expertise and some very creative designs. Colour is used very well and there is very good standard of design. Pupils have clearly given a great deal of attention to detail and been willing to take great care with their work, and they speak of it with great pride. The quality of art work is evident in a wide range of subjects, from pictures of Egyptian tombs to illustrations in science.
94. There was some excellent teaching during the inspection. The role-play aspect of the lesson has already been mentioned as adding excitement, but it was the preparation of the pupils for the lesson that made it so successful. Pupils had already researched the sculptor's work through books and the internet and knew about the materials he used and the forms and locations that he preferred. They knew all about his penchant for 'temporal' constructions that might float down streams, as well as his preference for natural materials and fixings. The very good range of materials available for the lesson enabled the pupils to make their own selections and follow the artist's style, with some pupils even suggesting that they would like to float their sculpture on the class pond. They followed the artist's use of a camera to capture their work and understood that their sculptures would need to be dismantled. Pupils were involved in particularly good evaluation of their pieces at the end of the lesson and showed how carefully they had thought about their work and drawn on what they had learned previously.
95. The co-ordinator has just taken over, and has inherited a very strong subject.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

96. During the course of the inspection, it was only possible to observe lessons in Year 3. Evidence gained from these lessons, an analysis of previous design and make work, teachers' plans and discussions are sufficient to show that pupils attain standards above expectations for their for their age at both Year 2 and Year 3. This shows standards have improved from the previous inspection when they were average. All pupils make good progress in developing their skills and understanding within the design and make process.

97. Teaching and learning are good overall and often very good. In a very good lesson using pneumatics, the teacher gave very good opportunities for pupils to investigate and to describe accurately and clearly what they had discovered. There was a very brisk pace, and the pneumatic system was quickly combined with a simple lever to form the starting point for designing and making a moving toy. Previous work shows that by the end of Year 2, pupils understand that the making process begins with a plan. They use pictures to develop and communicate their designs. They select from a range of materials, tools and techniques and learn to join various materials. The wide range of wheeled vehicles shows pupils have been given good opportunities to use a range of techniques and to make well finished products. When designing, their drawings are clearly labelled and identify the materials to be used.
98. The co-ordinator manages the subject well and provides well for colleagues. The quantity and range of resources are good and fully support the national guidelines, which ensure that skills are now systematically built on. Appropriate assessment arrangements are in place to record pupils' skills at the end of each unit. Pupils measure accurately to support numeracy and ICT is used for research to aid design.

## **HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY**

99. Because of the nature of the timetable, it was not possible to see any geography lessons during the inspection, and history lessons were seen in only one class. Evidence from previous work and discussions with pupils indicates that standards are broadly in line with those generally expected at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 3. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
100. Mention has already been made of the role-play lesson in which Samuel Morse appeared in front of the pupils to discuss his life and work, and even named his five children. This clearly excited the pupils and held their interest very well. As with the art lesson above, it was the preparation for the lesson by pupils and the teacher that made this so successful. Pupils had found out about his inventions and knew elements of the famous code. They were also aware of the importance of the invention in terms of its impact of communications at that time.
101. Good links were being made during the inspection between history and English by using the literacy hour to read and write about the ancient Egyptians. These links also extended to information technology, where the Internet was used to find out about aspects of Egyptian history, and to art where some high quality paintings and models had been made of artefacts from that time.
102. Both subjects are well led with clear schemes of work ensuring that pupils cover a good range of aspects thoroughly. The history curriculum has recently been reduced in Year 3, and this has been very helpful in ensuring that appropriate focus can be given to each aspect. Both subjects are enhanced by a good range of visits and visitors that help make learning real and immediate.

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

103. As a result of improved resources, increased skills in teaching, the clear vision of the co-ordinator, and the excellent support of the specialist learning support assistant, standards have improved significantly and are now above what is normally found. At the 1999 inspection, standards were below average and requirements were not met.

104. The quality of teaching and learning in all aspects is good. Again, this is a significant improvement since the last full inspection when they were unsatisfactory. The school reports increasing levels of skills as a result of a national training programme for teachers. Teachers are much more confident users of computers than at the previous inspection and there is a more consistent approach. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic learners and all are making good progress in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding. In Year 1 lessons, teaching supported English well as pupils used a program to make a list of requirements for a Teddy Bears' picnic. Pupils moved confidently around the screen and made good use of drop and drag to combine text and graphics, and were able to change fonts, size and colour and resize graphics. In Year 2, pupils have been well taught to produce text and pictures and to handle and display simple data. They access CD-ROM information and the Internet for research in other subjects and do this confidently. They use word processing across the curriculum to present their work and handle and display data in mathematics and science. The school provides a digital camera, which is well used to support work across the curriculum and two "official school photographers" recorded the visit of the local MP to open the new suite. By the time they leave the school, pupils in Year 3 add, amend and combine different information and show awareness of audience and the need for quality in their presentations. They have extended their use of the features of art packages and present data in a variety of ways. In the Year 3 lessons, pupils showed good skills of research as they used the Internet and software to compare and contrast the lives of rich and poor people in ancient Egypt.
105. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and shows a clear understanding of future development needs. The ICT support assistant has very good knowledge, teaches pupils skilfully and makes a significant contribution to the good progress they are making. The ratio of computers to pupils is in line with the national average. The new computer suite is well used and is having an impact on raising standards. The subject enhances pupils' personal and social development as they work well together and support each other's learning. There is a clear policy in place for safe use of the Internet.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

106. Only dance and games were taught during the inspection. Across the school, standards in these areas are as expected for the age of the pupils, and have been maintained from the previous inspection. The school reports that about 25 per cent of the pupils attain the national expectation for 11 year olds in swimming by the time they leave the school. This is good achievement.
107. The quality of teaching and learning is sound, and pupils make steady progress in developing physical skills. In a good Year 2 lesson, the teacher provided an energetic warm up and pupils could describe the effects of exercise on their bodies. He made good use of demonstration and gave opportunities for pupils to evaluate performance as they developed their passing and receiving skills. Where teaching was less effective the organisation of a small invasion game led to limited opportunities for passing and marking. The space was too cramped for the number of pupils on each side. In all lessons, pupils were attentive, listened well and followed instructions safely and sensibly.

108. The new co-ordinator is a specialist and supports colleagues well. At the previous inspection the co-ordinator had recently left. Planning follows authority guidelines and resources and accommodation are good as they can use middle school facilities such as the field and the pool. The curriculum is enhanced by the football club, for which there is a small charge.

## **MUSIC**

109. Pupils throughout school attain the standards expected for their age and enjoy their music making activities. They make satisfactory progress overall. It was only possible to see music being taught in Years 1 and 2 and the focus was on singing and performance.
110. Younger pupils sing appropriate songs with actions well, responding to different moods and maintaining a beat in simple accompaniments. Year 2 pupils sing appropriately and play instruments with a good sense of rhythm. Year 3 pupils sing songs such as "The Jelly Bean Blues" in two parts expressing the echo accurately in their performance. Pupils know the names of a range of musical instruments.
111. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The teacher has good subject knowledge and teaches the basic skills well. However, there could be more opportunities to involve pupils in the evaluation of their work. Sometimes when instruments are used to accompany songs, older pupils make less effort with their singing.
112. Pupils sing well in assemblies and listen carefully to music played. Singing makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal and spiritual development by raising their self-esteem and promoting a sense of community. There are now good opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities including various musical performances, the school choir and in Year 3 learning to play the recorder. The specialist music teacher is enthusiastic and has made a significant contribution to improvements since the last inspection particularly in singing. The curriculum and planning based on the national guidance are satisfactory. Good links are made to other subjects such as the World War II tea party in history, when appropriate.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

113. It was not possible to see sufficient lessons during the inspection for detailed judgements to be made. However, scrutiny of work and planning as well as discussion with pupils indicate that standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 2 and Year 3. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
114. By Year 2, most pupils are beginning to understand the significance of some of the important beliefs and practices of Christianity. For example, they reflected on the importance of godparents to Christians and wondered what happens if you do not have them. They showed some good insights whilst clarifying their own ideas. Pupils recall some stories from the bible such as "The Prodigal Son" and "The Good Samaritan". They are aware of other religious festivals. Year 3 pupils listened very well to a visitor talking about Divali. Good links are made to their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
115. The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership and management. She effectively monitors provision and planning to ensure there are good coverage and a good range

of interesting activities. Good links are made with many other subjects including ICT. Opportunities to extend pupils' thinking and reflection have been improved by the links made to assemblies and circle time but are still in the early stages. Good use is made of resources and artefacts loaned from the local authority and visitors to supplement the satisfactory resources available in school. Some pupils miss aspects of religious education because they attend extra lessons.