

INSPECTION REPORT

Springfield Lower School
Bedford

LEA area : Bedfordshire

Unique Reference Number : 109514

Headteacher : Mrs A E D Fisher

Reporting inspector : Ms R Frith
IRN: 2490

Dates of inspection : 22nd – 25th November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706960
Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown Copyright 1997

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

Under the Education (Schools) Act 1992 and the Education Act 1993, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school :	Lower
Type of control :	Community
Age range of pupils :	4 to 9
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	Orchard Street Kempston Bedfordshire MK42 7LS
Telephone number :	01234 306000
Fax number :	01234 306001
Appropriate authority :	Bedfordshire
Name of chair of governors :	Ann Robertson
Date of previous inspection :	April 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs R Frith, Registered Inspector	Under Fives English Music	Attainment & Progress Teaching Leadership & Management
Mr R Watts, Lay Inspector		Attendance Support, guidance & pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Mr P Thrussell, Team Inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Physical education Religious education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Efficiency of the school
Ms N Moss, Team Inspector	Equal opportunities Science Information technology History Geography	Curriculum & assessment
Mrs W Crouch, Team Inspector	Design and technology Art	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services
Strathblane House
Ashfield Road
Cheadle
Cheshire SK8 1BB

Tel. No: 0161 282 2982

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

The Registrar
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

Paragraph

MAIN FINDINGS

- What the school does well
- Where the school has weaknesses
- How the school has improved since the last inspection
- Standards in subjects
- Quality of teaching
- Other aspects of the school
- The parents' views of the school

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION

1 - 6

- Characteristics of the school
- Key indicators

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

7 - 28

- Attainment and progress
- Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
- Attendance

Quality of education provided

29 - 63

- Teaching
- The curriculum and assessment
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
- Partnership with parents and the community

The management and efficiency of the school

64 - 76

- Leadership and management
- Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
- The efficiency of the school

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

Areas of learning for children under five

77 - 85

English, mathematics and science

86 - 112

Other subjects or courses

113 - 154

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence

155 - 158

Data and indicators

Pages 45 - 47

MAIN FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The quality of teaching and the curriculum for the under fives is good and results in them making good progress.

- Pupils make good progress in geography, history and physical education at Key Stage 2.
- Pupils have good relationships with the staff and each other.
- Provision for pupils' moral and cultural development is good.
- Provision for extra-curricular activities is good.
- The quality of information to parents is good.
- The expertise of specialist staff for pupils with special educational needs and for those who speak English as an additional language is good and staff are used effectively to support pupils' learning.
- School administration, financial planning and efficiency of control are good.

WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES

- I. Pupils reach below average standards in English at the end of Key Stage 1 and when they leave school in Year 4.
- II. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory in Year 1 and inconsistent in Year 3 where here, too, it is sometimes unsatisfactory. Teachers do not plan work, which builds on pupils' prior knowledge, skills and understanding, and they have low expectations of what pupils can do. Although the systems to monitor the quality of teaching are satisfactory and have highlighted areas of weakness, the strategies for improvement, which have been adopted are not effective.
- III. At Key Stage 1 and 2, procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are inadequate and do not provide teachers with sufficient information on which they can plan work to match the varying ability levels in the class.

The school's weaknesses are outweighed by its strengths. The weaknesses will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to parents, or guardians, of children at the school. Governors will report annually on how the school is achieving the targets set in the action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

Overall, the school has made satisfactory improvements since the last inspection and is in a satisfactory position to improve further.

- IV. The school has successfully moved from teaching the curriculum through a topic approach to teaching subjects in specific identified lessons. This has ensured that adequate time is allocated to each subject and has led to a clearer focus for teaching, particularly in religious education.
- V. There is now a clearer distinction between religious education and acts of collective worship.
- VI. Systems are in place to review the curriculum and in most cases these result in satisfactory provision across each year group.
- VII. Teachers' knowledge and expertise has been developed through a regular system of appraisal and professional development.
- VIII. A comprehensive system of monitoring and evaluation is in place and has proved effective in some areas. However, the strategies adopted to improve teaching across the school are inadequate and remain unsatisfactory.

STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools
Reading	E	E
Writing	D	D
Mathematics	E	E

Key

well above average A

above average B

average

C

below average D

well below average E

The information in the chart shows that pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in the summer of 1999, when compared with all schools, and also when compared with similar schools, was well below average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. Teachers' assessment of pupils' learning in science indicates that pupils attained below average standards. Overall, these results indicate a fall in standards since the last inspection and from the previous three years when pupils' attained standards close to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. These results are also a reflection of a particular year group of pupils, 33 per cent of whom are currently identified as having special educational needs. The school has analysed the results and implemented specific strategies for improvement and, although insufficient time has passed for the effectiveness of these to be fully evaluated, early indications are that the attainment levels of pupils in the current Year 2 will be above those in 1999.

Through observing lessons, talking with pupils and looking at their work, the inspectors found that the attainment of pupils in English is slightly below the national average. Although the number of pupils working at a level appropriate for their age is broadly average there are few pupils attaining higher levels. Standards in mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly average. Pupils' attainment in information technology meet those expected nationally at the end of Key Stage 1 and attainment in religious education meets that outlined in the Agreed Syllabus. Currently, pupils in Year 4, attain below average standards in English. In this year group, 32 per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, with the majority of these needing support in the area of English. Pupils in Year 4, attain average standards in mathematics and science. Standards in information technology meet those expected nationally and attainment in religious education meets that expected for pupils of this age as indicated in the Agreed Syllabus.

QUALITY OF TEACHING

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 9 years
English	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Good	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Science		Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information technology		Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Religious education		Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Other subjects	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Across the school, the quality of teaching is very good in 8 per cent of lessons, good in 34 per cent, satisfactory in 39 per cent and unsatisfactory in 19 per cent. The teaching is consistently good for children under five and occasionally very good. The table above may seem to be misleading as it indicates no unsatisfactory teaching apart from mathematics at Key Stage 1. However, these judgements are based on the teaching of subjects overall across the key stages and the table does not highlight that teaching is unsatisfactory in several subjects in Year 1 and in one class in Year 3. When teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers have low expectations of what pupils can do and achieve and set work, which lacks challenge for the range of pupils in the class. This results in pupils becoming restless, lacking in concentration and consequently making unsatisfactory progress. When teaching is good, teachers have high expectations, set appropriate work which motivates the pupils to learn and keeps them interested. Consequently the pace of learning is good and pupils make good progress. The quality of teaching is good in history and physical education at Key Stage 2 and satisfactory elsewhere. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs are well supported by specialist support staff. In the Reception Unit and in Year 1, additional support by specialist staff funded from the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant is good.

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

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Overall satisfactory. The behaviour of most pupils is generally good around the school and in the playground. In most lessons pupils behave satisfactorily, although a small but significant minority of pupils do exhibit unacceptable behaviour and there are regular instances of restlessness, particularly when lessons lack pace and challenge.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupil's attendance is broadly in line with the national average and most pupils arrive at school on time.
Ethos*	Satisfactory. A well ordered school, which offers its pupils a secure and welcoming environment. Pupils' attitudes to learning are sound, and often better. They have good relationships with adults and each other.
Leadership and management	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides leadership with a strong commitment to maintaining a welcoming and caring environment and providing a range of experiences for pupils. Governors make positive contributions to the work of the school, providing active support and commitment. Whilst there is a range of procedures in place to monitor teaching and some effective strategies have been adopted, currently they are ineffective in bringing about an improvement in the quality of teaching.
Curriculum	Good provision for the under-fives. Satisfactory overall at Key Stages 1 and 2. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum but planning for work, which builds on pupils' prior knowledge, skills and understanding, is unsatisfactory in Year 1. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory and do not provide sufficient regular information in order to inform teachers' planning.
Pupils with special educational needs	The organisation and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. When receiving support from specialist staff, they often make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans but this does not always continue when pupils work independently.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Provision for pupils' moral and cultural development is good and provision for their spiritual and social development is satisfactory.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory. Although the overall pupil-teacher ratio is broadly average, there are large classes of up to 38 pupils in Key Stage 2. In some classrooms this creates problems when teachers and pupils move around. Classroom support staff are well experienced and used effectively. Satisfactory arrangements are in place for the professional development of staff. The learning environment is attractive, clean and well maintained. Adequate resources for learning have been maintained since the last inspection and shortages in science, history and art have been redressed. The library provides a stimulating and attractive environment to support learning across the curriculum, but is rarely used by older pupils for independent study.
Value for money	Satisfactory.

* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

THE PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<p>IX. Parents are encouraged to be part of the school and find it easy to approach staff with questions or problems.</p> <p>X. The school encourages pupils to achieve a good standard of work.</p> <p>XI. The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on children and they behave well.</p> <p>XII. Children enjoy going to school and are encouraged to get involved in extra-curricular activities.</p> <p>XIII. Parents are confident in the headteacher who is positive and supportive. She knows all the children well.</p>	<p>XIV. A minority of parents think that too easy.</p> <p>XV. A small minority of parents would like more information on how their child is</p>

Inspectors support most of the positive views held by parents, particularly in the way in which the school encourages parents to be part of the school and how staff are available to deal with their concerns. The headteacher knows all the children well and is supportive to children, parents and staff. Good relationships exist between adults and pupils and most children enjoy going to school. Parents receive a good variety of well presented information about the school and in most areas satisfactory steps are taken to inform parents about the progress which their children make. There is some inconsistency in the provision for homework apart from the expectation that pupils should regularly read at home. Whilst the school holds the philosophy of encouraging all pupils to achieve a good standard of work, the level of unsatisfactory teaching results in some pupils in Year 1 and Year 3 not making the progress of which they are capable.

• **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

To improve the standards of work and the quality of education provided, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

XVI. Raise standards in English at both key stages by:

- ensuring that pupils receive sufficient opportunity to write at length both in English sessions and in other areas of the curriculum;
- implementing a systematic programme to improve pupils' spelling;
- improving the systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress in writing and using this to inform planning;
- ensuring that there is a consistent approach to the correction of technical errors in writing across the curriculum;
- improving the systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress in reading, particularly for the guided reading sessions in the literacy hour, and using this to inform planning;
- ensuring that the work set in the independent group sessions within the literacy hour is sufficiently challenging for all pupils, particularly the higher-attaining pupils.

(Paragraphs 7,8,10,16,35,43,86,91,93,96)

• Improve the quality of teaching in Year 1 and the consistency of teaching in Year 3 by:

- ensuring that teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and achieve;
- setting appropriately challenging work which maintains the interest of the pupils and keeps them working hard;
 - using information on pupils' progress and attainment to ensure that teachers' planning recognises the need to build on pupils' prior knowledge, skills and understanding and pupils are not repeating work;
- using the information gained from monitoring teaching to develop effective strategies for improvement;
- disseminating the good practice within the school.

(Paragraphs 30,32,33,34,35,36,37)

• Ensure that the match of work to pupils' abilities results in them making the best possible progress at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 by:

- identifying clear and consistent procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and using the information gained from this to set targets and plan appropriate work;
- using assessment information to ensure that pupils' learning develops systematically across and within year groups.

(Paragraphs 47,48,96,106,112,118,124,130,138,142)

In addition to the key issue above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

• Develop a systematic way of recording pupils who are late which ensures that at any time the staff are aware of who is present in school.

(Paragraphs 28,56)

• Ensure that the systems and procedures for dealing with child protection issues are consistent and the potential confusion inherent in split responsibilities is avoided.

(Paragraph 58)

INTRODUCTION

· **Characteristics of the school**

- 1 Springfield Lower School is a community school providing education for both sexes and all abilities from age 4 to 9 years. The school is situated in Kempston which adjoins Bedford Town. Most of the children live in the immediate vicinity of the school and for the last few years, the school has had to refuse places to many living outside the catchment area as it has been over-subscribed. Currently, classes in Year 4 and in Year 5 have 36 to 38 pupils. Due to demographic changes, the numbers of pupils have been predicted to fall and the current year is the first when the Reception Unit has been under-subscribed. Only 31 out of the 54 entrants actually reside in the catchment area.
- 2 The school is larger than other schools of this type with 329 full-time pupils and 32 children attending part-time in the reception classes (174 boys and 187 girls). All children start school part-time at the beginning of the academic year following their fourth birthday. From the first half term of the academic year, children whose fifth birthday occurs during the autumn term become full-time. The rest of the children become full-time at the start of the term in which they are five. At the time of the inspection there were 39 children aged under-five. Information gained from their records and observations indicate that children's attainment on entry to school is below average with few children attaining the high levels on the Bedfordshire baseline assessments.
- 3 Information from the last census indicates that the percentage of adults with higher education is below the national average together with the percentage of children in high social class households. The percentage of children in overcrowded households is broadly average and the percentage of minority ethnic children is over double the national average. Since the last inspection, the number of children living in social housing has increased significantly. Eleven per cent of full-time pupils are entitled to free school meals which is below the national average.
- 4 Seventy-two (20 per cent) pupils are identified as having special educational needs which is broadly in line with the national average. There are 6 pupils (1.6%) with a statement of special educational needs and this is also broadly in line with the national average. There are 72 pupils who come from homes where English is an additional language and 49 pupils are identified for support from staff funded from the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant.
- 5 The school has a comprehensive list of aims which cover areas such as the curriculum, including academic, spiritual, moral, social, cultural, creative, physical and emotional development; partnership with families, equality of opportunity and respect for those with beliefs other than their own and provision of a calm, purposeful working environment.
- 6 The school's current priorities include:
 - Raising attainment in writing and spelling.
 - Successfully implementing the literacy and numeracy strategies.
 - Developing the role of the newly appointed subject co-ordinators for science, art, design and technology.

Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	39	34	73

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	30	27	33
	Girls	32	31	32
	Total	62	58	65
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	85 (79)	79 (80)	89 (89)
	National	80 (80)	81 (80)	84 (84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	23	32	25
	Girls	29	32	31
	Total	52	64	56
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	71 (79)	88 (81)	77 (86)
	National	81 (80)	85 (84)	86 (85)

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year

		%
Authorised Absence	School	5.4
	National comparative data	5.6
Unauthorised Absence	School	0
	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

¹

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	8
Satisfactory or better	81
Less than satisfactory	19

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

Attainment

- 1 Results from the 1999 standard assessment tests and teacher assessments at Key Stage 1, indicate that standards were well below average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing when compared to all schools and also when compared to school with pupils from a similar background. Teachers' assessment of pupils' learning in science indicates that pupils attained below average standards. Overall, these results indicate a fall in standards since the last inspection and from the previous three years when pupils' attained standards close to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has analysed the results and implemented specific strategies for improvement and, although insufficient time has passed for the effectiveness of these to be fully evaluated, early indications are that the attainment levels of pupils in the current Year 2 will be above those in 1999. These results are also a reflection of a particular year group of pupils, 33 per cent of whom are currently identified as having special educational needs.
- 1 Through observing lessons, talking with pupils and looking at their work, the inspectors found that the attainment of pupils in English is slightly below the national average at Key Stage 1. Standards in mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly in line with that expected nationally. Although the number of pupils working at a level appropriate for their age is broadly average there are few pupils attaining higher levels in these three subjects. There is also a higher than average number of pupils working at the lower levels. Pupils' attainment in information technology is average at the end of Key Stage 1 and attainment in religious education meets that outlined in the Agreed Syllabus. Currently, pupils in Year 4 are attaining below average standards in English and average standards in mathematics and science. In this year group, 32 per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, with the majority of these needing support in the area of English. Standards in information technology are average and attainment in religious education meets that expected for pupils of this age. There is no significant difference between the attainment of girls and boys.
- 1 Most children have had some pre-school experience. Information gained from the children's records and observations indicate that children's attainment on entry to school is below average with few children attaining the high levels on the Bedfordshire baseline assessments. The current year, however, have slightly higher levels than last year and does not yet include any pupils identified as having special educational needs. By the age of five, most children reach the expected standards in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative, physical, personal and social development.
- 2 Inspectors' lesson observations, discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of their work indicate the following. Standards in speaking and listening are broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1. The majority begin to show confidence in speaking and most explain their ideas using a satisfactory range of vocabulary. In Year 4, most pupils listen attentively and display by their answers and actions that they have understood. However, a significant minority of pupils with special educational needs has a restricted range of vocabulary and are unable to adapt what they say to the needs of the listener. There has been a decline in standards in reading and writing since the last inspection when each was identified as being a strength of the school. Standards in reading are now slightly below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and below average in Year 4 and standards in writing are below average at similar stages. Although the number of pupils reading and writing at the level appropriate for their age reflects the national picture there is a lower than average percentage reading at the higher level.

- 3 In mathematics, by the end of Key Stage 1 and when they leave school in Year 4, most pupils are on course to attain levels which are in line with the national average, showing that the standards of the previous inspection have largely been maintained. However, the level of high attainment previously found at Key Stage 2 is unlikely to be reflected in the current year's results due to the high level of pupils in Year 4 with special educational needs. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are beginning to develop the skills of mental calculation and to look at patterns in number when taking the same number away from different multiples of ten. In Year 4, pupils have a satisfactory grasp of multiplication tables and mental recall of addition and subtraction up to twenty. They are developing strategies for solving problems and are able to explain them.
- 4 In science, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a satisfactory factual knowledge of the areas they have studied such as the human body. They develop sound skills of scientific investigation and are able to predict sensibly when asked what might happen when materials are heated. They are aware that some changes are reversible and some irreversible. In Year 4, pupils have a greater understanding of the workings of the human body and are able to set up tests for themselves, conduct them fairly and record the results. The current emphasis, which was missing at the time of the last inspection, on experimental and investigative work has resulted in pupils having a clearer understanding of the scientific principles behind their investigative work and standards have improved at Key Stage 2. They are now in line with those expected nationally for this age group.
- 5 At the time of the last inspection, information technology was considered to be a strength in the curriculum but currently at the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is just below that expected nationally and in line in Years 3 and 4. Although there are two computers in each class and the subject is planned to support a range of subject area, the age of some of the computers and the number of pupils in each class result in pupils receiving insufficient opportunity to practise their skills and raise their levels of attainment. By the end of Year 2, most pupils can manipulate a mouse with some degree of accuracy and use simple packages but few use word processing with editing techniques to communicate with ease. By the end of Year 4, most pupils word process and use simple editing skills. They investigate shape and pattern using a mathematical program and give instructions to simulated control technology devices
- 6 Standards in religious education have been maintained since the last inspection and, when considered against the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus, remain satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1 and when pupils leave the school in Year 4. In Year 2, pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of Bible stories and are aware that the Bible, and the messages within it, has a special significance for Christians. They are aware that different groups of people hold different beliefs and learn about key religious leaders. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have developed their understanding of different religions to include knowledge about founders of religions and important people in today's society.

14 **Progress**

- 7 Children make good progress in the Reception Unit and sometimes it is very good, for example in their personal and social skills. This is a result of the good quality of teaching which ensures that work is set at an appropriately challenging level and the pace of learning is good. The good relationships which the staff have with the children, together with their high expectations of what children can achieve, encourages good responses and consequent good progress. The good organisation, management of the day and planning, which takes into account the varying needs of the full-time and part-time children, ensure that no time is lost and all are fully involved.

- 8 Progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing across Key Stage 1 and in Year 3 and Year 4 is satisfactory overall although insufficient to bring pupils up to the standards expected nationally. The Literacy Strategy has only been in place for one year and insufficient time has passed for the progress indicated in these sessions to impact on pupils' overall standards. Progress in speaking and listening is satisfactory as a result of planned activities which encourage responses from pupils in the literacy hour and other lessons. Support assistants make an effective contribution to the progress of lower-attaining pupils by clarifying questions, explaining new vocabulary and encouraging pupils to offer answers. In some cases the higher-attaining pupils are not fully challenged in reading and consequently do not make the progress of which they are capable. Also, the school's systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress and attainment in reading, particularly in the guided reading sessions of the literacy hour, are unsatisfactory and teachers do not have sufficient information on which to plan future work. Similarly, in some classes higher-attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently in their writing. The school has not fully addressed the need to ensure that all pupils have sufficient opportunity to write extended pieces of work both in English lessons and in other areas of the curriculum and consequently pupils have insufficient time to develop their skills. Also, the school does not systematically assess and record pupils' progress in relation to the quality of writing and thus teachers do not have sufficient information on which to plan work of an appropriate level.
- 9 Pupils make satisfactory progress overall at both key stages in mathematics although this progress is not consistent. Unsatisfactory progress is made in Year 1 where the teachers have low expectations of what pupils can do and the pace of learning is slow. In Year 2, pupils made good progress in subtracting single digit numbers from two and three digit numbers when activities provide challenge for all abilities. In a Year 3 lesson, when previous learning has not been taken into account, most pupils are unable to grasp the concept of equivalent fractions and little progress is made. In Year 4, a clear explanation of the tasks is given by the teacher and work is appropriately set for different ability groups. This results in pupils making good progress in collecting information and constructing bar charts.
- 10 Progress across the school in science is satisfactory, though it is more rapid in Years 3 and 4 than in Key Stage 1. The skills of investigation and recording are systematically taught throughout the school and this results in pupils becoming confident in hypothesising, predicting their results and carrying out 'fair tests'. Pupils in Year 1 make basic observations whilst in Year 4 they progress to the stage where they set up tests for themselves and conduct them fairly, recording the data accurately. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress through extra help from learning support assistants and the provision of appropriate work which builds on their prior knowledge, skills and understanding.
- 11 In information technology, progress in lessons is generally satisfactory but more rapid in Years 3 and 4 than in Key Stage 1, where some teachers lack confidence in the subject. It is best when teachers themselves have a good degree of expertise and understanding of the basic skills and programs. Pupils respond well to the subject and this supports the progress which they make. However, pupils are unable to make better progress due to the lack of opportunity to practise and develop their skills, particularly in the large classes in Years 3 and 4.
- 12 In religious education, pupils make satisfactory progress across the school. Progress is better when teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can do and set appropriately challenging work. As they get older, pupils develop an increasingly sensitive approach to beliefs and values of others and reflect on issues related to their own lives. For example, the good use of resources use in a Year 1 lesson on Baptism started pupils thinking about important celebrations, and how families come together on such occasions.
- 13 At Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress in art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. At Key Stage 2, pupils make satisfactory progress in art, design and technology, and music. They make good progress in geography, history and physical education due to the good quality of teaching.
- 14 No significant difference was noted in the progress of boys and girls during the inspection. Those pupils who learn English as an additional language make good progress when they work in small groups and receive additional specialist support but this tends to slow to satisfactory when they work in mainstream classes unsupported, and the work is not so well targeted to meet their individual needs.

15 Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. Progress is often good in sessions when they receive additional specialist support directly targeted to their needs and. There are clear procedures in place to enable pupils to move between the stages of the register, and to be entirely removed from it when appropriate.

23 **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

16 The school has maintained the pupils' quality of learning since the last inspection and their attitudes to learning are satisfactory, and often better. Children under five settle well into school and quickly learn the procedures and standards of good behaviour expected of them. They show an interest in activities and, with adult support, are able to sustain concentration and complete tasks. They are usually eager to join in and form good relationships with adults and each other. At Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4, pupils are interested in their work and can sustain concentration, although where insufficient or undemanding work is set they sometimes fail to fully engage in activities. At best, they persevere when not immediately successful and are eager to improve their work. When they are expected to do so, pupils sensibly organise resources for themselves and clear them away responsibly.

17 The behaviour is generally good around the school and in the playground, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Pupils move about in a quiet and orderly fashion, following routines and procedures readily so that restricted space poses no problems. They also play together amicably at playtimes. In most lessons pupils behave satisfactorily, although a small but significant minority of pupils do exhibit unacceptable behaviour and there are regular instances of restlessness and inattention, particularly where lessons lack pace and challenge, and on corporate occasions such as assembly. There have been no exclusions in recent years. Parents are pleased that the school has a justified reputation for good behaviour which is recognised by outsiders when pupils go on school trips.

18 Relationships between pupils and adults are good. Pupils are respected as individuals and treated accordingly. Pupils also relate well to each other, working and playing equally happily in mixed groups. Instances of bullying are rare and handled successfully. Pupils work together well when expected to do so, spontaneously offer assistance to peers and are appreciative of each others' successes.

19 Pupils respect the different values and beliefs of members of the school community and are tolerant of peers with emotional or behavioural problems. Parents rightly value the caring and respectful attitudes promoted by the school. The oldest pupils readily accept responsibility for a range of organisational tasks around the school, such as helping to clear away chairs after assembly, and sometimes take the initiative to do something helpful when they realise that a particular task needs doing. Although pupils rarely take responsibility for their own learning or make choices, such as selecting their own resources, when they are given opportunities to do so, they respond positively and sensibly.

27 **Attendance**

20 The attendance of pupils has been maintained since the last inspection and is broadly in line with the national average. The unauthorised absence rate is below the national average, although it is slightly understated because holidays in excess of ten days are incorrectly authorised. Most pupils are punctual although a few arrive late each morning and this can interrupt the first lesson, which starts very promptly. In general however, the satisfactory attendance has a positive effect on pupils' learning.

28 **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

28 **Teaching**

- 21 The school has addressed the key issue on teaching arising from the last inspection. The move from teaching a topic based integrated curriculum to teaching specific subject lessons has led to more focussed provision with an appropriate time allocated for each subject and particular improvements in the teaching of religious education. The weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge have also been addressed through a planned system of professional development but a minority of teachers feel unconfident with the use of information technology.
- 22 Across the school, the quality of teaching is very good in 8 per cent of lessons, good in 34 per cent, satisfactory in 39 per cent and unsatisfactory in 19 per cent. When teaching is good, teachers have high expectations and plan work which meets the variety of needs in the class. The pace of learning is good and all pupils are fully engaged in their learning. The unsatisfactory teaching is mainly focussed in Year 1 and in one Year 3 class. In Year 1, teachers do not effectively use the information gained from assessing pupils to plan work which builds on their prior knowledge, skills and understanding and this results in pupils not being fully challenged. Consequently, they lose interest, become restless and teachers have to spend a disproportionate amount of time trying to gain their attention. The work for pupils in one Year 3 class is also sometimes not well matched to the pupils' needs and organisation and management of the lessons muddled.
- 23 The quality of the teaching for children under five is good overall and in a third of lessons it is very good. A good induction programme is in place which ensures that parents have the opportunity to meet with staff and a nursery nurse funded by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant is able to talk with some parents in their home language. This provision results in children quickly adapting to school life and following the day-to-day practices and procedures. Teachers and support staff create a stimulating learning environment and provide a range of appropriate activities which challenge pupils and keep their interest. The knowledge and expertise of all adults working in the Reception Unit are good and staff provide a consistent approach to teaching and learning based on a thorough understanding of how young children learn. Very high expectations are placed on children and they respond well to this. The pace of learning is good and children make good progress in their learning. Staff praise them well and this, together with structured opportunities provided to develop their independent skills, result in children often making very good progress with their personal and social development. Staff relate well to the children and manage their behaviour very well. The quality and use of day-to-day assessment is good and staff use their on-going knowledge of what children can do to plan appropriate work. Staff make satisfactory use of homework by extending the partnership with parents and encouraging positive attitudes to reading, in particular.
- 1 Although in over a quarter of lessons in Key Stage 1 the teaching is good or better, the quality of teaching in Year 1 is unsatisfactory and is having a detrimental effect on the progress which pupils make. In a significant minority of these lessons, the teachers' expectations of what pupils can do is too low and this, together with the unsatisfactory use of day-to-day assessment to plan work, results in pupils receiving tasks which are often undemanding. The methods used and organisation of learning is sometimes unsatisfactory and because the pace of learning is sometimes slow, time is not used effectively. When teaching is good, the pupils are stimulated to learn, for example, when the teachers enthusiastically read a story in a Year 1 and Year 2 class. Here the pace of learning is good and teachers use questioning effectively to extend the pupils' thinking and assess their understanding. Across the key stage, teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge although some indicate a lack of confidence in using the computers. Staff generally manage pupils satisfactorily.

- 1 Teaching is good in nearly a half of lessons in Years 3 and 4 and this positively contributes to the progress which pupils make. However, the quality of teaching in Year 3 is inconsistent with unsatisfactory teaching observed in some lessons in one of the classes. Although the teachers plan work together across the year groups in some cases this is inadequate to ensure consistency of provision. When teaching is unsatisfactory, the pupils are not working as hard as they could be and consequently not making the progress of which they are capable. Sometimes time is wasted, for example, when pupils prepare for an art lesson, and the pace of learning is slow. Also, there is a weakness in some lessons when teachers do not effectively use the knowledge they have of pupils' progress in the short-term to plan appropriate activities. When teaching is good, the large numbers of pupils in the classes are managed effectively, including those pupils identified with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Teachers use their sound subject knowledge to plan activities which meet curricular objectives and are appropriate for the high number of pupils with special educational needs in these year groups.
- 2 Across the school, teachers and support staff work well together. The support from the literacy support assistants is effective and well managed. Work is usually marked regularly but some teachers do not use this activity effectively to indicate how pupils could improve their work. Some good comments are made in the books in one class in Year 2 which indicates that the teacher had assessed what the pupils should do next and indicated this to the pupils. There is some inconsistency in the setting of homework apart from the expectation that pupils should read regularly at home. When homework is set it supports the pupils' learning in school, particularly in English and mathematics.
- 3 The quality of teaching in English is satisfactory overall although two unsatisfactory lessons were observed in Year 1 and there are elements of weakness in some other lessons. Teachers generally plan appropriate work but in a significant minority of lessons, they do not provide sufficient challenge for the higher-attainers, particularly in the sessions in the literacy hour when pupils are to work by themselves. Also, they do not have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can do and learn and this has a negative influence on the progress which pupils make. Teachers know their pupils well but do not systematically use the information gained through day-to-day assessment to plan future work. Also, there is an inconsistent approach to the correction of errors in pupils' writing across the curriculum. The methods and organisational strategies which teachers adopt are sound and most manage pupils satisfactorily. The time allocated to specific activities during the literacy hour is used satisfactorily and in the best lessons the pace of learning is good.
- 4 The school introduced the Numeracy Strategy at the start of the term and although mathematics' lessons now follow a given structure with mental calculation, a main teaching activity and a concluding session, the lessons observed did not always contain all of these elements. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is unsatisfactory because all lessons observed in Year 1 were unsatisfactory. In these lessons the work was inappropriately matched to the pupils' abilities and little learning took place. This reflects the teachers' unfamiliarity with the numeracy sessions and a lack of assessment which would provide information on what pupils already know and understand. The lessons in Year 2 were better and some good and very good teaching was observed. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall with some elements of good teaching. One teacher demonstrated good subject knowledge and expertise by setting appropriate tasks which challenged all pupils when they were collecting and recording data. In one unsatisfactory lesson observed, teaching was muddled, there was no mental calculation and pupils were not sure of what to do as the work set was too difficult for most.
- 5 In science, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but in Key Stage 2 it is sometimes good. Teachers generally have secure subject knowledge and use this effectively to plan lessons with clear learning objectives which they share with the pupils. However, in some lessons, higher-attainers are not fully challenged and consequently do not make the progress of which they are capable. An emphasis has been placed on practical work and teachers ensure that pupils learn correct scientific methods. Scientific vocabulary is well enhanced by most teachers, for example, in a Year 2 class where 'reversible' and 'irreversible' were repeated to ensure that all pupils knew the terms well. Teachers praise pupils well and encourage pupils to think for themselves and develop their own hypotheses.

- 6 The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages for information technology although not all teachers are confident in the subject. The best teaching is well planned and provides opportunities for pupils to use information technology in subjects such as art and geography. Learning objectives are clear and conveyed to the pupils either by explanation or demonstration. Although equipment has improved and more is planned, currently, teachers find it difficult to ensure that all pupils have sufficient access to computers, particularly in those classes with large numbers of pupils.
- 39 In religious education, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In the best lessons, such as one in Year 3 when pupils were preparing for a visit, the teacher's introduction was clear and questions were used effectively to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. Contrary to this, in another Year 3 lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory, the content of the lesson was not clearly thought out and the activities provided were not suitable. Most of the pupils spent the lesson colouring in pictures and not developing their knowledge and understanding of the Sikh religion.
- 7 At both key stages, the quality of teaching is satisfactory in art, design and technology and music. Too few lessons were observed to make an overall judgement on the teaching of geography. Teaching is satisfactory in history and physical education at Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2.
- 8 The quality of specialist teaching and support given to those pupils who learn English as an additional language is good and positively contributes to the progress which they make. Staff have high expectations and plan work which develops pupils knowledge, understanding and use of English. They interact well with the pupils and offer good role models in the way that they speak clearly and introduce a wide range of appropriate vocabulary. When not supported by specialist staff, the quality of teaching for these pupils is satisfactory.
- 9 All staff understand the stages of the Code of Practice, and take care to monitor the performance of pupils with special educational needs. They write the individual education plans for pupils on Stage 1 of the register. Teachers involve pupils with special educational needs in all classroom activities. Pupils are often withdrawn from classrooms to be given additional help either individually or in small groups. A special needs assistant and learning support assistants work with these pupils under the guidance of the special educational needs coordinator and class teacher, referring to the targets on the pupils' individual educational plans. In these sessions the pace of learning is often good as a result of the effective teaching. Overall, however, when pupils work in the mainstream classes unsupported by specialist staff, the quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory.

42 **The curriculum and assessment**

- 10 The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. At the time of the last inspection religious education was under represented in class work. Pupils receive their full entitlement to the curriculum, although the curriculum is often less relevant to the needs of the pupils in Year 1 than it is in the Reception Unit. The school has a policy for health education, which is taught, along with drugs and sex education, through science and circle time. Time allocations for each subject are sound, including the teaching of information technology. Sufficient time each day is allocated to the teaching of literacy and numeracy, although insufficient attention is given to the development of extended pieces of writing in English. Children in the Reception Unit receive a rich and interesting curriculum which prepares them well for work in Key Stage 1 and is particularly effective in developing their personal and social skills. Overall, the school's curriculum at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 satisfactorily promotes the intellectual, social, creative and physical development of the pupils and prepares them for the next stage in their education.

- 11 The quality of curriculum planning is also satisfactory overall with strengths in the Reception Unit and weaknesses in Year 1. Teachers effectively plan together across year groups, identifying, with the help of coordinators, clear learning targets to ensure that pupils progress. There is, however, a lack of continuity in some curriculum areas from Reception to Year 1, though planning is sound in Key Stage 2. Since the last inspection, schemes of work have been implemented for all subjects, even though many are adoptions or adaptations of the Qualifications and Curriculum Association (QCA) schemes of work. The schemes provide a satisfactory framework to help teachers with their planning and to ensure that all attainment areas in each subject are covered. Apart from some areas of Key Stage 1, skills, knowledge and understanding are systematically developed through the school.
- 12 The curriculum provides equality of access for all pupils, except sometimes for higher-attainers, who are not challenged to their full potential in some lessons. At the time of the last inspection, provision for pupils with special educational needs was judged to be sound, but there was concern that withdrawal from classes denied them access to important work in the classroom. The introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies has meant that pupils need only be withdrawn during the appropriate periods of these lessons, to cover the same ground at their own level. Planning and provision are sound and the requirements of the Code of Practice are met, with satisfactory individual pupils' plans in place. These plans are reviewed every term, with targets being updated or renewed as necessary.
- 13 Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. As at the last inspection, there is a considerable range of activities available, including sport, recorder clubs, country dancing, skipping, and an after school French club. The grounds of the school are used for environmental study and there are many visits to local places of interest, which enrich pupils' learning in history, geography and science.
- 14 Assessment of children in the Reception Unit is good and information gained from this is used effectively to plan challenging work and enhance pupils' progress. Assessment procedures in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are judged to be less satisfactory than at the time of the last inspection and are now unsatisfactory. Pupils are thoroughly tested when they enter the school and there is a comprehensive system of ongoing testing, for example in reading and spelling. However, there is little assessment undertaken for each pupil to provide teachers with sufficient information on which to plan their lessons in order to meet pupils' needs. The keeping of ongoing records is left up to individual teachers, and, apart from spelling and number tests, there is little information on which to base the necessary course of action for pupils, particularly the higher-attainers. Topics are assessed at the end of a planned piece of work, but overall, not in connection with each pupil. The school relies on teachers' knowledge of their pupils, rather than on formal assessment, to give a picture of each pupil's progress in each subject. Teachers' marking is regularly done, but contains little advice to pupils on ways of improving their work.
- 15 The results of assessments are also not sufficiently well analysed to highlight weaknesses. In particular, the school has not undertaken sufficiently rigorous analysis of test information to identify where changes of planning may need to be made in order to ensure that pupil' learning is systematically developed across year groups, particularly in Key Stage 1. Assessment data is not used effectively to raise standards of attainment. There is a general portfolio of pupils' work in English, mathematics and science which indicates the National Curriculum levels attained.

48 **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

- 16 The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall and has generally been maintained since the last inspection.

- 17 The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. It is promoted through the school's daily assemblies, which provide a time for quiet reflection and prayer. Pupils come into assemblies quietly, and quickly settle down to the music being played. Assemblies have a theme for the term, and are carefully planned; the current theme being 'Citizenship'. Once a week there is a celebration assembly where a range of achievements are recognised and a music assembly where hymns and songs are practised. The unsatisfactory behaviour of some pupils in Year 3 and Year 4, and the lack of sufficient adult supervision, sometimes detracts from the reflective atmosphere of assemblies. In religious education lessons, pupils learn about the main world religions and elements of their religious beliefs and celebrations, They reflect on their own experiences and other peoples' lives and beliefs, show respect for each other's beliefs, and are interested in the range of religious practice represented within the school. Well planned visits to churches and the Sikh Gudwara add to their spiritual development. There are no planned activities where pupils can experience the awe and wonder of the natural and man-made world, although this may arise in lessons. An extra-curricular environment club does encourage pupils to make careful observations of wild life and seasonal changes in the local area, and their reports show sensitivity and feeling of the wonder of nature.
- 18 The provision for pupils' moral development is good. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and treat each other with consideration. Assemblies and religious education lessons often include moral themes, which are discussed by pupils. Relationships in the school are good, and there are high expectations of pupils' behaviour. The strongest influence on pupils is the day-to-day dealings between staff and pupils. Pupils receive plenty of praise and encouragement in lessons, and good behaviour is recognised in celebration assemblies. The staff act as good role models in their dealings with each other. Classes discuss and formulate their own rules at the start of the school year.
- 19 The school makes satisfactory provision for social development. Social skills, such as sharing and participating in class activities, are promoted in the classes with youngest pupils, and this provides a firm basis for pupils' social development as they progress through the school. Pupils in Year 4 are given responsibilities; they all have the chance to be prefects whose duties involve general helping and tidying up around school, in the library and shared areas. Extra-curricular activities provide opportunities for Key Stage 2 pupils to participate in a range of clubs including country dancing, skipping, football, recorder and environmental studies. Pupils are encouraged to learn about, and contribute to, charities. Personal development and social skills are further promoted through the visits that pupils make and the visitors to the school. Letters of thanks, written by pupils, show their appreciation of visitors and of the places they have visited. Pupils are encouraged to take some responsibility for their own learning through regular weekly homework. However, the use of the library and information technology do not sufficiently address the development of independent learning.
- 20 The school makes good provision for the pupils' cultural development. An awareness of their own and other cultures, past and present, is well developed through art, music, history, geography, dance and religious education. Visits to local museums and churches and to St Albans enhance their knowledge and understanding of their own cultural heritage. A visit to the Sikh Gudwara, experiences of Indian dancers celebrating Diwali and an Afro-Caribbean storyteller during Book Week, enhance their knowledge and understanding of other cultures. Pupils listen to music and sing songs from different cultural traditions, and perform traditional dances in the country dance club. There are good multi-cultural resources, including a range of religious artefacts. However, the library does not contain many books representing the multi-cultural nature of British society today.

53 **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

- 21 The school is a caring community in which the supportive relationship between adults and pupils is strong. Although there are some weaknesses in behaviour management and welfare procedures, overall the school makes satisfactory provision to look after and support its pupils.

- 22 In order to support pupils in their learning, the school has satisfactory procedures for monitoring their academic and social progress. Teachers know the pupils very well and keep good track of personal development, starting in the Reception Unit where the induction and assessment of children starting school is good. Good records are kept of incidents and observations which reflect how well the pupil is developing and they are used well to provide guidance where required. Monitoring of academic progress is not always satisfactory, however. It starts well in the Reception Unit where the teachers' knowledge of each child's capabilities is used well to challenge them appropriately. In the rest of the school, however, in too many lessons it is apparent that work is not set at a level that matches the pupils' ability, which reflects the lack of accurate monitoring of what the pupil has already learnt. Children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are adequately monitored and this results in satisfactory support for these pupils.
- 23 The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory. Teachers mark the registers correctly and a computerised system is used to collate the data and provide statistics when required for checking a particular pupil. There is an appropriate system for categorising absence but days in excess of the 10-day maximum for holidays in term-time are authorised. Parents are contacted on the first day of absence if there has been no explanation, which is a rigorous security measure. However, some pupils who are late after the registers are closed go directly to their classrooms so that, for some time, their presence in school is not formally accounted for. When the school has concerns about a pupil's attendance and lateness it makes appropriate contact with parents and, if necessary, the education welfare service.
- 24 Overall the school procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are satisfactory and effective as evidenced by the generally good behaviour around the school. The policy outlines some general principles but does not reflect what happens within the school. In most classes the pupils discuss and set class rules, which are mainly positive; these are displayed in some rooms and pupils recognise and value them. Systems for reward and sanction are not consistent, however, with some teachers having clearly displayed reward systems for groups or individuals and others eschewing this on principle. Although there are few examples of poor behaviour, expectations of good behaviour are not always consistent, with pupils' attention being allowed to wander unremarked. An example was in a music practice assembly where many of the pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 were not fully involved for long periods. Pupils are recognised for good or improved work or behaviour in assemblies.
- 25 Overall, the school's procedures for child protection and health and safety are satisfactory but again there are inconsistencies. The school has adopted the local procedures for child protection but has divided the responsibilities between a designated teacher, who has received the training, and the headteacher and deputy headteacher to whom any concerns are reported and who follow these up. Thus, this does not support the need for a single designated teacher to avoid the risk of mix-ups inherent in split responsibilities. Staff are guided well by training, backed up by good documentation, and pupils receive advice on how to avoid or recognise risks to themselves. Work with outside agencies is generally satisfactory although the school feels that sometimes liaison links are not always kept up to date.
- 26 Pupils who are ill or who have accidents at school are well looked after by staff, many of whom have first aid training. Health and Safety procedures are good and thorough risk assessments are carried out and reported to governors. Staff are made aware of any risks associated with activities and the preventative measures to take. Equipment is tested regularly as appropriate.
- 59 **Partnership with parents and the community**
- 27 The school has a sound partnership with its parents and the community. Parents are provided with much useful information about the school and many are involved in a variety of ways in their child's education. Before the inspection, parents expressed their satisfaction about this aspect of the school.

- 28 The information issued by the school to parents is good. The prospectus is a lengthy document that gives a wealth of useful information as well as meeting all statutory requirements. The governors' annual report to parents also meets requirements. The school has issued the required Home-School agreement, which has been thoughtfully put together. Parents are kept abreast of the latest news in regular newsletters from school and are advised both on what their child will be learning and how to help. Pupil reports contain all the required information on each subject. Comments on the pupil's attainment, although quite detailed for English, maths and science, tend to be rather bland rather than specific to individuals. Apart from the end of Year 2, they lack information on how a pupil is progressing compared to national expectation and targets set by staff on how to improve. Comments on personal development are good. Parents are satisfied with the arrangements the school makes for talking to them about their child's progress.
- 29 The part played by parents in the children's education is satisfactory. Many hear their child read at home and comment in the reading record; this encourages the pupil and raises the worth of reading in their mind. There is good liaison with parents of children under five in starting them on their learning path. Although concerns may initially be discussed with parents of pupils with special educational needs, they are not involved in the drafting of the individual education plan. Parents may make enquiries about their children's progress and staff take opportunities at parents' evenings to report fully on progress and the reviews of individual education plans. A few parents give valued help around the school and educational trips benefit from the increased adult supervision that volunteers give. The Parent Teacher Association works hard to raise money for resources like computers and playground equipment and to organise well attended events like the Christmas Fair. The school actively fosters and seeks to facilitate and guide parental support.
- 30 The school also has links with the local community that contribute satisfactorily to pupils' learning and development. Arrangements with local Christian churches and the Sikh community broaden experiences in religious education. Personal and social development is enhanced by visits from the police, nurses, firemen and the mayor. Pupils use the surrounding area well as a resource for geography, history and science. Local businesses are generous in supporting the Parent Teacher Association and pupils make visits, for example to a farm and a recycling depot, to gain a wider perspective of the world of work. Their understanding of the problems and needs of the wider community is developed by collections for such charities as mental health and Christmas presents for children in Eastern Europe.

63 **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

63 **Leadership and management**

- 31 At the time of the last inspection, the headteacher was described as having a sound strategic overview of the school and providing strong and positive leadership. This has been maintained and currently the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The display in the school's reception area entitled 'All individuals working as a team' clearly indicates the school's philosophy and underlies the structure for leadership and management. The headteacher works closely with her staff and has created a strong mutually supportive atmosphere. Nearly half of the full-time teaching staff have worked in the school for 15 years or more and, together with other staff, this has resulted in a group of people with shared aims and values. They have created a caring environment where pupils feel safe and secure but overall the ethos of the school remains only satisfactory as the stated aim of raising standards has not been realised. There is no formal senior management team although the deputy headteacher and headteacher meet regularly and each area of the curriculum has an identified co-ordinator. All co-ordinators have clear job descriptions and are aware of their roles and responsibilities. Their role in monitoring and evaluating, however, is still at an early stage of development. One of the school's current priorities is the need to support those co-ordinators new to the post.
- 32 The two special educational needs coordinators, one in Key Stage 1 and the other in Key Stage 2, work well with staff and provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. They write the individual educational plans for all pupils at Stage 2 and beyond on the register and regularly review pupils' progress. The special educational needs governor takes a strong interest in her role and spends time in school to support individual pupils, under the guidance of the class teacher. She keeps up to date with information and circulars from the local education authority and meets regularly with the coordinators. Statutory requirements for pupils

with a statement of special educational needs are met.

- 33 The management of the school is enhanced by the work of its governors, many of whom have a close and long connection with the school and the community it serves. Many governors have specified areas of interest and develop their expertise in these areas by attendance on courses. There is also a programme of visits to the school when governors speak with staff and pupils and observe teaching and learning, for example during numeracy lessons. Members of the governing body are aware of current issues, such as the number of pupils in each class, and play an active part in the leadership of the school. An effective committee structure is in place and groups meet regularly in addition to full governing body meetings. Governors are well informed and have a clear overview of the work of the school. They receive a draft of the school development plan which is a summation of discussions where priorities have been identified. Management, curriculum and financial decisions are linked, for example when it was decided to have larger classes of pupils of the same age with additional non-teaching support instead of classes containing pupils of mixed year groups. The school has identified appropriate priorities to improve standards and there is a sound educational direction for the school outlined in the school development plan.
- 34 The governors monitor the work of the school through their visits and through the analysis and discussion of baseline assessment results and the end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum test results. The headteacher has a comprehensive and thorough system of monitoring teaching and the curriculum through commenting on planning, observing lessons, looking at pupils' work and meeting pupils each year for a formal review of their progress and discussion about their work and analysing the results of tests and assessment. Whilst some of this work has resulted in the development of strategies which have improved performance, it has been unsatisfactory in improving the quality of teaching in Year 1 and the consistency of teaching in Year 3.
- 35 Aims, values and policies are satisfactorily implemented. The headteacher and staff meet frequently to discuss policy and planning and this has proved effective in responding to the issues raised in the last inspection. Satisfactory progress has also been made in developing and implementing whole school procedures on agreed developments, such as changing from a topic approach to a curriculum with specific subject areas identified. This has resulted in a more structured approach to the teaching of religious education and a clearer definition between religious education and acts of collective worship. Also, there is a clearer focus for teaching a broad and balanced curriculum with an appropriate amount of time allocated to each subject. Strategies to implement the teaching of literacy and numeracy lessons are satisfactory but, as yet, have not resulted in the raising of standards. Staff have developed a clearer system for planning and in Year 2 and Year 4 are effective in reviewing the curriculum. Teachers' knowledge and expertise has been developed through a regular system of appraisal although a minority of teachers still lack confidence when teaching information technology. Overall, the school is in a satisfactory position to make further improvements as long as the issues relating to the improvement of teaching which have been identified by the headteacher are quickly resolved. The school meets statutory requirements.

68 **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

- 36 There has been little change in teaching staff since the last inspection, so the staffing consists of a high proportion of long-serving teachers. Although the overall pupil-teacher ratio is broadly average, there are large classes of over 35 pupils in Key Stage 2. The provision of well experienced classroom support staff does alleviate this situation in literacy and numeracy lessons. Appropriate arrangements are in place for the induction of new staff when appointed, and the appraisal procedures are used to identify suitable training for established staff. In response to the last inspection report, appropriate professional development has been provided to improve teachers' own subject knowledge, and any teachers taking on new subject co-ordination roles have attended relevant courses to enable them to accept their changed responsibilities.
- 37 Although the special educational needs coordinators have full classroom commitments, they have non-contact time for their responsibilities. A special needs assistant and two learning support assistants are well used, and prepare work for pupils linked to their individual targets. They give regular support to pupils in lessons and there is a small room in the school where they can work with pupils withdrawn from classes. There are good resources for special educational needs. The special needs assistant is proficient in the use of information technology, and uses programs to support pupils with special educational needs.

38 As at the time of the last inspection, the learning environment is attractive. The building is now clean and well maintained. Shared areas are welcoming and used well to celebrate pupils' work. However, the problems inherent in the building remain, resulting in cramped accommodation for Key Stage 2 pupils and storage problems throughout the school. As a result, practical lessons such as art and design and technology have to be more tightly controlled than might be expected for Key Stage 2 pupils because the lack of space makes free movement difficult. Storage of shared items has necessarily to be located in the hall, and pupils are restricted in what they are allowed to bring from home. The attractive external environment still enhances the school, as does the well maintained swimming pool.

39 Adequate resources for learning have been maintained since the last inspection and shortages in science, history and art have been redressed. The only curriculum area now adversely affected by resource provision is information technology, where software is of good quality but cannot be reliably used on computers which are now ageing and are less powerful than those desirable for the demands of the current information technology curriculum. Good provision for under-fives and music have been maintained and there have been improvements in resources for religious education, mathematics and geography. The library provides a stimulating and attractive environment to support learning across the curriculum, but is rarely used by older pupils for independent study.

72 **The efficiency of the school**

40 Overall, the financial resources of the school are managed well; this is in line with the findings of the last inspection. The governing body oversees financial matters effectively, delegating certain responsibilities appropriately to the head teacher. The meetings of the finance and personnel subgroup of the governing body are carefully recorded and written up, with appropriate recommendations made. Future staffing changes and the school's needs are discussed, in order to make best use of the financial resources available. Grants for reducing class sizes and for employing literacy and language support staff are being used effectively. Educational developments, such as the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, have been well resourced and supported. The school has good financial planning, with areas of development costed and built into the school development plan. Although the school development plan spans a three year period, it is only costed carefully for one year ahead. The maintenance of staffing levels, along with the need to finance initiatives such as literacy and numeracy, leaves little surplus to clearly budget for future developments beyond the year ahead. The budget shows a carry forward of less than four per cent, and reflects the prudent management of the budget available. Funds allocated for pupils with special educational needs are properly targeted and efficiently used.

41 The teaching staff are deployed and used effectively; in some curriculum areas teachers use their specialist knowledge and experience to good effect, such as in gymnastics, dance, music and religious education. Subject leaders are becoming more involved in monitoring their subjects, to ensure that effective learning takes place. The support assistants in Key Stages 1 and 2 are used well and give good support to pupils with special educational needs, and to pupils receiving literacy support. Good use is also made of the expertise of staff funded by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant. They are involved in planning and use their time effectively, often withdrawing small groups of pupils for support. The learning resources and accommodation are generally used effectively to promote pupils' learning. The day-to-day running of the school is smooth and effective due to the good working relationship between the office and other staff in the school. The accommodation is used to the full, and the good use of display and interest areas around the school enhance the learning environment.

42 The routine financial controls and administration of the budget are good. The school's 1998 audit report made several recommendations which have all been fully carried out.

43 The school receives an average budget per pupil. Given the below average level of attainment on entry, the pupils' satisfactory behaviour and attitudes to learning, their satisfactory progress and the satisfactory improvement made since the last inspection, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

76 AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

44 All children start school part-time at the beginning of the academic year following their fourth birthday. From the first half term of the academic year, children whose fifth birthday occurs during the autumn term become full-time. The rest of the children become full-time at the start of the term in which they are five. Information gained from the children's records and observations indicate that children's attainment on entry to school is below average with few children attaining the high levels on the Bedfordshire baseline assessments. The current year, however, have slightly higher levels than last year and does not yet include any pupils identified as having special educational needs. By the age of five, most children have made good progress and reach the expected standards in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative, physical, personal and social development. This judgement is made according to the criteria established by national guidance. In some lessons, progress is very good, particularly in the area of children's personal and social development.

__77 Personal and social development

45 Teaching in this area is very good. Children are settled into the Reception Unit thoughtfully and successfully. By the age of five most children meet the expected standards in their personal and social development and a significant number exceed it. Relationships are very good and staff are effective in creating a warm, caring and stimulating learning environment in which children develop good attitudes to learning and become self-confident. The creation of small pastoral groups, each with an attached adult, is a significant factor in this. Progress is often very good and children quickly understand routines and the structure of the day. They show growing independence and initiative when presented with choices and with increasing confidence follow instructions. For instance, when the bell rings for them to have their milk, they organise themselves into the appropriate group with an identified child who distributes the milk. They then sit quietly, discuss what they have been doing and clear away sensibly without any problems. Although teachers have an over view of this activity, the children organise the session themselves. In all activities they listen well and when given a task they settle quickly. They are keen to discuss their work with others and can confidently describe what they have been doing. Children are well behaved and form good relationships with each other and with adults. They are appropriately learning to share equipment and to take turns.

__78 Language and literacy

46 Teaching in this area of the curriculum is good and by the age of five, the majority of children reach the levels appropriate for their age. They make good progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Children listen attentively to stories and songs and, for example, when listening to the telling of the 'Three Little Pigs' are eager to complete the lines spoken by the wolf. They laugh with enjoyment and display a good understanding of the characters and story. The skilful questioning by teachers and support staff encourages pupils to respond in a clear, confident manner when speaking about their work. A specialist nursery nurse funded by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant is used well to give the children for whom English is an additional language confidence to try harder. Children handle books carefully and know that print carries meaning. Higher-attaining children can point to the author on the front page of a book. Most children confidently follow and recall the story by looking at the pictures and enjoy sharing books with adults. Higher-attaining pupils identify simple common words and are beginning to develop basic pre-reading strategies. Most children write their own name and copy letters in recognisable script. A range of activities such as imaginative play in the 'hospital' and 'vegetable shop' encourages the use of writing in every-day situations. Also, children use their work in design and technology to stimulate their writing, for example, when they developed their own 'plays' after making hand puppets. As the children get older, staff change the curriculum to meet their needs and introduce a more formal session based on the Literacy Strategy.

79 **Mathematics**

- 47 Teaching in this area of learning is good and makes a positive contribution to the good progress which children make. By the time they are five, children reach standards which are in line with those expected for that age nationally. They count numbers to 10 orally and indicate an understanding of number by placing objects in number sets. Higher-attaining children correctly indicate half of ten on their fingers and know that $3 + 3 = 6$ and $5 + 1 = 6$. Teachers, using correct terminology, appropriately introduce children to mathematical language. This results in children explaining their answers well and understanding that adding one more makes a number bigger. They successfully count forward and backward to 10 using a number stick. Most children identify a circle, square and triangle and copy a shape using cubes. Teachers use every opportunity to reinforce pupils' knowledge and understanding of number through repetition of the date, days of the week and the number present in the class.

80 **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

- 48 Teaching to promote children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good. Children make good progress and reach the expected standard by the time they are five. They understand the different types of clothing needed in summer and winter and draw pictures under the appropriate headings of warm, dry and cold. They identify 'conkers', cones and fallen leaves and associate these with the autumn. When studying the feeding of birds, children identify that the ground is hard in the winter and consequently birds find it more difficult to get their own food. Very good opportunities are provided for children to understand how things change over time. A very good lesson which focussed on washing clothes in the past, gave the children opportunities to look at pictures and artefacts. It resulted in them understanding changes in technology and developing a good sense of chronology. Effective opportunities are provided for the children to assemble and disassemble simple models using a variety of construction kits to try out ideas. They enjoy baking and successfully use clay to make divas when celebrating Diwali. Pupils regularly use the computer and can independently work through a simple program.

81 **Creative development**

- 49 Children's creative development is successfully fostered through an appropriate range of activities and they reach the expected standard by the age of five. Teaching is good and particularly effective in getting good responses from children in relation to what they see, hear, feel and imagine. Many drawing and painting opportunities are provided and children use a variety of techniques, for example, when creating a picture of a bonfire and fireworks. The role-play areas provide stimulating opportunities for the children to play co-operatively and to develop their understanding of the world around them. In addition, they develop their imagination and extend their language skills by re-enacting familiar situations or making up their own. Children are encouraged to sing songs from memory with appropriate actions and with control of dynamics.

82 **Physical development**

- 50 Teaching to promote pupils' physical development is good and results in pupils making good progress. By the age of five they reach standards appropriate for their age as a result of regular sessions of physical education, play outside and a range of opportunities to develop control and manipulation of objects and materials. Their use of small objects such as pencils, construction apparatus, tools, scissors and paint brushes, is satisfactory and they handle them safely and appropriately. They have many opportunities to cut, stick and join objects together, for example, when making movable figures using split pins. In one physical education lesson, the children made very good progress in response to music when performing a firework dance. This was a direct result of the high expectations of the teacher. Children enjoy using the outdoor play area and develop control, co-ordination and awareness of space through the use of apparatus, equipment and ride-on toys. Some children engage in role-play as petrol pump attendants and customers thereby developing their social skills and use of language.

51 Overall, the quality of teaching in the Reception Unit is good in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, personal, social, creative and physical development, with some very good aspects. Very good teaching is characterised by good subject expertise, high expectations and the systematic development of children's attitudes to learning. All staff work well together and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Teachers and nursery trained staff have secure understanding of how young children learn and provide a rich learning environment in which the children can develop. Good relationships are established between adults and children. Effective planning which is clear and detailed takes into consideration the national guidance for children under five and the National Curriculum when appropriate. Activities are well organised and resourced, showing very good preparation to stimulate and motivate the children to try harder. Staff have high expectations of work and behaviour and provide a calm, secure and purposeful learning environment in which the children make good progress. The pace of the lessons is good and clear challenges are set.

52 A good induction programme is in place which encourages parents to become involved in their child's learning. Sessions are provided for parents and children to come to the school before entry and home visits are offered. Assessments take place soon after the children start school and these help to inform the statistics for measuring pupils' achievement in the school. Clear records are kept to monitor the progress which children make and to assess what they need to do next. Staff are reflective and keen to develop their practice. This has resulted in an improvement in provision since the last inspection.

85 **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

85 **English**

53 In the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1, attainment was well below the national average in reading and below average in writing when compared with all schools nationally, and also when compared to schools with pupils of similar social and economic backgrounds. These results show a fall in standards since the last inspection and from the previous three years when pupils attained standards close to the national average. These results are a reflection of a particular year group which currently contains 33 per cent of pupils identified as having special educational needs. Most of these pupils experience some level of difficulty with reading and writing. There is no significant difference between the attainment of girls and boys.

54 Currently, the standards of pupils in Year 2 are slightly below that expected for pupils of the same age nationally. Although the number of pupils working at a level appropriate for their age is broadly average there are few pupils working at the higher levels. Standards of attainment for pupils in Year 4 are below those for pupils of a similar age nationally. Thirty-two per cent of pupils in this year are identified as having special educational needs and there are few pupils working at above average levels.

55 Standards in speaking and listening are broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1. By the time pupils are seven the majority begins to show confidence in speaking and most explain their ideas using a satisfactory range of vocabulary. Higher-attaining pupils sometimes demonstrate good standards, for example when talking about their reading books. In the current Year 4, most pupils listen attentively and display by their answers and actions that they have understood. Most are responsive to the opinions of others and express their own opinions clearly and fluently. However, a significant minority of pupils with special educational needs has a restricted range of vocabulary and these pupils are unable to adapt what they say to the needs of the listener.

- 56 Progress in speaking and listening across Key Stage 1 and in Year 3 and Year 4 is satisfactory overall. In a Year 1 story time lesson, a teacher, who is funded by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant, stimulates the interest of the pupils well when reading Handa's Surprise. This motivates them to respond to her questioning well and they put forward their views confidently. Opportunities are planned to encourage pupils to increase their vocabulary and use of spoken English during the literacy hour, for example, in a Year 2 class when pupils are asked to predict what will happen next in the story 'Suddenly'. In one Year 3 class, pupils are keen to answer questions about planning a party and use information gained in previous lessons to support their answers. Support assistants make an effective contribution to the progress of lower-attaining pupils, as in a Year 4 class. They clarify questions, explain new vocabulary and encourage pupils to offer answers.
- 57 There has been a decline in standards since the last inspection when reading was identified as being a strength of the school. Standards are now slightly below average at the end of Key Stage 1. Although the number of pupils reading at the level appropriate for their age (Level 2) reflects the national picture there is a lower than average percentage reading at the higher level. Also, there is a significant number of pupils reading at the lower end of Level 2. Most pupils enjoy reading and state clearly why they like a particular book or story. They read a range of texts and can distinguish between poetry, fiction and non-fiction. Average and higher-attainers use phonic skills successfully to work out unfamiliar words and lower-attainers recognise some words in familiar text and know initial letter sounds. In the current Year 4, standards are below average due, in the main, to the high number of pupils with special needs in this year group, many of whom have difficulties with reading. Most pupils quickly identify the author and title of a book and the higher-attainers use the context page and index to find information. Following a lesson on instructional texts, most pupils are able to identify the imperative verbs and amend the text to improve clarity of reading.
- 58 Progress in reading across Key Stage 1 and in Year 3 and Year 4 is satisfactory overall although in some cases the higher-attaining pupils are not fully challenged and consequently do not make the progress of which they are capable. Also, the school's systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress and attainment in reading, particularly in the guided reading sessions of the literacy hour, are unsatisfactory. This means that teachers do not have sufficient information on which to plan their lessons and to ensure that all pupils make appropriate progress. Year 1 pupils generally make satisfactory progress in learning letter sounds and this is having a positive impact on progress. Pupils sometimes make good progress in lessons for example in one Year 2 class when they are encouraged to use the punctuation in the text in order to develop the expression in their reading. All pupils take their reading books home, but a significant minority do not read regularly to an adult.
- 59 There has been a decline in standards since the last inspection when writing was identified as being a strength of the school. Standards are now below average at the end of Key Stage 1. Although approximately 80 per cent of pupils are working at the level appropriate for their age (Level 2), a significant number of these are not attaining the higher levels within this overall band. Pupils who do attain the expected standard sequence their ideas appropriately and use simple punctuation correctly. Higher-attainers write more imaginatively, for example, about dinosaurs and use a good range of vocabulary. Standards in the current Year 4 are also below average, mainly due to the high number of pupils in this year group with special educational needs. Pupils write for a range of different purposes, and higher-attaining pupils show a good understanding of the features of journalistic writing and writing dialogue for a play script. Many pupils begin to use a wider range of vocabulary and vary simple sentence structures, but few use complex sentences. Most spell common words accurately but a significant minority of pupils at both key stages attempt to spell more difficult words in a way which indicates a lack in understanding of phonetics. Pupils use joined script from an early age and this results in them attaining at least satisfactory standards in handwriting by the time they leave school.

- 60 Overall, progress in writing across Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory for the majority of pupils but the recent developments in the curriculum through the introduction of the literacy hour have not had sufficient time to raise standards to the national average. Also, in some classes higher-attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently and consequently do not make the progress of which they are capable. The school has not fully addressed the need to ensure that all pupils have sufficient opportunity to write extended pieces of work both in English lessons and in other areas of the curriculum and consequently pupils have insufficient time to develop their skills. Also, the school does not systematically assess and record pupils' progress in relation to the quality of writing and thus teachers do not have sufficient information on which to plan work of an appropriate level. Pupils across the school are taught to understand the features of different types of writing and make satisfactory progress in developing punctuation and handwriting skills.
- 61 Pupils with special educational needs generally make satisfactory progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans and this is enhanced by the additional support provided. Those pupils who have been identified to work with the additional learning support assistants in some sessions within the literacy hour make good progress in these sessions, but are not always able to transfer the skills acquired to the mainstream class when they are working independently. The emphasis on phonics across the key stage is beginning to have a positive influence on pupils' progress. Overall, pupils who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in line with their levels of English acquisition when working in class without additional support. However, when support is available, the work is well structured to meet their needs and consequently this results in them making good progress with the development and use of vocabulary.
- 62 Pupils' response to lessons is often good at Key Stage 1, particularly in Year 2 where pupils display good attitudes to learning. They join in enthusiastically in one class when the teacher reads the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears and laugh at the funny descriptions. Good relationships and behaviour are evident and pupils work co-operatively, often sharing their ideas and helping each other. In Year 1, however, pupils' responses are mainly satisfactory apart from when a teacher who is funded from the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant is in the lesson and works well with the pupils to raise their levels of interest and motivation. In one lesson in Year 1, pupils' responses were unsatisfactory due, in the main, to inappropriate work being set. At Key stage 2, pupils' responses overall are satisfactory although pupils in one Year 3 class display good attitudes to learning. In this class behaviour is good and pupils listen well and concentrate. They make links in their learning by remembering learning gained in previous lessons and use this to eagerly answer questions. Although there are pupils in the other classes at Key Stage 2 who display good responses in lessons, there is a majority of pupils who lack sustained concentration and find difficulty in working independently. A small minority of pupils who are identified as having emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties sometimes disrupt the work of others by demonstrating restless and silly behaviour.
- 63 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall although two unsatisfactory lessons were observed in Year 1 and there are elements of weakness in some other lessons. At both key stages, teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge and generally use this effectively to plan appropriate work. However, in a significant minority of lessons, they do not provide sufficiently challenging work for the higher-attainers, particularly in the sessions in the literacy hour when pupils are to work independently. Also, they do not have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can do and learn and this has a negative influence on the progress which pupils make. An example of this was seen in a Year 1 class when some pupils completed the task set and were then asked to colour the pictures. A more suitable activity would be based on the pupils developing their reading and writing skills further. The methods and organisational strategies which teachers adopt are sound and most manage pupils satisfactorily. The time allocated to specific activities during the literacy hour is used appropriately and in the best lessons the pace of learning is good. An appropriate range of resources is used to stimulate the interest of the pupils, including those with special educational needs. Teachers know their pupils well but do not systematically use the information gained through day-to-day assessment to plan future work. Also, there is an inconsistent approach to the correction of technical errors in pupils' writing across the curriculum. Regular reading homework is set and this enhances the progress which pupils make, particularly when pupils read regularly to adults.

64 Overall, the subject is satisfactorily managed by both the co-ordinator and the headteacher. Test results are analysed carefully to identify areas for improvement and to plot pupils' progress across the school and this has resulted in the school identifying the need to improve reading, writing, and spelling. Targets are set for all pupils and take into account the needs of those pupils identified on the special educational needs register. Resources are satisfactory, well organised, accessible and in good condition. Pupils know how to use the library to gain information from non-fiction text and to choose a reading book at an appropriate level.

97 **Mathematics**

65 In the previous report, standards of attainment were judged to meet national expectations in both key stages, with some higher attainment in Key Stage 2. In 1999, results from national testing in mathematics showed that pupils' performance was well below the national average at Key Stage 1. Evidence from the years 1996-1998 National Curriculum tests show results to be close to the national average. The lower 1999 results can be attributed to the significant number of pupils, thirty per cent, with special educational needs in Year 2 at the time. There is no significant difference between the attainment of girls and boys. Inspection evidence shows that by the end of Key Stage 1, and by the time pupils leave the school in Year 4, most pupils are on course to attain levels which are in line with the national average, showing that the standards of the previous inspection have largely been maintained. However, the level of high attainment, previously reported in Key Stage 2, is not likely to be maintained due to the significant number of pupils with special educational needs in Years 3 and 4. Standards of numeracy are satisfactory by the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave the school in Year 4.

66 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are confident with identifying numbers which add up to ten and can easily count to a hundred and beyond. They understand odd and even numbers and are beginning to use standard measures; they readily identify two and three dimensional shapes with an understanding of faces, edges and corners. Lessons observed in Key Stage 1 show pupils starting to develop their skills of mental calculation, by holding up numbers in response to questions. They can recognise coins and place them in order of value. In Year 2 they understand the vocabulary related to subtraction, and are beginning to look at patterns in number when taking the same number away from different multiples of ten.

67 In Key Stage 2, by Year 4, pupils understand numbers to a thousand and beyond. They are unsure about decimal notation, but can recognise it when working with money. They have a good knowledge of standard measures and can select appropriate measures, for example, when measuring the length of a room or the thickness of a book. Some correctly use the terms perimeter and area. They have a satisfactory grasp of multiplication tables and mental recall of addition and subtraction up to twenty; they can record information, construct bar charts and interpret them. They understand reflective symmetry and can show the lines of symmetry on regular two dimensional shapes. Pupils are developing strategies for solving problems and are able to explain them.

68 The inspection found that pupils in both key stages, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress in mathematics although this progress is not consistent. Good progress is made in lessons which are well planned and organised, with pace and high expectations. In Year 2, pupils made good progress in subtracting single digit numbers from two and three digit numbers when activities provided challenge for all abilities. In Year 4 good progress was made in collecting information and constructing bar charts when pupils discussed the work using the correct vocabulary, a clear explanation of the tasks was given and work was appropriately set for different ability groups. Unsatisfactory progress was made in Year 1 where pupils were identifying coins and trying to understand their equivalent values. The pace of the lessons was slow and dictated by the pupils; teachers had low expectations and tasks were not sufficiently challenging, often being completed quickly, without a clear indication of what pupils were to do next. In a Year 3 lesson, when previous learning had not been taken into account, most pupils were unable to grasp the concept of equivalent fractions and little progress was made.

- 69 Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are mostly satisfactory. Where there is sufficient pace and variety pupils enjoy the lessons and maintain interest and enthusiasm. When the introduction to lessons does not allow sufficient involvement of pupils, or when tasks are not matched to the abilities of pupils, there is some restlessness and unsatisfactory behaviour. Pupils work well together in groups or in pairs, supporting each other, allowing the teacher to focus attention on a particular group.
- 70 The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is unsatisfactory overall, with all lessons in Year 1 judged to be unsatisfactory. The lessons in Year 2 were better, with one of them judged to be very good, another one good and the remaining one satisfactory. In the unsatisfactory lessons the work was inappropriately matched for many pupils. Teachers had low expectations, and the more able pupils were not sufficiently challenged. In a lesson where pupils had to recognise coins and begin to understand their equivalent values, the higher-attaining pupils could already identify the coins and order their values, yet spent time drawing around them and colouring them in. In a very good lesson where pupils were looking for patterns in number, the groups were challenged. They had to decide whether the given answers to subtraction sums, containing hundreds, tens and units, were correct and they had to identify the sums with the wrong answers, give the correct answer and check using inverse operations. Lower-attaining pupils worked with numbers up to ten in a more practical way. All pupils in this lesson were making good progress.
- 71 The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall. Two lessons were judged to be good, one satisfactory and one unsatisfactory. In the good lessons teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge and methods of teaching. In a lesson where pupils were collecting and recording data, the introduction was well planned with pertinent questions, using the correct vocabulary and involving the pupils in a practical way to collect data for recording. The tasks set were appropriate for the range of ability. In the unsatisfactory lesson organisation was muddled. There was no mental calculation, and pupils were kept waiting whilst tasks were being explained to all groups. Once in their groups, pupils were still unsure of what to do as tasks were too difficult for most. The final session did not relate to the learning objective.
- 72 The school has recently introduced the Numeracy Strategy, and mathematics' lessons now follow a structure with mental calculation, a main teaching activity and a plenary session at the end. The lessons observed did not always contain all of these elements. Mental calculation was often slow, and in one lesson forgotten; methods are not always used to ensure that all pupils can attempt to answer questions quickly rather than just those who know the answers. Plenary sessions were not always linked to the learning objectives and the extent to which pupils had achieved them. In the good lessons observed, pupils were involved in the introduction of the main teaching points, through listening to careful explanations and responding to open questions with thought-out answers.
- 73 The school provides a satisfactory broad and balanced curriculum in mathematics, incorporating the programmes of study for both key stages. Mathematics is being used in other areas of the curriculum, in science and in geography, where pupils collect and record information on bar charts. Information technology is being used in some lessons to aid pupils' learning and understanding in mathematics. Assessment overall is unsatisfactory; lesson plans do not list opportunities for assessment. The recording of pupils' progress against the learning objectives of the Numeracy Strategy needs to be developed. Work can then be matched to the learning needs of individual pupils and more consistent progress made. An analysis is being made of the results from national and other testing carried out by the school, to identify strengths and weaknesses. Future planning takes account of these assessments. More thought needs to be given to the information passed on to new classes at the end of the year, so that starting points for each pupil are clearly identified.

74 The mathematics' coordinator gives good support throughout the school. The mathematics' policy has not been revised to take account of the Numeracy Strategy; the numeracy framework provides the scheme of work. Careful thought has been given to the introduction of the numeracy hour; training has been undertaken by all staff and teachers' planning and pupils' work are monitored. The head teacher has observed all teachers in a numeracy lesson, and a list of comments, including strengths and weaknesses, made. Points from these observations will be the focus of future monitoring. Materials from a published scheme of work, along with others downloaded from the Internet, have been introduced. There are good resources for teaching mathematics which are classroom based; many new resources have recently been added for the numeracy hour. Most classrooms have a mathematics' table or corner, and displays of work also add interest to the classroom environment. All National Curriculum requirements are fully met.

107 Science

75 By the time pupils leave the school, they are achieving standards in line with those expected nationally. In the 1999 standardised tests at Key Stage 1, teacher assessments show that pupils' results were below the national average overall. From observation of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work, inspectors judge that the level of attainment at the end of Year 4 is well in line with that of national expectation for the age group. The current emphasis, which was missing at the time of the last inspection, on experimental and investigative work is resulting in pupils having a clearer understanding of the scientific principles behind their investigative work, helping them to raise standards of attainment. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are now attaining appropriately in experimental and investigative science, materials and their properties, life and living things and physical processes. There is no significant difference between the attainment of girls and boys.

76 Progress across the school is satisfactory, though it is more rapid in Years 3 and 4 than in Key Stage 1. The skills of investigation and recording are systematically taught throughout the school. Pupils are confident in hypothesising, predicting their results and carrying out 'fair tests'. Pupils in Year 1 learn about the human body and discover how it works, its senses and features. Pupils in Year 2 experiment to see what changes come about when different materials are heated and learn to predict whether a change is reversible or irreversible, using ice, chocolate teddy bears and toasting bread. In Year 3, pupils can tell the purpose of a Newton meter and how friction works, as well as investigating with the growth of seeds. They explore circuits and know that there has to be a circuit for electricity to flow. They begin to make scientific explanations for their observations. A Year 3 class was observed planning a test to compare the absorbency of different kinds of paper, making comparisons between the materials and drawing conclusions from it while ensuring that it was a 'fair test'. Pupils also study electricity, push/pull forces and balanced forces. They learn more about the workings of the human body, investigate plant and pond life. In Year 4, pupils study the water cycle and test materials for permeability. Their ability to set up tests for themselves and conduct them fairly, recording the data accurately all develop well, as in a class where pupils were describing and grouping materials according to the degree of their quality of permeability. Throughout the school, pupils accurately record their results and make hypothesis on the light of their experiences. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress through extra help from learning support assistants and differentiated work provided for them by teachers.

77 Pupils enjoy science lessons and look forward to them. Their attitudes to learning are good. They behave well, are interested and enthusiastic and readily discuss their work and findings. They contribute effectively to class discussions and work well collaboratively in groups when doing investigative work. Year 3 pupils using water to test permeability of materials were sensible and careful to ensure that no water was spilt or that measuring was careless. Pupils work well during experimental activities, behaving thoughtfully even when not directly supervised. They show respect for materials and equipment and clear away efficiently after their practical sessions.

78 Teaching across the school is satisfactory overall, but in Key Stage 2 it is sometimes good. Lessons are generally well planned, with clear objectives and sound strategies and methods. Pupils are in no doubt about what they are to learn and do. Teachers generally have secure subject knowledge and understanding and, in Years 3 and 4, expectations are appropriately high. All lessons now have an emphasis on practical work and teachers ensure that pupils learn correct scientific methods. Scientific vocabulary is well enhanced by most teachers, for example, in a Year 2 class where 'reversible' and 'irreversible' were repeated constantly until the teachers was sure that all pupils knew the terms well. Pupils are given good opportunities to carry out investigative work and the best teaching is when pupils are supervised to plan their own activities, through trial and error. More challenging work is rarely set for high attaining pupils. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and are not disappointed. Instructions are given clearly and carefully and question and answer techniques are often used with great success to promote thought and understanding. In one very good Year 2 lesson, the teacher used the toasting of bread to show the effect of heat on different materials with humour and common sense, which communicated themselves to the pupils and gave the lesson an individual and enthusiastic flavour. Teachers praise pupils well and some refuse to over direct lessons, forcing pupils to think for themselves.

79 The subject is clearly planned and is moving more closely to the pattern of QCA planning for its schemes of work. The subject co-ordinator has a clear grasp of the overall teaching of the subject and teachers plan effectively in year groups producing medium and short-term plans. The co-ordinator has a clear vision of the changes to be made to the schemes of work and is working towards this well. There is little opportunity for the monitoring of teaching. Although a new form of assessment is being trialled, at the moment procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are unsatisfactory. Consequently, insufficient information is available to inform teachers' planning. Assessment data is not used effectively to set targets or to track the progress of individual pupils in a way, which would show them how to progress further. There is a general portfolio of pupils' work in English, mathematics and science which indicates the National Curriculum levels attained. This is used to help teachers agree on standards. Resources are adequate, easily accessible and well managed. A little use is made of information technology for data handling, but there is too little opportunity for all pupils to become familiar with this skill.

112 OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

112 Information technology

80 At the time of the last inspection, information technology was considered to be a strength in the curriculum. However, since then the advances in the teaching of the subject and its resources have been rapid and the school's equipment now renders it impossible for attainment to be anything more than just in line with national expectations in Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4. This is because there are only two computers in each classroom, so that although the subject is planned into the timetable in conjunction with other curriculum subjects, it is not possible for more than a few pupils at a time to practice what is being taught. Many lessons are similar to that observed in a Year 3 lesson, where the objective of the lesson was to alter and amend text, using 'Pendown'. In this lesson, the teacher demonstrated the program in preparation for pupils to work in groups, but the effectiveness of the lesson was restricted by the lack of resources and support staff.

81 By the end of Year 2, most pupils manipulate a mouse with some degree of accuracy and use simple packages, such as 'Splish' and 'My World'. Few use word processing with editing techniques to communicate with ease. By the end of Year 4, most word process and use simple editing skills. They investigate shape and pattern using a mathematical program and give instructions to simulated control technology devices, such as 'Terry Turtle'. Some pupils, particularly those who have the opportunity to practise skills at home, can cut and paste, and change fonts, colour and size of print. They retrieve information and enter simple data onto spreadsheets. Work is often linked with other curriculum subjects, such as art, English, mathematics, geography and history. The school is developing the use and teaching of electronic mail.

- 82 Progress in lessons is generally satisfactory. It is best when teachers themselves have a good degree of expertise and understanding of the basic skills and programs. Progress is more rapid in Years 3 and 4 than in Key Stage 1, where some teachers lack confidence in the subject. Pupils of all abilities are making similar progress, all being limited by the lack of opportunity to practise and develop skills. Those with special educational needs are given support, so that they understand what they are trying to achieve.
- 83 Pupils respond well to the subject. They are naturally enthusiastic about computers and show a genuine interest and desire to achieve, except when enforced inactivity causes them to become disengaged and bored, as seen in a Year 1 lesson where each pupil in turn came up to press a key and then use the right button to delete. This took up most of the lesson time. Pupils generally work well in pairs or small groups. They take turns equitably and are willing to help each other. Much of their discussion is purposeful and productive. They listen and watch well, concentrate most of the time and follow teachers' instructions. They behave very well at the computers and treat the equipment with care.
- 84 Teaching ranges from good to unsatisfactory, depending on the level of teacher knowledge but is satisfactory overall. Much of the teaching observed was confident, though not all teachers are secure in the subject. When they are, some very productive work was seen, such as the Year 2 lesson in which pupils used 'Splosh' to paint pictures in the style of Mondrian, while the rest of the class pursued the same activity manually. At its best, teaching is well planned, matched with suitable activities and clear learning objectives are conveyed to pupils by demonstration and explanation. Pockets of productive work were also seen in other curriculum subjects, such as a spread sheet in geography of the ways in which pupils travelled to school in different areas, but these were all limited to a few pupils at a time. The school still has to solve the problem of how to improve access to the limited number of computers.
- 85 The co-ordinator has improved the equipment during the last few years and more improvement is planned in the near future. However, this improvement largely consists of replacing some of the old computers, buying some new ones and improving the school's stock of software, which is now good. Long term planning is based on the QCA schemes of work, which are appropriate for the school's needs. The co-ordinator monitors by discussion with teachers, rather than by direct observation of teaching and learning, and has run training courses for all teachers and non-teaching staff. Assessment is left to individual members of staff, who rarely do more than keep a 'tick list' for key skills. This means that assessment is not effectively used to inform future planning, an essential exercise with so little time for each pupil to develop skills and progress.

118 **Religious education**

- 86 Standards in religious education have been maintained since the last inspection and remain satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1 and when pupils leave the school in Year 4, when considered against the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus.
- 87 In Key Stage 1, pupils consider the natural world and their place in it as a unique individual; they look at how people celebrate special occasions. Pupils in Year 1 look at themselves as individuals, their place within a family, their friends and things that make them happy or sad. In Year 2, pupils look at special books; they hear stories from the Bible and other sources, and consider their moral teaching. They learn about other religious leaders such as Guru Nanak. Pupils in Key Stage 2 look at places of worship, churches and temples, how these places are laid out and their significance to followers. They learn about the founders of religions and the important people within them today. Through a topic on water, pupils consider the importance of water to human life, and how it is used in religious ceremonies such as Christian baptism and when Muslims prepare for prayer.

- 88 From lesson observations pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress at both key stages. This is particularly evident when teaching involves good planning with well thought-out and prepared lessons, which capture the interest and enthusiasm of the pupils. In Year 1 a good lesson on infant baptism, using plenty of resources and artefacts, started pupils thinking about important celebrations, and how families come together on such occasions. In Year 3, pupils learnt about Sikh Gudwaras and the importance of the Guru Granth Sahib, in preparation for a visit. A clear introduction, good use of questioning, a video and prepared worksheets ensured that pupils made good progress.
- 89 Pupils' attitudes to religious education are good. They listen attentively to their teachers and to each other and are keen to join in discussion, making thoughtful and sensitive contributions. They show respect for the beliefs of others, who are able to talk confidently about their own religious backgrounds.
- 90 Observations of lessons and information gained from looking at pupils' past work and teachers' plans indicate that the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Good lessons are clearly introduced and involve pupils in relevant discussion, often using pictures and other resources, and artefacts. In unsatisfactory lessons the content is not clearly thought out and activities are not suited to pupils' abilities.
- 91 The curriculum and policy are based on the locally Agreed Syllabus, and fully comply with statutory requirements. Religious education is now taught as a discrete subject in all classes, which is an improvement since the last inspection, when provision was largely through whole school and year group assemblies. Assessment opportunities are not shown in teachers' planning, and no formal assessment is made of pupils' knowledge and understanding. Literacy skills are being used satisfactorily through discussion and the writing pupils do, especially in Year 4.
- 92 The subject leader for religious education, along with the head teacher, has made some written amendments to the religious education policy, and produced a scheme of work for each year group, with clear learning objectives for each term, based on the locally Agreed Syllabus. This provides continuity and progression for the subject. After in-service training, following the last inspection, most teachers are now taking religious education lessons, encouraged and supported by the subject leader. Medium-term plans are monitored, but checks need to be made on weekly planning to see that each of the learning objectives for the term is covered sufficiently. In a Year 2 class, four weeks have been spent on one learning objective out of twelve, where pupils have been hearing stories from Aesop's fables and considering the moral teaching. Religious education lessons make a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are good resources for religious education, including good reference materials, pictures and artefacts. Very good use is made of local places of worship, including churches and a Sikh Gudwara. The school is acquiring an information technology package from the local authority, that provides a wide range of learning materials, which can be accessed by staff and pupils as required.

125 **Art**

- 93 A limited number of art lessons were observed during the inspection, but evidence from pupils' work indicates that they make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4. Essential skills and techniques are acquired and practised regularly throughout the school, although in a minority of lessons opportunities for creativity are less well developed. Pupils are constantly introduced to the work of well-known artists and images from different cultures, so that by Year 4, pupils are beginning to be able to compare and to select styles and techniques to use within their own pictures. Some Year 4 pupils, for instance, talk knowledgeably about a chosen artist and how they are using particular characteristic colours or brushwork to create their own paintings on a water theme. Progress in individual lessons, however, varies. Where pupils are actively involved in discussion of intentions and subsequent refinement of work they make good progress in applying techniques and experimenting with ideas. In contrast, when teaching is confused or lessons are not well prepared, the progress made by most pupils is too slow. Since the last inspection the school has improved provision to ensure progression by rearranging timetabling for art to alternate half-termly with design and technology so that lessons are of sufficient duration for skills to be developed and practised.

- 94 Pupils enjoy art lessons and have positive attitudes to their work. Practical tasks are undertaken with enthusiasm, and concentration is frequently prolonged. Although pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 are often rightly proud of their completed pictures and appreciative of the work of peers, they are not easily satisfied and strive for even better results. Most pupils have responsible attitudes to caring for resources and, at best, take the initiative to clear away or tidy up the classroom after lessons.
- 95 Observations of lessons and information gained from looking at pupils' past work and teachers' plans indicate that the quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. At best, pupils' work is used effectively to discuss a variety of ways of achieving desired results, including the incorporation of relevant technical and descriptive vocabulary to enable pupils to present their own ideas confidently. Pupils are expected to consider and express opinions on successful and less effective aspects of their work and that of others, and to develop an open-minded approach to refining and improving it. Previous learning about different artists' work is effectively used for comparison and applied to work in progress. Where there are shortcomings, for example in Year 1 and Year 3, interventions with pupils to promote improved techniques are insufficiently frequent or unfocused, and inadequate organisation leads to slow pace or restricted opportunities to discuss work. While sketchbooks are usefully employed throughout the school to try out ideas and skills, few teachers make regular constructive comment to assist pupils in subsequent work, and although a school portfolio has been started, this, too, lacks any commentary to show expected standards and build up of skills.
- 96 The school's art gallery and centrally positioned displays celebrating pupils' work ensure a high profile for the subject, enhance provision and encourage pupils to do their best work. A newly appointed co-ordinator has yet to influence provision, but is aware of the importance of providing opportunities for creativity.

129 **Design and technology**

- 97 A limited number of lessons were observed during the inspection, and little pupils' work was available to scrutinise in Year 2. However, it is possible to judge that pupils make satisfactory progress through the school. Pupils with special educational needs often make better progress than their peers when supported by classroom helpers who regularly discuss the work with the pupils. Pupils use a limited range of materials to make different products which become more complex as pupils mature. These artefacts incorporate simple mechanisms such as the split pins used in Year 1's hedgehogs to create moving legs. Pupils learn to manipulate basic tools with increasing control and to consider different ways of joining, including the effectiveness of different glues in Year 4 where they had built bridges to carry a given weight. Pupils in Key Stage 1 record their simple ideas with pictures whilst pupils in Year 4 produce more formal plans, write about any problems encountered and changes in their intentions. However, there is no agreed school-wide practice about assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress to ensure that there is regular development made in the demands on pupils in terms of designing; moreover, designs in technological terms are usually identical for all pupils in many of the projects. The time allocated to artistic finish is not always balanced correctly in some projects, such as the focus on appearance of photograph frames in Year 3 when pupils are not sure about the mechanism for making them stand upright.
- 98 Pupils enjoy the practical work within design and technology lessons and are enthusiastic about the products they make. They share resources fairly and co-operate with each other. They await turns for tools or templates without fuss, and older pupils also wait patiently for adults to distribute equipment. However, some are restless and inattentive during introductions, are frequently noisy while working and conduct practical tasks messily and untidily.

99 Information gained from looking at pupils' past work and teachers' plans indicates that the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but one of the two lessons observed was not satisfactory. The most significant shortcoming in the weaker lesson was the inadequate organisation so that pupils spend an inordinate proportion of the lesson largely inactive. Consequently, poor work habits were promoted because of insufficient attention to preparing tables and using resources carefully and economically. Moreover, because the teacher and helpers distribute resources themselves, the amount of direct support to pupils is unnecessarily restricted. However, when interventions are made they are useful and where, in the more successful lesson, focused on developing pupils' practical skills, are effective in ensuring improvement. Teachers' instructions are clear, and any demonstrations are pertinent. Teachers pay appropriate attention to safety.

100 The co-ordinator, who has recently taken up the role, has already begun to monitor curriculum coverage and is aware of the need to amend some of the projects. The school has rightly reconsidered timetabling since the last inspection so that design and technology and art are taught in blocks half-termly, thereby ensuring that individual lessons are long enough to enable progress to be made.

133 **Geography**

101 Only a small number of geography lessons could be observed during the inspection week. However, evidence from teachers' planning, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils indicate that pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress at Key Stage 2. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection.

102 Pupils in Year 1 make simple accounts of their way to school and of going on holiday. Year 2 pupils draw a useful map of the school and one of an imaginary island, using a key and symbols with understanding. Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 tell the points of the compass, make an accurate map of the school and name major towns in Britain. They study co-ordinates, map signs and symbols and grid references. Physical features are studied, such as mountains and rivers, as well as the weather. In Year 4 they undertake a comparative study of two areas, their own town, Kempston and Stanton-in-Peak. A Year 4 lesson was observed in which pupils consolidated their knowledge of these areas by examining the home/school journeys of pupils to schools in both areas and how and why people in villages travel to larger towns every day. Pupils develop a range of geographical skills, such as using and interpreting maps and using a variety of scales. They acquire a good geographical vocabulary.

103 Pupils have a good, positive attitude to the subject. They are very willing to discuss their work and what they have learned in their lessons. In the lessons seen they concentrated hard, enjoyed the problem solving aspects of the work and were keen to ask and answer questions. Pupils in Year 4 were anxious to explain the differences between Kempston and Stanton-in-Peak and how they had discovered these differences.

104 Too few lessons were observed to be able to make an overall judgement on teaching. However, teachers have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the subject and in Key Stage 2 use this particularly well to plan work which focuses on the skills to be taught. Effective use is obviously made of question and answer to promote individual thought in pupils. Teachers manage pupils well.

105 Since the last inspection a thorough scheme of work has been put in place by the co-ordinator, who is constantly reviewing it. The scheme covers all the relevant attainment targets and follows the National Curriculum requirements. The co-ordinator monitors work and displays, but has little opportunity to monitor the teaching of the subject. Assessment is unsatisfactory for keeping a record of individual pupils' progress and is not effectively used in future planning to ensure systematic build up of learning between years. There are many productive cross-curricular links, with mathematics and information technology and use is made of computer programs such as 'The Oxford Talking Atlas' and 'Terry the Turtle'. Resources are good and field trips are used well to give pupils practical experience.

138 **History**

- 106 By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, the standards they achieve in history are in line with national expectations, as at the time of the last inspection. In Key Stage 1 they can successfully use time lines to talk about a range of events. They are able to remember significant features in periods they have looked at, such as the Victorian period. They can handle artefacts and use them to make deductions about the times from which they came. At the end of Year 4 they can categorise and extract information effectively from books and other resources and they can remember a range of events and periods through history. They learn appropriate skills for pupils of their age.
- 107 Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 move from a chronology of their own families and a sense of 'now', 'then' and 'long ago' to time lines of wider scope. They learn to sequence objects such as children's clothing and in Year 2 they recognise the differences between a Victorian washing day and a contemporary one by handling artefacts such as a wash tub and a dolly. In Year 3, pupils were observed studying the ways in which settlement at Elstow has changed and developed over a long period of time and were learning to look for and recognise evidence of the Roman settlement. They continue to study the local area as far back as the Saxons and learn about John Bunyan. These pupils have a good understanding of the history of transport, from The Rocket to Wilbur Wright. In Year 4, pupils have a wider knowledge of invaders and settlers in Britain and compare and contrast changes in social history and the landscape. Pupils with special educational needs are appropriately supported and progress in line with other pupils.
- 108 Pupils have a very positive attitude to history. They enjoy the topics, like seeing and touching artefacts, gaining pleasure from being able to distinguish between primary and secondary sources of evidence. They concentrate hard on the research side of history, listen well in class, contribute readily and discuss sensibly in pairs or groups. They are stimulated by the visits they make to Bedford or to the Cecil Higgins' Museum and talk readily about them. They are developing research skills and work effectively on their own and in small groups.
- 109 The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Teachers have satisfactory knowledge and a clear understanding of the historical skills to be taught. Lesson planning is usually good and pupils are clear about what they are learning. Good use is made of a range of resources and artefacts to make the subject more accessible and enjoyable. The enthusiastic co-ordinator has drawn up and revised thorough schemes of work which ensure a systematic build up of pupils' knowledge and skills throughout the school. Although there has been little opportunity for observation of colleagues' lessons, work is regularly monitored and plans are overseen by the co-ordinator. Work is marked and assessed by individual teachers in an informal way, but there are insufficient systems for monitoring individual pupils' progress and standards.
- 110 The school makes good use of visits, such as to Chiltern Open Air Museum and Iron Age House and the county archaeologist's department come in to the school to talk to the pupils. Resources are good and plentiful and there is some good computer software, such as 'Micropedia', though its use is limited by the number of computers in the school.

143 **Music**

- 111 The broad and balanced music curriculum has been maintained since the last inspection and results in pupils making satisfactory progress through both key stages. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs make similar progress to that of their peers. During the week of the inspection the focus of music lessons was rehearsals for the Christmas concert.

- 112 Pupils take part in a comprehensive programme of musical activities which are built around a sound policy, a well-balanced scheme of work and medium-term plans. These give effective guidance for the teaching of skills throughout the school. Pupils in Year 1 develop an understanding of the sounds made by a variety of drums and, as a class, indicate the ability to keep to a rhythm by drumming to recorded music. In Year 2, pupils develop control of breathing, dynamics and pitch whilst being accompanied by a keyboard and are aware of the need to sing in a way which reflects the words. For example, a pupils suggests using a happy voice whilst singing a piece with the word 'playful' in it. Both year groups make satisfactory progress in learning new songs and confidently sing a range of songs in lessons, aware of the need to keep in time with others.
- 113 In Year 3, pupils use a combination of instruments and voices to create the atmosphere of a rainforest and follow a graphic score satisfactorily. Most are aware of the need to closely follow the conducting and do so well. In Year 4, pupils make improvements in their breathing and diction as a result of teacher direction and demonstration. This results in them clearly singing a two-part round which indicates an understanding of tempo, dynamics and pitch. Pupils are developing an awareness of other performers and the need to rehearse to improve their performances. Evidence from recordings by pupils indicates a satisfactory development of composing skills from Year 1 to Year 4.
- 114 Pupils' attitudes to music are satisfactory. Whilst most enjoy performing, whether it is singing or playing an instrument, a minority lack enthusiasm and the teacher has to work hard to keep them involved. The majority of pupils listen attentively, behave satisfactorily and persevere with the tasks set but a significant minority become restless, for example when distributing instruments. Also, in the music assembly, some pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 did not fully participate and lacked the motivation to join in with the singing. Literacy skills are promoted satisfactorily by explaining unfamiliar words, through the emphasis that is placed on learning the words of a wide range of songs and by teaching the correct technical vocabulary.
- 115 The quality of teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. The specialist teacher makes effective use of her good subject knowledge and lessons are planned to develop pupils' performing, composing, listening and appraising skills. The teacher works hard to ensure that no time is wasted by preparing lessons well and by moving appropriate equipment to each class. In one classroom in particular, the lack of space makes it difficult for the teacher to move around the room and to use easily a wide range of instruments. The teacher has a broad range of strategies to keep the interest of the pupils and maintains satisfactory behaviour. Some pupils, however, lack good self-discipline and rely on the teacher to get them to behave well. Assessment procedures are simple, give an indication of the strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils and are used to inform planning. Class teachers in Year 1 use a series of recorded programmes to further enhance pupils' singing skills and teaching here is satisfactory. There are opportunities provided for pupils to learn to play a musical instrument through the recorder clubs and through additional lessons from a visiting specialist for violin and cello.
- 116 The co-ordinator works in school for two days a week and teaches every class for their weekly music lesson. She has good subject knowledge and experience and uses this to promote a range of musical activities. The scheme of work is linked to areas of the curriculum other than music, for example the study of rainforests and pupils are given various opportunities to perform publicly through concerts and celebrations of religious festivals. Varied events are encouraged such as visits from an opera workshop company and workshops focusing on African stories and drum playing. These create opportunities for pupils to experience performances from a range of countries and traditions.

149 **Physical education**

- 117 During the course of the inspection, it was not possible to view all aspects of physical education but progress is judged to be satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, three dance lessons were observed. In one lesson pupils were able to follow a taped broadcast, listening to the instructions and creating a dance sequence about 'The First Christmas Day'. In another lesson pupils were developing a dance sequence to music, and were able to perform well, remembering steps and actions and keeping in time to the music. At Key Stage 2, gymnastics lessons were observed. In one lesson where pupils were learning to balance and to travel to another balance position, they practised, improved and refined their performance well, carrying out movements with control and accuracy. In another lesson pupils were learning to balance with a partner and to develop a routine; this was carried out well. The school has its own swimming pool, and all pupils have the opportunity to learn to swim, most becoming confident in the water by the time they leave the school in Year 4.
- 118 Pupils' attitudes to physical education are good. They respond most positively in their lessons, concentrating well and following instructions carefully. They collaborate well when creating dance sequences, and work sensibly together in pairs. Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy their lessons.
- 119 The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. One good lesson was well planned, with clear objectives and a variety of activities; pupils had a warm up session, went over the dance learnt in the previous lesson and added new parts to it. The teacher's subject knowledge and expertise were used to good effect. At Key Stage 2, teaching is good. Clear planning and good subject knowledge, linked with high expectations and good management of pupils, ensure that good progress is made.
- 120 Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. There is a clear policy and scheme of work, which indicates how pupils' skills are developed systematically in all the elements of physical education. The subject leader takes all lessons in Key Stage 2, apart from games, and is able to monitor pupils' progress in dance and gymnastics. He is also given time to observe lessons in Key Stage 1. A teacher, trained in dance, takes all dance lessons in Year 2. A regular programme of extra-curricular activities enhances the provision for physical education. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have the opportunity to participate in football, cricket, netball, skipping and country dancing. They take part in competitive cricket, which is organised by the subject leader. Football is organised by parents, and pupils play against other teams.
- 121 The school has good resources for physical education which are added to annually as required; subject leaders put in a bids which are considered by the head teacher. Good use is made of specialist teachers on the staff. The accommodation for physical education is good, with an indoor hall and outside areas. Care needs to be taken that displays and other equipment kept in the hall do not impinge on pupils' safety.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

154 SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 122 The inspection was carried out by a team of five inspectors, who spent a combined total of 16 days in school. During the course of the inspection, the team observed 73 lessons in whole or in part, attended assemblies and observed registration periods and beginnings and ends of sessions. Three pupils from each class were heard reading aloud. Pupils discussed their reading habits and books and talked about other aspects of their work. A scrutiny of pupils' work was also undertaken. Observations were made of pupils in the playground, at lunchtime and around the school. This provided opportunities for inspectors to talk with them. A total time of approximately 68 hours and 50 minutes was spent on the above activities.
- 123 The inspection team scrutinised minutes of the governing body meetings, curriculum and other policy documents, teachers' plans, financial statements, pupils' records and attendance registers.
- 124 Discussions were held with members of the governing body, the headteacher, teaching and non-teaching staff. Approximately 16 hours was spent on this activity.
- 125 There were 58 responses (20 per cent) to the parents' questionnaire and approximately 13 parents attended the parents' meeting. Discussions also took place with parents in the playground during the week of the inspection.

158

DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y4	345	6	72	37

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR – Y4)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	13.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25

Education support staff (YR – Y4)

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked each week	249.25

Average class size:	29
---------------------	----

Financial data

Financial year:

1998/9

	£
Total Income	525,667
Total Expenditure	543,844
Expenditure per pupil	1,523
Balance brought forward from previous year	37,579
Balance carried forward to next year	19,402

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	283
Number of questionnaires returned:	58

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	37	63	0	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	43	53	3	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	22	63	15	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	17	59	21	2	2
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	14	63	16	7	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	22	71	7	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	28	58	11	4	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	12	70	7	11	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	41	48	10	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	23	70	7	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	52	47	2	0	0

NB: Percentages of responses are rounded to nearest integer, sum may not = 100%
 Percentages given are in relation to total number of returns, EXCLUDING nil replies.

Other issues raised by parents

Parents are confident in the headteacher who is positive and supportive. They state that she knows each child well. The school has a good wild life area. The school has good additional provision connected with literacy, such as, book week, visits from authors and a bookshop.