

INSPECTION REPORT

Greenleys First School

Milton Keynes

LEA : Milton Keynes

Unique Reference Number: 110345

Headteacher: Mrs Catherine Lehal

Reporting inspector: Mr Graham Lee

Dates of inspection: 11 – 14 October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707006

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act
1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
Type of control:	County
Age range of pupils:	4 - 8
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. Norman Miles
Date of previous inspection:	3 – 5 October 1994

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Derek Bowers, Lay Inspector	Geography	Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community Efficiency of the school Curriculum and assessment Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Christopher Hill	Mathematics Information Technology	
Stephanie Lacey	Art Physical Education Equal Opportunities English Music Religious Education Under – fives Special Educational Needs	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Provides a safe and secure environment for pupils.
- The very good example set by staff promotes pupils' good attitudes and behaviour.
- Effective provision for the under-fives results in good progress for the youngest pupils.
- Physical education is taught well and pupils make good progress.
- Strong leadership by the headteacher creates a clear sense of purpose.
- The whole staff team are dedicated and committed to meeting the needs of all pupils.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Standards in reading, particularly for boys, are too low.
- II. In some lessons work for the highest attainers is too easy.
- III. Information technology is not given enough attention and standards are low.
- IV. The timing and organisation of the school day results in some imbalances in the curriculum.
- V. There are no formal systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning.

The weaknesses are outweighed by what the school does well but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and overcome most of the weaknesses found then. The curriculum for the under-fives is now a strength of the school. The teaching of religious education is better and standards have been raised. Much continues to be done to involve parents and carers fully in the life of the school, although their response is sometimes disappointing. The governing body has developed a much more active role and with a number of new, enthusiastic members is well placed to improve still further. The school development plan is now more central to the improvement of the school with clear aims, costings and time scales. Least progress has been made with regard to curriculum co-ordinators. Whilst their role in relation to support and advice has improved, procedures for them to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning in their subjects remain under-developed. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection but have not improved significantly. The school has established clear and realistic priorities and, under the leadership of the new headteacher, is well placed for further improvement in standards and the quality of education.

Standards in subjects

This table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds in 1998 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools		Key
			<i>well above average</i>	A
			<i>above average</i>	B
Reading	E	D	<i>Average</i>	C
Writing	E	C	<i>below average</i>	D
Mathematics	E	C	<i>well below average</i>	E

This information shows that standards are well below the national average. However, when compared to similar schools in terms of pupils eligible for free school meals they are more typical, except in reading. Whilst the majority of pupils reach expected levels in these subjects, few do better. Boys' performance is very low in reading compared with girls.

The inspection found that progress in literacy and numeracy is sound overall. There is some evidence of improving standards, although pupils' attainment remains below average at the age of seven and by the time they leave the school. In science and religious education standards are now broadly average. Pupils' competence in information technology is weak. They do particularly well in physical education. When they begin school the skills and understanding of the youngest pupils are well below average. They make good progress in the reception class, although by the age of five their skills in literacy and numeracy remain below average.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 8 years
English	Good	Good	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Science		Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information technology		Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Religious education		Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Other subjects	Good	Good	Satisfactory

The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in nine out of ten lessons and good or very

good in more than half. In one out of ten lessons, the teaching is less than satisfactory. Teaching of the under-fives is consistently good and ensures a secure start to school life for the youngest children. In Key Stage 1, the teaching varies from very good to poor but is mainly satisfactory or better. It is particularly strong towards the end of the key stage. In Key Stage 2 the teaching is mainly satisfactory. The range of teaching is generally represented across subjects, although physical education is taught consistently well. Throughout the school, the teaching of information technology is a weakness. Overall, the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, most notably for the under-fives.

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	Good overall. Most pupils behave well in lessons, assemblies and around the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Below average but improving due to better procedures for monitoring and following up on absences.
Ethos*	Good overall. Most pupils have good attitudes to work. Relationships between pupils are generally positive as a result of the very good example set by staff. The school is committed to improvement and raising standards
Leadership and management	The new headteacher provides strong leadership. Well supported by enthusiastic governing body and dedicated staff team. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are under-developed.
Curriculum	Broad with suitable emphasis on literacy and numeracy. A little unbalanced as organisation of the short days results in an under-emphasis of some subjects.
Pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall. Good management and links with parents. Variable provision and levels of support.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good overall. Very good provision for social and moral development, good for spiritual and satisfactory for cultural.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory. Adequate levels of teaching and support staff. Suitable accommodation and extensive grounds. Adequate resources in most subjects.
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
VI. The approachability of all staff.	X. The homework policy is not clear.
VII. The range of information it provides.	XI. The lack of involvement of some
VIII. The values and attitudes it promotes.	XII. Parking in front of the school which is
IX. The role it plays in the community.	

Some care must be exercised in interpreting parental views as only six parents attended the meeting with the Registered Inspector and the response to the questionnaire was also limited. Nevertheless, in discussion with parents during the inspection no parent expressed any views which contradicted the positive view of the parents who responded. Inspectors support the positive views of parents. Staff are always available to parents and the school provides a range of good quality information. The school has a very positive ethos and promotes caring attitudes and values amongst its pupils. The school plays a prominent role in the local community. Governors and staff work hard to involve parents, although it is true that their response is sometimes disappointing. Parking in front of the school gates does present a potential hazard. Governors and local community groups are working hard to address this issue. There is some good practice with regard to homework but this needs to be consolidated in a new policy and communicated to parents.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to build on the strengths of the school and raise standards, the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

- XIII. Improve standards in reading, particularly for boys, by:
giving all pupils access to a wider range of literature;
increasing opportunities for adults to share books with pupils on an individual basis;
providing more opportunities for pupils to develop research skills;
using performance data more effectively to identify weaknesses and to set targets
for
improvement.
(Reference paragraphs: 5,6,13,28,44,85,86 and 89)
- XIV. Increase levels of challenge in all lessons, particularly for higher attainers by:
providing more activities which require pupils to think for themselves;
widening the range and purposes of writing in all subjects;
giving pupils more opportunities for involvement in practical activities;
developing the use of assessment to plan the next stages of learning.
(Reference paragraphs: 5,13,27,43,85,87,90,95,98,102 and 107)
- XV. Improve standards in information technology by:
giving the subject more prominence within the curriculum;
developing staff confidence and competence;
ensuring that information technology is fully integrated into the curriculum.
(Reference paragraphs: 10,23,30,36,109,110,111,112 and 113)
- XVI. Make more efficient use of the school day by:
lengthening it to meet minimum recommendations;
ensuring that sufficient attention is given to all subjects;

giving pupils more opportunities for involvement in practical activities.

(Reference paragraphs: 9,18,26,27,36,37,38 and 73)

XVII. Developing effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning:

(Reference paragraphs: 63,67,92, 99 and 108)

In addition to the key issues mentioned above the following less important issues should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

XVIII. Ensuring that marking is consistent in helping pupils to improve;
(Reference paragraph: 33)

XIX. Ensuring that targets on individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are specific and measurable;
(Reference paragraph: 41)

XX. Improving provision for the celebration of cultural diversity;
(Reference paragraph: 49)

XXI. Develop the links between school development planning and the budget cycle;
(Reference paragraph: 65)

XXII. Ensure appropriate provision for pupils with English as an additional language;
(Reference paragraphs: 32 and 40)

XXIII. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the senior management team in relation to the raising of standards;
(Reference paragraph: 60)

XXIV. Review and clarify homework policy.
(Reference paragraph: 34)

· **INTRODUCTION**

· **Characteristics of the school**

1. Greenleys First School is a smaller than average first school situated on the Greenleys estate in the north west of Milton Keynes, less than a mile from the established railway town of Wolverton. It was one of the earliest developments in the new city in the early 1970s. The estate was built with affordable housing for workers and much of the housing remains in the public sector whilst some properties have been purchased by the tenants. A later development consisted of privately owned houses. The school serves the Greenleys estate itself, as well as the neighbouring areas of Stacey Bushes and Hodge Lea. A few pupils come from further afield.

2. There are currently 161 full-time pupils on roll and another 25 who attend on a part-time basis. There are significantly more boys than girls, particularly in the older year groups. Children start school in the term after their fourth birthday. There are 41 children currently in the reception year. At the time of the inspection 37 of these children were still four. Although pupils come from a range of backgrounds, many of them are from homes where there is considerable social and economic disadvantage. There are high levels of unemployment in the area. 42 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well above average. 15 per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and 13 per cent speak English as an additional language. These pupils are mainly from a Pakistani background although other cultural backgrounds are also represented in the school. Currently, 34 per cent of the school population is on the register of special educational needs, which is well above average. The majority of these pupils have learning difficulties, although some have emotional and behavioural and speech problems. No pupil has a statement of special educational need. Around half the pupils have attended playgroups or nurseries prior to attending school but the remainder have no pre-school experience. As a consequence, their social skills are under-developed when they enter the school. Similarly, their levels of skill and understanding in other areas are also well below average overall. The school roll has been relatively stable over the past few years. The most significant change since the last inspection has been the steady increase of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.

3. The school's aims are to:

- | | | |
|--------|------------|----------------------|
| XXV. | safe place | make the school a |
| XXVI. | | respect other pupils |
| XXVII. | together | work and learn |

The headteacher is clear that the school's central priority is to raise standards. Current priorities include the development of information and communications technology both as a curriculum resource and as it relates to all aspects of management and administration. The development of monitoring and evaluation in the school is also a priority for the coming year. The school is also concerned to consolidate the Literacy Strategy in its second year and to implement the Numeracy Strategy successfully.

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
	1998	20	26	46

National Curriculum		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Test/Task Results				
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or Above	Boys	8	9	16
	Girls	23	24	24
	Total	31	33	40
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	67 (61)	72 (73)	87 (68)
	National	80 (80)	81 (80)	85 (84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or Above	Boys	8	14	11
	Girls	23	24	24
	Total	31	38	35
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	67 (70)	83 (80)	76 (75)
	National	81 (80)	85 (84)	86 (85)

¹ Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

- **Attendance**

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:			%
	Authorised	School	9.0
	Absence	National comparative data	5.7
	Unauthorised	School	0.3
	Absence	National comparative data	0.5

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- **Exclusions**

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:		Number
	Fixed period	0
	Permanent	1

- **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	15
	Satisfactory or better	90
	Less than satisfactory	10

- **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**
- **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**
- **Attainment and progress**

4. The school's baseline assessment shows that children start school at four with skills, knowledge and understanding which are wide ranging, but well below average overall. Many children have specific problems in their language development. They make very good progress in their personal and social development and good progress in all areas of learning as a result of effective teaching and support. By the time they reach their fifth birthdays, most children attain the nationally recommended desirable learning outcomes for this age group in their personal, social, creative and physical development. Some children also reach the desirable learning outcomes in language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. Many children, however, in spite of their good progress, do not reach these levels because their limited vocabulary inhibits the growth of understanding in these particular areas.

5. In 1998, the results of national tests for seven-year-olds in reading, writing and mathematics were well below the national average. When compared to schools similar to Greenleys, in relation to the numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were average in writing and mathematics but below average in reading. The great majority of pupils reached the expected levels, particularly in mathematics, but few did better. The results of national science assessments were also well below average. In general, this replicates the picture of standards over the last few years and the picture reported in the last inspection. A significant factor in this pattern of attainment is the relatively few pupils who reach higher levels, particularly in mathematics. Although national comparisons are not yet available, the 1999 results follow this pattern except in science where there have been significant improvements.

6. A consistent feature of attainment has been the relatively low levels of attainment of boys in reading and writing compared with that of girls. Whilst girls' performance has steadily improved towards the national average, particularly in reading, boys' attainment remains very low. This pattern is not repeated in mathematics where there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

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7. In English, the inspection confirms that pupils' attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing remains below average at the age of seven and by the time they leave the school in Year 3. Although the National Literacy Strategy made no impact on test results last year, pupils are developing a greater understanding of how language works. In Key Stage 1, they build on their good start in the early years and make steady progress overall in all aspects of the subject. This progress accelerates in Year 2 because of focused and lively teaching. In Year 3 pupils' progress is satisfactory. In reading, the progress of some pupils is hampered by the lack of opportunities to share books with adults on an individual basis, either at home or at school. Pupils' research skills are also under-developed and this weakness is exacerbated at the moment by the library being out of action. In writing, pupils' progress is inhibited by a lack of opportunities for them to write independently in the literacy hour. The school has recognised this weakness and has plans to address it. For these reasons, pupils are only making limited use of their developing literacy skills in other aspects of their work.

8. The inspection findings indicate an improving picture of standards in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1, with most pupils reaching expected levels. Very few, however, are working at higher levels. In the current Year 3 standards remain below average because of a significant number of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are making generally sound progress throughout the school in the acquisition of number skills and in other areas of mathematics. The consistent quality of teaching and the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy are having a positive impact on raising standards. Pupils make effective use of their developing mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum, for example, when recording information in science and measuring in design and technology.

9. In science, inspection findings confirm the picture of improving standards at the end of Key Stage 1, with the great majority of pupils reaching the expected level, with a small number doing better. Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils make at least sound progress in relation to their knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas. This progress accelerates towards the end of the key stage. In Year 3, most pupils are working at an appropriate level but their progress slows down. Throughout the school, progress is less marked in relation to the skills of experimental and investigative science. Pupils are given too few opportunities to formulate their own questions and conduct their own investigations. This has a particularly adverse effect on the progress of the highest attaining pupils. In Year 3 this is exacerbated by the large class group in the afternoons, when the subject is taught, which makes practical activities difficult.

10. In information technology, pupils' attainment at the age of seven and by the time they leave the school is well below national expectations. Throughout the school, pupils' progress is unsatisfactory because they have insufficient opportunities to use computers and develop their skills. This finding indicates that standards have fallen significantly since the last inspection.

11. In religious education, pupils broadly meet the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus by the age of seven and are working at appropriate levels in Year 3. In both key stages they make satisfactory progress in developing their knowledge of religious belief and how it impacts on people's lives. This marks an improvement from the last inspection when standards were low.

12. In physical education, pupils make good progress throughout the school in response to some effective teaching. In art, design and technology, geography, history and music, pupils make broadly satisfactory progress in both key stages. In general, this maintains the situation reported in the last inspection, although in geography pupils are now making better progress.

13. In each class there are a minority of pupils whose attainment is better than that of their peers. This is not always apparent in the results of tests. In some lessons, these pupils are not set work that is suitably challenging. In particular, they are not given enough opportunities to research information for themselves, write independently and devise their own solutions to problems. Too often they are given limiting worksheets which do not extend their thinking. Whilst the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are having a positive effect on the attainment of these pupils, particularly in Year 2, they do not always progress at the same rate as their peers. The school has recognised this to some extent and has set up a register of able pupils, which will help to identify and meet the needs of these pupils more successfully.

14. Most pupils with special educational need have been identified with difficulties in the area of language and literacy. These pupils make good progress in the early years because staff pay good attention to developing their spoken language. In Key Stage 1, they make satisfactory progress overall. In the literacy hour they sometimes make good progress as a result of appropriate tasks and good adult support. They make satisfactory progress in Year 3 because the work is well planned, but the large size of the class makes it more difficult for the teacher to give them extra support.

15. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress overall because teachers are aware of their needs and plan special work for them. They do not always have sufficient opportunity to develop their spoken language within the activity part of the literacy hour.

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Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

16. Very good relationships between all members of the school community set a firm framework for the good behaviour and positive attitudes of most pupils. This contributes to the satisfactory progress made by most pupils. The good standards identified in the last inspection have been maintained.

17. The youngest children settle quickly into school and all are now confident and happy in the secure environment of the early years building. They have made new friends and play and work well together. They have built up very good, trusting relationships with the three full-time adult staff and respond very well to requests and instructions. They behave well and clearly know the difference between right and wrong.

18. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and are positive about their work. Most listen well to their teachers in the introductory part of lessons and settle quickly to their work. They try hard and persevere with tasks, even when they find them difficult. In the early years class, children often have opportunities to make choices about their work and to follow an activity that they find particularly interesting. They experiment with water, for

example, to see how much a container will hold. Older pupils are much more directed and there are fewer opportunities for them to write freely, for example, or to search for information through personal study on computers or in the library.

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19. Most pupils behave well in assemblies, at play-times and, particularly, in assemblies. They come into assembly very quietly and listen carefully to what is said. In lessons, most pupils respond quickly to instructions and behave very sensibly. In one or two lessons some pupils are a little silly, but this is usually linked to the weak management skills of the teacher. Pupils who have identified behavioural problems sometimes present challenging behaviour but manage well, for the most part, because of the good support given to them by teachers and support staff. Last year there was one permanent exclusion for persistent bad behaviour but this is unusual. In the summer term, three pupils left the school grounds during playtimes or physical education lessons, which is a cause for concern. Pupils are aware of the dangers of this kind of behaviour and it has not been repeated this year.

20. Pupils of all ages and ethnic groups play happily together and there is no evidence of any racist behaviour or bullying. Generally, pupils get along with each other very well. Playtimes are lively occasions with a multiplicity of skipping and ball games, as well as small groups of pupils talking quietly to each other or sitting in the sun. Very good relationships are also evident in lessons and pupils co-operate well, sharing equipment and helping each other with their work. Most pupils are very friendly and outgoing with their friends, teachers and visitors to the school.

21. Pupils make sound progress in their personal development. All pupils enjoy taking on extra responsibilities. Helpers from each class take the registers to the office, for example. Older pupils, particularly, are very helpful and take on special duties. They distribute the milk before school, for instance, and prepare the hall for assembly. These tasks are clearly laid down but there are fewer opportunities for pupils to show initiative and to take responsibility in their own learning.

Attendance

22. The attendance of pupils last year was well below the national average but is now satisfactory overall because of improvements this year. This is a broadly similar situation to the one reported in the last inspection. Absences last year were higher than the national average due to the failure of a few families to inform the school when they were moving away from the area. There are indications that a tightening of procedures is improving attendance this year. The punctuality of the pupils is generally good, although a few pupils persistently arrive late at the start of the day.

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QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

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Teaching

23. The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in nine out of ten lessons and good or very good in more than half. In one out of ten lessons, the teaching is less than satisfactory. Teaching of the under-fives is consistently good and ensures a secure start to school life for the youngest children. In Key Stage 1, the teaching varies from very good to poor but is mainly satisfactory or better. It is particularly strong towards the end of the

key stage. In Key Stage 2, the teaching is mainly satisfactory. The range of teaching is generally represented across subjects, although physical education is taught consistently well. Throughout the school, the teaching of information technology is a weakness. Overall, the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, most notably for the under-fives. As a result, pupils' progress is satisfactory or better in most areas of the curriculum.

24. The teaching of children in the early years is now consistently good and sometimes very good. The teacher and learning support assistants work very effectively as a team. They provide a stimulating and imaginative learning environment where children can explore, experiment and learn in a focused way. Good planning clearly identifies the learning focus for each session and ensures that adults are clear about their role. Staff work particularly hard to develop children's linguistic skills through a range of strategies. They encourage children to take on other roles, for example, the 'baby clinic' provides a very good setting for children to engage in conversations about babies and childcare. Staff also use class sessions well to introduce new vocabulary and develop understanding. In one such session, the teacher showed the children a range of shoes and involved them in talking about their names and purpose. Staff assess children informally on a day to day basis and share their observations in the weekly planning meetings. They do not yet use small group activities to assess children's progress against identified targets, in order to plan more effectively for their needs.

25. In most lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers have good relationships with pupils, based on mutual respect. In general, they manage their classes well and have established effective classroom routines. They have clear expectations of pupils' behaviour and manage challenging situations calmly and effectively. As a result, a purposeful working atmosphere is established and pupils are able to sustain concentration and make progress. In the few lessons where teachers' classroom management is ineffective, pupils lose motivation and concentration and make slower progress as a result.

26. Another consistently good feature of the teaching is the quality of planning. Year group teachers plan together ensuring a consistency of provision between classes. Planning is detailed at all levels and weekly plans identify clearly what pupils are expected to learn as a result of the lesson. A range of appropriate activities is planned and these are particularly successful when they revolve around interesting, practical activities. For example, a lesson on human growth in Year 2 involved a visit from some parents who brought their own babies along. Pupils devised and asked their own questions in a very successful session. Artefacts are often used to good effect, particularly in history. For example, during the inspection a variety of old cooking utensils and Greek vases were used to good effect. In general, pupils spend too much time sitting listening or working passively and not enough time actively involved in practical and collaborative activities.

27. In the most successful lessons, teachers make it clear to pupils what they are expected to learn from the session, explain activities clearly, set a brisk pace and use questions well to explore pupils' understanding and to develop their thinking. In these lessons, follow-up activities are challenging for all pupils. However, in some lessons teachers' expectations of pupils are not high enough. Sometimes good introductions from teachers, involving discussion and questioning are followed by activities that do not extend pupils' learning. For example, relatively unchallenging worksheets are often used instead of more stimulating activities, which require pupils to think for themselves and devise their

own solutions. In particular, this has a detrimental effect on the progress of the higher attaining pupils.

28. The school has successfully adopted the National Literacy Strategy, which is now firmly embedded. Teachers have implemented the Strategy diligently, establishing clear routines which are understood by pupils. As a result, most sessions are brisk and purposeful. A particularly strong feature of the work is the partnership with learning support assistants who make a valuable contribution to the quality of learning. Where teaching of literacy is particularly good, in Year 2 for example, teachers use texts effectively to interest and stimulate pupils, organise their classes very effectively and prepare good worksheets, which challenge pupils. Although the Strategy has not had a significant effect on test results so far, it is clear that pupils are acquiring a systematic understanding of the structure of language as a result of the focused teaching.

29. Similarly, the school has made a good start with the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and there are indications that this is already having a positive effect on pupils' attainment. Lessons proceed at a good pace and there is an appropriate balance of direct teaching and activities for the pupils. Teachers plan various activities to suit the needs of different groups although at times these are not sufficiently challenging for the higher attaining pupils.

30. The teaching of physical education is consistently good because teachers present good role models in terms of their dress and demeanour, involve pupils in vigorous activity and give good opportunities for pupils to develop and refine skills. Only in information technology do teachers lack appropriate subject knowledge and confidence. As a result, they do not integrate the subject into the rest of the curriculum. In the short time allocated to information technology each day, teachers give pupils little opportunity to develop skills and understanding or to use computers for any meaningful period of time.

31. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall with some good features. Teachers plan work that is generally appropriate for pupils. In the literacy hour particularly, these pupils work on special tasks, often with extra support from the teacher or classroom assistant. This helps them to make sound progress with the gentle encouragement of a patient adult. In the better lessons, the work planned captures pupils' imagination because the tasks are varied and linked to interesting stories. Occasionally, the work set is too difficult and, without adult support, pupils make slower progress. The targets on pupils' individual education plans are taken into account more than they were at the time of the previous inspection.

32. Pupils with English as an additional language are often taught in groups alongside pupils with special educational needs. This is not an ideal situation, but the best arrangement that the school can make at the moment. Generally the activities planned are appropriate, but not sufficiently focused on speaking and listening.

33. The quality and use of teachers' day-to-day assessment is variable. In general, they give pupils good verbal feedback during lessons on how they are doing. Work is marked regularly and stickers and stamps are given to reward effort. However, marking in books for older pupils does not always give sufficient guidance on what they need to do to improve. Whilst weekly planning provides for assessment opportunities, teachers do not always make use of these and do not consistently plan for the next stages of learning.

34. A limited amount of homework is set. This mainly involves reading for younger pupils, although the books are not returned to school consistently by some families. For older pupils, some good examples were seen of homework being used effectively to extend work in class. Some parents are unclear about homework requirements and it would be useful for the school to clarify its draft policy and share it with parents and carers.

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The curriculum and assessment

35. The curriculum for the children in the early years is lively and interesting and is considerably improved since the last inspection. It is effectively based on the six areas of learning for children of this age and good links are made with the National Curriculum. The school has developed a sound scheme of work, which underpins detailed planning. The children work on relevant and purposeful activities and are consequently very enthusiastic and positive about their work.

· 36. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum is broadly based and meets statutory requirements in relation to the National Curriculum, religious education and sex education. However, whilst the curriculum is broad it is not sufficiently balanced between and within subjects. The length of the school day in both key stages is below the recommended minimum. The headteacher has already brought this to the attention of governors, recommending action. Whilst there is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy, the allocated teaching time within the school day does not allow sufficient time to develop all aspects of the curriculum effectively. For example, information technology is not given adequate time or status to allow pupils to develop their skills effectively. Similarly in music, whilst pupils are involved in a range of activities, the current timetabling of music lessons once every three weeks makes it more difficult for them to acquire skills and understanding systematically. Time allocations for science are also relatively low, leaving little time for investigative work. During afternoon lessons in Year 3 there are more than 40 pupils in the class. This makes practical science work particularly difficult.

37. Planning for the curriculum in Key Stage 1 and 2 is very thorough. Published national schemes of work have been successfully incorporated into several of the schools' schemes to give a reasonable balance in most subjects. Planning ensures that pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are built upon systematically from year to year. Joint planning in year groups is a strength of the system and ensures consistency of provision between classes in Key Stage 1. Another strength is the good links that are made between different subjects in the curriculum. For example, the work on the Ancient Greeks in Year 3 is also used for mapwork in geography and as a starting point for observational drawing in art. However, the current organisation of the school day prevents planning in music and information technology being implemented effectively. The school has made a good start with the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. In Year 3, considerable liaison between schools in the local cluster groups ensures continuity in the Key Stage 2 curriculum as pupils move on to middle school.

38. There is good informal provision for the personal, health and social education of all pupils, which effectively promotes their personal development. Teachers provide personal and social education within their daily approach to life and learning in the classroom and more specific health education during the study of themes such as 'A baby needs'. 'Milk time' also helps promote personal and social education in some classes although its

impact is variable. The focus of this daily session is not clear as it is combined with the teaching of information technology. Aspects of sex education are taught appropriately for pupils of this age as they occur through the topics studied but there is no provision for drugs awareness. Although the governing body have a statement about sex education in the brochure there is no policy. Similarly, the school does not have a policy for personal and social education to clarify and consolidate these aspects of its work.

39. Provision for after school activities is satisfactory. There are two well-established clubs that are available to all Year 2 and 3 pupils. The art club is well run and provides good opportunities to build upon skills taught in the school day. The games club allows a good opportunity for pupils to be physically active and enables them to practice and extend skills. Both clubs are run enthusiastically by staff and are enjoyed by the good number of pupils who regularly attend. The curriculum is also enriched by visits to places such as local museums and woods and through the loan of a range of artefacts. Visitors, such as musicians and dancers, also widen pupils' experiences. During the inspection, much interest was stimulated when a baby was brought into class as part of a science topic developing personal health and social education.

40. The curriculum generally promotes equality of opportunity for all, although not entirely successfully in the case of boys' reading. Pupils who speak English as an additional language follow the same curriculum as their peers. Support for these pupils is not separated from that given to those with special educational needs. The school is aware that this is not always appropriate. There has been a recent sharp increase in numbers of these pupils. Anticipated support with assessment and provision from the local authority has not materialised this term, although the head is confident that it will be in place shortly.

41. The school has improved the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs since the last inspection. There is still a particular focus on reading and writing, but this is now planned within the context of whole class work in the literacy hour. This means that pupils have access to the same curriculum as their peers. Most of the time pupils work in a special group within the class, although sometimes they are withdrawn appropriately for extra help from the visiting special educational needs teacher. The work for these pupils is related closely to the targets on their individual education plans, which are written by the class teacher and special needs co-ordinator. These targets are often particularly related to the development of phonic skills and tend to be general targets, rather than specific to individual pupils. Others are sometimes too vague. As a result, it is not always easy to measure progress against the targets.

42. The provision of challenging activities and opportunities for higher attaining pupils is not consistent in all lessons. However, the implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is having a positive effect on provision for these pupils as teachers plan for their needs on a daily basis. Nevertheless, practice is still variable. The school has recognised this issue by developing a register of higher attainers who also have individual education plans identifying their needs. As a result, work planned for these pupils is sometimes related to specific targets identified in the plans.

43. The school's current assessment policy is under review. All statutory assessments are completed properly each year. In addition, a range of other measures is used to monitor pupils' progress. There are particularly detailed systems for recording pupils' acquisition of phonic skills in reading, although other aspects of their reading and writing are not so

clearly documented. Reading diaries, for example, do not record pupils' preferences and attitudes and are not always completed. In general, it is the most fluent readers who have the most detailed diaries. The school has adopted the local authority's recommended scheme for baseline assessment. This has been administered at the start of term this year and has indicated the overall attainment of pupils on entry is very low. Early Years staff also use other published tests to enable them to get a grasp of children's language development, for example, and also to identify potential special needs. Systems are also developing in the school for recording attainment in mathematics, science, religious education and information technology.

44. The range of procedures for assessment and monitoring the curriculum are not consistently used to plan future work. The data collected from baseline assessments, other assessments and tests are starting to be interpreted, but are not yet being used effectively to plan the curriculum. Similarly, they are not yet being used to set targets for individuals and group of pupils within the school. Overall, the use of assessment information in planning the curriculum is under-developed. This is a priority of the review of the assessment policy, which is now taking place.

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Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

45. The school has improved on the effective support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development noted in the last inspection. Pupils' moral and social development is promoted very well. There is also good provision for their spiritual development. Pupils' cultural development is promoted satisfactorily. This quality of support is evident in the heart of the school, where pupils' work about sharing and playing in the playground and stories about the negative effects of greed are displayed in the central hall.

46. The school has taken great strides forward in developing pupils' spiritual awareness. This is now promoted effectively through some religious education lessons. Pupils reflect on factors that affect their own lives, such as worry for example, before going to discuss how they can deal with this. In assemblies, there is always a moment of quiet reflection or prayer when pupils consider spiritual matters. Regular visitors from local church and Christian groups also make a very positive contribution to pupils' understanding. In one such assembly, pupils were entranced by an exciting story about setting a good example. In some lessons, pupils step beyond routine tasks and experience a real sense of wonder. This was evident in an early years session, when the teacher brought out a pair of golden slippers from her special bag.

47. Pupils' moral development is very well promoted. Staff are very positive about the value of good behaviour. They show pupils how much they value this by constantly praising and rewarding their efforts to behave well. In class, for example, groups gain merit marks for behaving well, working hard and tidying up sensibly. Each week there is an achievement assembly in which individual pupil's good work and behaviour is celebrated in the class 'Golden Book'. The whole school congratulates the named pupil for their achievements. The school has worked hard since the last inspection to improve lunchtime behaviour and midday supervisors have a positive approach. They encourage pupils to behave well and join with them in playground games. Pupils are reminded of classroom and playground rules by the simple rules displayed around the school.

48. Pupils are encouraged to relate to others sensitively. Staff act as very good role models, are quietly spoken and considerate of the needs of others. Consequently, most

pupils try to emulate this behaviour and work and play together very well. Sensible staggering of morning playtimes helps the younger pupils to build up good relationships in a smaller group. Pupils are shown that they are valued through displays such as the ones in Year 1 that welcome each child to their new class. This helps them to value themselves as well as their friends. Pupils are expected to take on responsibility for looking after equipment and even the youngest children manage to tidy away their plates, knives and forks at the end of lunch. Older pupils are asked to take on more tasks to ensure the smooth running of the school and are responsible for milk distribution, for example. Pupils are encouraged to think of others and have collected toys for children in Kosova, for instance.

49. Sound provision is made for pupils' cultural development. They learn about European cultural traditions through special events, for example the visits of a brass ensemble and a puppet theatre. Future plans include a visiting writer and trips to a theatre and art gallery. There is less evidence of the celebration of famous artists and good literature on a regular basis. There are no displays, for example, to draw pupils' attention to the work of particular authors. There is some attention paid to non-European cultural traditions, particularly religious festivals, such as Eid and Divali. Year 3 has undertaken some interesting work on Islam and learned more about this from a visitor, who talked to the pupils about special dress and customs. Generally, there is little opportunity to celebrate non-European art and music. At the moment, the school does not have a multicultural policy and the school environment does not sufficiently reflect the rich cultural traditions represented by pupils in the school.

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

50. The effective promotion of pupils' welfare, which was reported after the previous inspection has been maintained and developed. All members of staff know the pupils well. They work successfully to create a safe and secure learning environment. In general, they monitor pupils' academic progress and personal development effectively. The systematic reviews of the progress and development of all pupils each term are used to identify pupils with potential special educational needs. The school monitors the progress of pupils with special educational needs well. Records are kept meticulously and the procedures for the reviews of pupils' individual education plans are good.

51. The behaviour policy is well established and underpins the approach of all members of staff to good pupil management. Teachers and support staff are vigilant and consistent in their monitoring and management of behaviour. They are almost invariably friendly and non-confrontational and command great respect from the pupils. The strength and effectiveness of behaviour management in lessons extends to assemblies and breaktimes. The staff stress the importance of good relations and consideration for others and they make it clear that rudeness, aggression and bullying are unacceptable. Any concerns expressed by parents or pupils are investigated and addressed promptly.

52. Parents and pupils receive good support and advice on attendance. The registration procedures are good and the investigation of any absences is thorough, with the headteacher and education welfare officer providing good support for the teachers. These procedures have been tightened this year and this has resulted in improving attendance.

53. The school follows the local authority's child protection procedures well. The headteacher is the member of staff who is responsible for child protection and has received training recently. There is very good liaison with outside agencies and all relevant parties are invited to case discussions. Teaching staff are aware of the procedures to be followed but there has been no training in recent years for support staff.

54. The school has based its good health and safety policy and practice on the comprehensive local authority guidelines. The governors, who have responsibility for health, safety and security, use their considerable industrial experience for the benefit of the school. The formal health and safety inspections, which are carried out each term, are recorded and reported to the full meetings of the governing body. The governors and staff are concerned that some of the paving stones at the side of the building need repair and the library has been taken out of action because of concerns for the safety of the pupils on the steep staircase. All electrical equipment, fire appliances, play equipment and fire alarms are tested regularly. The fire drills each term are recorded in the diary by the headteacher. Aspects of hygiene, health and personal safety are covered well in lessons and assemblies with valuable contributions from the school nurse, police and fire brigade. Parents and governors are concerned that parking outside the school gates presents dangers to pupils. Governors are working vigorously with local community groups to address this concern.

· **Partnership with parents and the community**

55. Staff and governors have made great efforts to address the issue identified in the previous inspection, to build on the good relationship between the school and parents in order to increase their involvement in the life of the school. Few parents help in school on a regular basis, particularly in lessons, but there is very good attendance at concerts and assemblies and many parents help with school trips. Most parents attend the consultation meetings each term and some help with home reading. Parents find the school open and welcoming and many talk to teachers at the beginning and end of the school day. The school has built up a good relationship with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and tries to involve them in discussions about their children's progress. Parents are invited to the termly reviews of their children's progress and many take up this offer.

56. The school is active in providing opportunities to meet the parents of the new reception children. A home link teacher from the local authority visits parents and children at home prior to entry and runs one afternoon session a week for the children in the half term before they begin school. This helps both children and parents to ease into school gradually and to become familiar with faces and routines before they come every day. There are good links with local playgroups and nurseries, which helps the children to make the step into formal schooling. Parents are invited into the classroom to help settle the children in the early weeks. Staff are preparing story packs for parents to work with their children in lessons.

57. The brochure and annual report to parents are well prepared and presented and provide good information on all aspects of school life. The frequent letters and newsletters give good details of the curriculum, including topics, and good notice of future events. The annual pupil reports cover all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. They provide information on the achievements of the individual pupils but place more emphasis on strengths rather than any weaknesses that need to be addressed.

58. The well-established links with the nearby middle school have been developing well since the appointment of the new headteacher. There are good preparations and arrangements for the transfer of pupils at the end of Year 3. These pupils have opportunities for early visits to their new schools and staff from the middle schools also make visits. The local Radcliffe community is a strong cluster group and there are regular meetings between the headteachers. Subject and special educational needs co-ordinators from the cluster schools meet regularly and this helps to ensure consistency in preparing pupils for the later stages of Key Stage 2.

59. The school nurse, school doctor, health visitors, police, fire brigade and road safety advisers all visit regularly and give good support. An appreciation of the wider community is fostered through a number of visitors to the school. For example, a leader from the local mosque and the local Methodist minister take assemblies and a local historian brings artefacts and displays into the school. An African musician and a Ukrainian dancer are other recent visitors. The headteacher is seeking to involve companies from the construction industry in school activities. The school has applied for and recently been awarded a grant from the Thames Valley Partnership for work on rule making, rule enforcing and assertive behaviour.

- **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

- **Leadership and management**

60. The new headteacher exercises strong leadership and is establishing a clear educational direction for the school. In her first term she established effective relationships with governors, staff, parents and the local community and has identified clear priorities for further improvement. She is committed to building on the school's positive ethos and to raising standards. In this she is well supported by an enthusiastic governing body and dedicated and committed staff team. Throughout the school, good relationships prevail and an effective learning environment has been created. For some years, the school has had no deputy, a situation created by budgetary rather than strategic considerations. The headteacher is assisted by a senior management team, consisting of the most experienced members of staff. However, roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined within this team and its impact on standards is not clear.

61. After the last inspection, the school put into place a robust action plan and has been successful in addressing most of the key issues identified. Provision for the under-fives has been transformed and this is now an area of strength. The teaching of religious education is better and standards have been raised. Much continues to be done to involve parents fully in the life of the school, although their response is sometimes disappointing. Governors have a much more prominent role. The school development plan now has a more central role in outlining the school's development.

62. Least progress has been made with regard to the role of curriculum co-ordinators. Whilst they have successfully developed their role in relation to support and advice, procedures for them to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of planning, standards and provision in their subjects remain under-developed. For example, they do not routinely analyse performance data and assessment papers in order to identify trends and set

targets for improvement. Similarly, whilst the headteacher has observed teachers and given feedback on an informal basis, the systematic evaluation of teaching and learning is not established.

63. The headteacher has consolidated the school's aims around three short statements, which outline the central mission of the school. The school is successful in fulfilling each of these. A safe and secure learning environment has been created, based on respect between pupils and between adults and pupils. The school does have a commitment to high standards, as evidenced by the beginning of a register of very able pupils. However, this is not made explicit through the aims and currently no targets have been set in order to measure improvement. The school has a range of policies which underline its work, although several of these are out of date and need revision to consolidate current practice. Similarly, the governors' statement of curriculum aims needs to be updated to reflect current initiatives.

64. The governing body has developed considerably since the last inspection and with a number of new, enthusiastic members is well placed for further improvement. Governors are very supportive of the school and a number are active in its daily life. They fulfil their legal responsibilities effectively through a number of committees, which have delegated responsibilities and report back to the full governing body. Each governor has a curriculum responsibility and visits the school to monitor their areas. Governors also monitor the results of statutory assessments. At the moment, governors do not have a great deal of involvement in the construction of the school development plan and have no formal mechanisms for monitoring its progress. Statutory responsibilities are met.

65. The school development plan is now central to the improvement of the school. It has a long-term perspective and identifies clearly roles and responsibilities, timescales and costings. Success criteria are identified although these are not always expressed in terms of gains in pupils' learning. Teachers are fully involved in its construction and implementation and curriculum co-ordinators draw up action plans to supplement the plan. However, links between the school development plan and the budget are not well established. For example, the system for the allocation of resources to curriculum areas is not explicit and co-ordinators are not given budgets to spend.

66. The school has a clear commitment to equality of opportunity and this is evidenced by its provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. The experienced special needs co-ordinator is responsible for the co-ordination of this area. She is a class teacher and this responsibility means that she does not work with specific groups or have the opportunity to monitor teaching and pupils' progress within lessons. She manages the administrative side of the job very well. The policy has been updated since the last inspection and is now being reviewed. There are currently some omissions in this otherwise helpful document. There is a newly appointed governor with responsibility for special educational needs and she has a clear picture of the level and provision in the school. The annual report to parents is very detailed and all statutory requirements are met. The school is still absorbing the impact of a recent and significant increase in the numbers of pupils with English as an additional language. Currently, there is no policy and the management of this area is subsumed under special educational needs. The school is aware that this situation is unsatisfactory and is planning to address the issue shortly with the advice and support of the local authority.

· **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

67. Staffing levels are satisfactory overall. Teachers are suitably qualified and experienced to match most of the demands of the National Curriculum and requirements for the under-fives. Staff expertise in information technology is limited, however. Whilst training needs in this area have been identified, they have yet to be met. Teachers are well supported by a generous level of support staff. These members of staff are very committed and make a significant contribution to the classroom organisation, the quality of the curriculum and levels of caring throughout the school. They have received appropriate training. The school is particularly well staffed in the reception class, where both support assistants are qualified nursery nurses. The school is well supported by external agencies, such as social services and the educational psychologist.

68. There has been no cohesive policy for staff training, although teachers have a commitment to continuing professional development. For example, all staff have received training in literacy and numeracy and this has contributed to the successful implementation of the national strategies. The recently appointed headteacher has made a positive start in improving the arrangements for staff development and in linking these to whole school priorities and needs. All teachers have had an interview and a follow-up meeting to address their professional development needs. Staff appraisal has fallen into abeyance, as it has throughout the local authority. The school is sensibly awaiting the introduction of the new scheme proposed to start next autumn. A good quality system exists for the induction of newly qualified teachers and this follows national requirements. The current newly qualified teacher feels well supported. However, there are no set procedures for the induction of all teachers new to the school. There is a staff development policy but this needs revisiting to consolidate these areas of professional development, appraisal and induction.

69. The accommodation consists of a well-maintained main building and an annexe for the early years department, both constructed early in the 1970's. The accommodation is adequate for the number and age of pupils and allows the curriculum to be effectively taught. The library, however, is located in an upstairs room, and has recently been closed due to safety concerns about the stairs and banisters leading to the room. Apart from the location of the library all parts of the main building are accessible to the disabled. Toilet areas were clean and in good condition, though there was on occasion an unpleasant odour from the toilets near to Year 2 and 3 classes. The school benefits from a good sized hall which doubles as a canteen at lunch times. The early years unit has a courtyard which is used for the use of wheeled toys, but this is limited in area and floods easily, restricting its use. Staff try to make the environment of the school attractive and welcoming for pupils and visitors but there are few vibrant displays of pupils' work. The school has spacious grounds, with both soft and hard play areas, as well as a wild area.

70. In general, the school has adequate supplies of books, equipment and materials to meet the demands of the National Curriculum and the needs of the under-fives. Resources for the teaching of physical education are good. The provision of books is quite low and this is exacerbated by the current closure of the library. In particular there is a lack of poetry books. Where there are shortages in resources, teachers supplement these through loans of artefacts for example in history and religious education. There is an adequate number of computers but some of these are old and of limited capability.

The efficiency of the school

71. Since the previous inspection, the governors have become increasingly active in strategic planning, decision-making and budget setting. The transfer of control of the local schools to a new unitary authority two years ago resulted in an extended period of uncertainty about the income available to the schools. This uncertainty was heightened at the end of the last financial year when the headteacher of the neighbouring middle school was seconded to Greenleys for a term, before the current headteacher took up her post. Some financial confusion over salaries ensued, as a result of which it appeared that the school would end the financial year considerably in deficit. This issue has been resolved and the school is now in a healthier financial position. In spite of these problems the overall quality of financial planning in the school is sound and the school should be in credit by the end of this year. The recent budgets have met the school's key priorities while maintaining essential levels of staffing and resources. The staff and governors plan well to provide the flexibility to manage variations in pupil numbers in different year groups. The headteacher and governors are now actively preparing longer-term strategic and financial plans. They monitor all areas of expenditure closely to seek possible savings and better value for money.

72. The overall deployment of teaching staff is satisfactory. However, the current arrangements result in a large class in Year 3, particularly during the afternoons and this has a negative effect on the progress of the pupils in some lessons. The deployment of support staff is good. The overall use of accommodation is satisfactory, although the current ban on the use of the library for reasons of safety is an inefficient use of the space and resources. The wild area is not as effectively used as it was at the time of the last inspection. In general, resources are used efficiently except computers, which were substantially under-utilised during the inspection.

73. The school administration is very efficient and gives good support to the staff, governors, parents and pupils. The filing systems are in good order and information is readily available to those who need it. The good routines that are in place ensure that the school runs smoothly throughout the week. The records of the main account are kept well and up to date. The staff follow the procedures laid down for the ordering and payment of goods and services. The most recent auditor's report found the main procedures and controls to be in good order and made a few suggestions for minor improvements, all of which the school has implemented. The secretary manages the new accounting system well and produces regular, valuable and intelligible financial reports for the staff and governors. The school fund accounts are in good order and are audited properly each year.

74. The overall use of specific grants and funds for pupils with special educational needs is good with the school spending additional income on the support staff available to these pupils. The school accounts properly for the expenditure on staff development through the standards funds.

75. The unit costs per pupil for a school of this size, the socio-economic circumstances and well below average attainment of the pupils on entry to the school; set against the satisfactory or better progress of most pupils, their good attitudes and behaviour and the good quality of much of the teaching means that the school is providing satisfactory value for money.

· **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

· **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

76. The school has made considerable progress in the provision for children under five, which was a weak area at the time of the last inspection. A new early years department has been established under the clear guidance of an experienced teacher and it is now a strength of the school.

77. Children start school in the term after their fourth birthday and join a class in the early years department. This term all the children are in the reception year, but in the spring and summer term some children will be in their pre-reception year. At the moment there is only one class, but this will be split into two during the year, when numbers increase. About half of the children have had some pre-school experience in nurseries or playgroups, for the rest starting school is their first step away from home. When they start school, baseline assessment shows that children's experiences, skills and understanding are wide ranging but well below average overall. This is particularly so in the area of language development. Many children have very limited vocabularies and some have specific speech problems. They make very good progress in their personal and social development and good progress in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative and physical development. By the time that they are five, most pupils have reached the recommended desirable learning outcomes in their personal, social, creative and physical development. Some children reach the desirable learning outcomes in language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. Many children, however, in spite of the good progress made, do not reach these levels because their limited vocabulary skills inhibit the growth of their understanding in these particular areas.

Personal and social development

78. Children make rapid progress in their personal and social development when they begin school and quickly adapt to new routines. All are at home in their new surroundings and when they come in at the beginning of each session move confidently to their own chosen activity. Most relate very well to other children and work and play in happy collaboration. This very good progress is fostered by the freedom that the staff give the children within a structured framework. There is a good balance between activities that children choose to do, often in partnership with their friends, and those directed by the staff. In directed group and class sessions, for example, children have already learnt that they have to listen when someone else is speaking and take turns in speaking themselves.

Children know the difference between right and wrong and have made good progress in adapting to school conventions, such as lining up to walk over to the main school building.

They make very good progress in looking after themselves. In the dining hall, for example, most manage a knife and fork well and, with a little help, are able to change their clothes for physical education.

Language and literacy

79. Many children start school with a quite limited vocabulary range. A few also have specific speech problems and find it hard to pronounce some words. They make good

progress in their first few weeks and although these inherent difficulties remain, most children are very confident conversationalists. The very good teaching in this area fosters this confidence. All staff take particular care to introduce new words to children when they are leading a particular activity. They also talk to the children at every opportunity to help them to develop their spoken language skills. Children practise their speaking skills in several contexts. These include speaking to the whole class in discussions, talking about specific tasks in small groups and to their friends while they are playing. Children enjoy looking at books. Staff encourage them to take books home to share with their carer or parents and this also fosters their early start as readers. Staff share books and stories with the children and 'Jack and Jill' formed the basis for several activities. Children used pictures, for example, to successfully sequence the story and looked at the letter 'j' in their work on phonics. Formal teaching on writing skills goes alongside opportunities for children to write for a purpose. Children learn how to write their names, for example, by tracing over the teacher's writing. They also write out prescriptions and appointment cards in the clinic, clearly understanding that print conveys meaning.

Mathematics

80. Children make good progress in developing their numeracy skills and mathematical language. Some children count confidently to ten. Many are beginning to grasp the relationship between numbers and objects and match one object to another. They match one teddy to one bowl, for example. When working on the number two in one session, children were talking about pairs of shoes and showed good development in mathematical language. They suggested that when two shoes were put together it could be called a match, repeating pattern or pair. In another session, children made 'Peter and Paul' from card and feathers and the assistant used this as a good basis for talking about one more and one less. Children clearly grasped what happened when one more was added.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

81. Children are beginning to understand about the passing of time. They have been studying babies this term and appreciate that they have changed since they were born. They understand their own place within their families. They talk confidently about their daily lives and relate what they know to their imaginative play. In the 'baby clinic', for example, children change nappies, feed babies and give birth, confident in their own interpretation of reality. One little girl was determined to feed her baby weatabix, for example, 'because he already has a tooth'. The staff use class sessions well to extend children's understanding. In one such session, for example, the teacher showed the children various combs, brushes and shampoos as a basis for discussion about hair care. In another, children looked at shoes to talk about a range of activities. Children encounter new experiences with confidence. Most enjoy working on the computers, for example, and many already show good control of the mouse.

Physical development

82. Children move confidently in the early years classroom and in the playground, with due regard for other children. They use the school hall for some lessons and, at these times, they use the space well. In one session, they used pairs of shoes as a stimulus for movement in different ways. They danced in imaginary ballet shoes, for example, or

waded through mud in wellingtons. The children changed appropriately for the session and managed dressing and undressing well. At other times, children go into the early years courtyard in small groups to use the wheeled toys and small apparatus. They control these well. This area tends to flood in wet weather and so its use is limited. Children are developing fine motor skills and manipulate small toys and construction equipment carefully. Many use scissors well and are developing their pencil and brush control.

Creative development

83. Children make good progress in developing their creative skills because of the many and varied activities available for them. They have daily opportunities to paint, draw and use 'playdough'. They also join in more structured activities when they are taught specific skills. They have all painted themselves as babies, for example, and used colour well. They sing frequently and the staff use songs and rhymes well to reinforce work on number. Children have opportunities to make up their own stories in collaboration with their friends. They use the 'baby clinic' and adjacent home corner well for this. Other children use the small world toys well to act out their own fantasies, although these are not always articulated.

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ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

84. The results of national tests in 1998 show that pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is well below average in both reading and writing, with pupils doing slightly better in writing. This repeats the pattern of recent years. The percentage reaching nationally expected levels has been below average and very few reach higher levels, particularly in writing. Although national comparisons are not yet available, in 1999 only about three-quarters of Year 2 reached expected levels in both reading and writing. A small proportion reached a higher level in reading, but not in writing. When compared to schools with pupils from similar socio-economic backgrounds, attainment at Greenleys is about average in writing and below average in reading. A consistent feature of attainment has been the relatively low levels of attainment of boys in reading and writing compared with the girls. Whilst girls' performance has steadily improved towards the national average, particularly in reading, boys' attainment remains very low.

85. The inspection found that attainment remains below average in speaking and listening, reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1 and when pupils leave the school in Year 3. Overall, this is a very similar picture to the last inspection of the school, although girls are now doing slightly better. The school adopted the National Literacy Strategy at the beginning of last year although, so far, this has had no impact on pupils' performance in tests. Pupils have, however, acquired more of an understanding about how language works and are developing a wider grammatical and phonological vocabulary.

86. Pupils in Year 1 build on the good progress made in the early years class and make satisfactory progress in all areas of English. This progress is not as good for all pupils when there is a lack of additional support in lessons. Pupils make good progress in Year 2 as a consequence of the focused and lively teaching. In Year 3, pupils make satisfactory

progress, which is fostered well by the additional support from the learning support assistants. Pupils with special educational needs are often supported by the teacher or an assistant and make sound progress with this extra help. Higher attainers do not always make as much progress as they might, particularly in writing, as they are given too few opportunities to write for a range of purposes.

87. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress overall because teachers are aware of their needs and plan special work for them. They do not always have sufficient opportunity to develop their spoken language within the activity part of the literacy hour.

88. Most opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills lie within the class introduction to lessons. In all subjects, teachers make a special effort to extend pupils' vocabulary and words to be introduced are noted in planning. Most pupils listen very carefully to their teachers in these sessions and some contribute enthusiastically. Most pupils speak confidently, but it is evident that for some pupils a lack of precise vocabulary impedes their ability to express themselves clearly or to understand what they are being told. One Year 3 boy, for example, showed his collection of acorns to the class. He knew that squirrels ate them, but did not know what they were called. Sometimes pupils share their work with each other and, on these occasions, read their work clearly with due attention to the audience. Circle time is also used well to develop pupils' confidence and at these times most pupils speak confidently and make themselves understood. The last inspection found that teachers used a limited range of activities to develop speaking and listening skills. This is still the case to some extent and pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their skills through role-play or discussion in small groups. Some pupils have difficulty in articulating clearly, which makes it difficult for them to learn their initial sounds.

89. Most pupils approach reading tasks sensibly and try hard to read accurately. They concentrate more on sounding out the words than enjoying the story. This is largely because staff place great emphasis on teaching the mechanics of reading. Pupils in all classes learn to recognise letters and sounds and use this knowledge to help them to read the printed word. This works well when the words are read within the context of a story and pupils see that reading has some purpose and meaning. In some classes 'big books' are used well to keep a good balance between the excitement of the story and work on reading strategies. Sometimes pupils do not work with books in the literacy hour and find it hard to relate the work that they have undertaken on sounds to reading texts. Pupils work individually through a published reading scheme. There are fewer opportunities for adults in school to share books with individual pupils. Although pupils are asked to take books home to share with parents and carers, the support they receive varies. Those who read at home tend to read more fluently than those who do not. The school has chosen to spend money on sets of reading scheme books and pupils have fewer opportunities to work with a range of good quality texts in some classes. There are few displays to draw pupils into a love of reading. There is a range of non-fiction and fiction texts in the library, but this is currently out of use and so pupils have limited opportunities to develop their research skills. Overall this provision is adequate, although there are insufficient poetry books. A few older pupils know how to use a contents and index page, but their study skills are not well developed.

90. Pupils learn to write in a structured way. They progress from tracing to copy writing

and then onto independent writing. Most pupils are writing independently by the time they reach Year 2. In Year 3, there has been no significant move forward in planning, drafting and editing work since the last inspection. Pupils develop their writing skills across the curriculum, although there are few opportunities for independent writing. The school has decided to allocate a short period each term for pupils to write at length and last term pupils wrote some imaginative stories about a greedy zebra and King Midas. Across the school, there is some breadth and range in the writing activities; thank you letters in Year 3, instructions in Year 2 and little books about themselves in Year 1. However, there is not sufficient breadth in the writing tasks within each year group. Pupils are building up spelling strategies, which are fostered well in the literacy hour. Pupils are developing handwriting skills. Many younger pupils find pencil control difficult and find it hard to write evenly. This improves as they move into Key Stage 2, although sometimes pupils' writing is too small and their work is not well presented.

91. Most pupils behave well in lessons. They listen carefully to their teachers and settle quickly to the tasks set. When they are asked to, they work very well together. Most pupils enjoy books and stories but they find it difficult to talk about the books they have read. Some are avid and enthusiastic readers at home, although this tends to be the more fluent readers. There is evidence to suggest that some of the other pupils are less enthusiastic about reading at home.

92. The quality of teaching is predominantly satisfactory in Years 1 and 3 and always good or better in Year 2. Strengths in the teaching overall are the very conscientious way in which teachers have implemented the Literacy Strategy and the good use made of learning support assistants to work with groups. In the better lessons, teachers use texts well as a basis for the work. In these lessons, they prepare good quality worksheets and are very well organised. Consequently pupils are interested, know exactly what they have to do and make good progress. In the unsatisfactory lesson, some of the activities planned for the pupils were too hard and so they did not make any progress. Generally, all teachers give pupils good verbal feedback on how they are doing. Written records tend to concentrate on the acquisition of phonic skills and there is little written evidence of pupils' reading preferences or progress in writing. The co-ordinator has begun to monitor the implementation of the Literacy Strategy. Staff are aware that they now need to evaluate the information provided in order to identify strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision.

Mathematics

93. The results of national tests in 1998 indicate that pupils' attainment is well below the national average overall at the age of seven. Whilst the great majority of pupils reached the expected level, none did better. When compared to schools with pupils with similar backgrounds as Greenleys, however, standards are broadly average. This repeats the pattern of the last few years and the findings of the last inspection. Although national comparisons are not yet available, the 1999 results were similar. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

94. The inspection evidence confirms that standards remain below average overall, although there is evidence of improving attainment in Year 2 as a result of the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and some focused teaching. Most pupils are working at expected levels but few are exceeding these. The attainment of

pupils in Year 3 is also below average when they leave the school as there are few working at the higher levels.

95. Throughout the school, pupils generally make satisfactory progress in the acquisition of number skills and in other areas of mathematics. In all year groups there are high numbers of pupils with special educational needs. These pupils make at least satisfactory progress due to above average levels of support from classroom assistants. Similarly, pupils with English as an additional language progress at the same rate as their peers through good levels of support. In some lessons, higher attaining pupils do not make as much progress when the work set is unchallenging for them.

96. Pupils in Year 1 can throw a dice and add one more to the number. They count up to twenty from a smaller number. They understand simple mathematical vocabulary, such as more or less, and can do simple mental calculations giving answers orally. Some count double numbers to thirty. Pupils with special educational needs follow simple instructions to draw one door, two trees, three windows and so on. In Year 2, many pupils can count orally in twos to thirty, others count in twos to sixteen and to twelve. Pupils recognise pairs. Many can count back and count on. They double numbers and the higher attainers recognise that by halving a number you will find its double. In Year 3, all pupils can count back in hundreds from a thousand to zero. Pupils have a sound understanding of place value. They order jumbled numbers up to a hundred on a number line. Across the school, pupils are taught the importance of quick and accurate mental mathematics.

97. Pupils generally enjoy mathematics and take part with enthusiasm. In Key Stage 1, they mostly listen well and are attentive in initial sessions and many are keen to volunteer and apply knowledge. However, in a minority of lessons pupils were restless and disengaged in the task due to unsatisfactory classroom management. Pupils generally move to the main activity and practical activities quickly settling to the task and sustaining interest throughout. In Year 1 pupils are paired effectively so that higher attainers support and give confidence to those of lower attainment. Pupils co-operate and share resources well for the most part and are supportive of the work of others. In Year 3, pupils mostly listen well and sustain satisfactory levels of concentration. A minority of boys find it difficult to remain on task without the regular intervention of the teacher or classroom assistant. Throughout the school, pupils' response to questions is satisfactory and improves as lessons progress and their confidence increases. Occasionally, pupils lose focus and motivation when they find lessons uninteresting.

98. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, although in one lesson it was poor. Throughout the school, there is a consistently good standard of planning, which identifies clearly what pupils are expected to learn as a result of the lesson. Planning clearly identifies different activities for the different ability groups. Mostly these are challenging but this is not always the case for the higher attainers. Where teaching is most effective, teachers set a good pace and engage in good quality, direct teaching throughout the lesson. In these lessons, mental and oral activities at the start of lesson are brisk, activities in the main task are clearly explained and the plenary session consolidates what pupils have learnt. Teachers are starting to use questions effectively to test and extend pupil knowledge and understanding. Where teaching is weak, the teacher is unsuccessful in accomplishing the objective of the lesson as a result of poor classroom management. In consequence, discipline is unsatisfactory allowing the pupils to become restless and disengaged from the activities. Throughout the school, teachers do not provide

opportunities for pupils to use information technology to support and deepen learning in mathematics. Classroom assistants make an effective contribution to the teaching of mathematics in the classes where they are deployed. Number squares, number lines and mathematical vocabulary are displayed, although there is limited display of pupils' own work to strengthen and give value to their learning in mathematics.

99. The successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is already having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and there is evidence that it is beginning to raise standards. The introduction of the Strategy has been well managed and resourced adequately. However, there is currently no provision for the monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy at the planning or classroom levels.

100. The school allocates appropriate time to the teaching of mathematics and there are good links with other areas of the curriculum. For example, in science data is collected and presented in a variety of mathematical forms. Currently assessment procedures are inadequate. The co-ordinator recognises this weakness and half-termly assessments of pupils' attainment are planned as part of the review of the school policy. Although pupils' performance in national tests is analysed, the information gathered is not used sufficiently to review the curriculum and to plan for future learning. Monitoring of the curriculum takes place through informal scrutiny of planning and the co-ordinator's discussions with staff. Opportunities do not currently exist for the co-ordinator to monitor through classroom visits. Teachers monitor the work of pupils in lessons effectively. Marking is satisfactory and, on occasions, teachers record their assessment comments.

Science

· 101. In the 1998 national assessments of seven-year-olds, the percentage of pupils attaining expected levels was well below average. However, the proportion reaching higher levels was broadly average. This generally follows attainment patterns over the previous four years and the findings of the last inspection. However, whilst national comparisons are not yet available, the 1999 results were significantly better. Almost all pupils reached the expected level and a few did better.

102. Inspection findings confirm this picture of improving standards at the end of Key Stage 1, with the great majority of pupils reaching the expected level, with a small number doing better. Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils make at least sound progress in relation to their knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers. This progress accelerates towards the end of Key Stage 1 but levels off again in Year 3. Throughout the school, progress is less marked in relation to the skills of experimental and investigative science. Too much 'investigative' work is tightly controlled by the teacher and closed off with unchallenging worksheets. Pupils are given too few opportunities to formulate their own questions and conduct their own investigations. This has a particularly adverse effect on the progress of the highest attaining pupils. A significant contributory factor is that time allocations for science are relatively low, leaving little time for investigative work. In Year 3, this is exacerbated by the class organisation in the afternoons when science takes place. During these lessons there are more than 40 pupils in the class, which makes practical work particularly difficult. In this aspect, the school's provision has declined since the last inspection, when the attention given to investigative work was commended.

103. Pupils develop a sound understanding of life processes and living things as they move through the school. They acquire knowledge about a range of living things and can describe the conditions necessary for their survival. For example, in Year 1, pupils describe the changes that Autumn brings to the trees. They recognise and name the external parts of the human body. They distinguish the pupil from the iris in the human eye, noting the colour of their own eyes and comparing them with others in the class. In Year 2, they sort food into groups such as grain, dairy, meat and vegetables. They also consider the difference between healthy and favourite options. In Year 3, pupils sort minibeasts into groups according to a variety of criteria. They know the conditions needed to sustain growth in plants.

104. Pupils' knowledge of materials and their properties also develops appropriately as they move through the school. In Year 1, they sort materials such as wood, glass, metal and fabric according to their properties. In Year 2, this understanding is developed as pupils consider why various materials are used for particular purposes, for example glass for windows and metal for scissors. In Year 3, they continue with this work considering, for example, which fabrics are best suited for a variety of purposes. They conduct various experiments with waterproofing to decide which is the most successful before designing umbrellas and hats for a teddy or doll.

105. Throughout the school, pupils make similarly appropriate progress in relation to their understanding of physical processes. In Year 1, they know that light comes from a variety of sources and identify some of those sources. In Year 2, they identify a range of household utensils that require electricity and those that do not. In Year 3, pupils build on this work, constructing simple circuits and identifying what is needed to complete the circuit. They understand how light travels from a source and how objects are seen by the eye.

106. Mostly, pupils have satisfactory attitudes towards their learning and, in some lessons, they are enthusiastic. They particularly enjoy practical activities when given the opportunity and participate in these with enthusiasm. In initial sessions pupils are mainly attentive, keen to answer questions and contribute ideas. At times, they are able to maintain concentration and interest for long periods. For example, when pupils in Year 2 were asking questions about the development of babies. In some lessons, however, pupils find it difficult to sustain focus and become increasingly more restless when asked to sit for long periods of time. This is exacerbated when they have been sitting listening for most of the day. In follow-up activities most pupils are able to remain on task and co-operate well for the most part.

107. In Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching is inconsistent, ranging considerably from good to unsatisfactory. In Year 3, the lesson seen was unsatisfactory. Throughout the school, a consistently good feature of the teaching is the planning, which identifies clearly what pupils are expected to know or understand as a result of the lesson. Also good links are made with other areas of the curriculum, for example mathematical data from science lessons is represented in a variety of ways. Information technology, however, is not used to support work in science. In the good lessons, teachers enjoy positive relationships with pupils and manage their classes well. They prepare very well for lessons and use questions skilfully to develop pupils' thinking and understanding. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, the classes were visited by parents with babies of varying ages. The teachers used questions well to develop pupils' understanding of human development, focusing on

similarities and differences at different stages of development. Where the teaching is weaker, teachers do not set challenging enough activities, particularly for the higher attainers. Sometimes, this is compounded by ineffective classroom management or insecure subject knowledge. Overall, the quality of teaching has declined from the last inspection, when it was consistently good in both key stages.

108. The headteacher took over the role of co-ordinator when she arrived as the previous post holder had left. She has established a robust action plan for the current year. Currently the quality of the curriculum and the impact of teaching are insufficiently monitored. The school is using the published scheme from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority as the basis of its planning and intends to review this in the Spring Term in the light of revisions to the National Curriculum for September 2000. Procedures for assessment in science are inconsistent and do not provide a firm basis for measuring pupils' attainment as well informing the next stage of pupils' learning. The school's policy for science is several years old and will need to be rewritten to reflect and underline current practice. The school has extensive grounds, including a wild area, which is less well used than it was at the time of the last inspection.

· **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

· **Information Technology**

109. The teaching of information technology takes place in short, fifteen minute sessions which are combined with 'milk' time. The use of computers was not seen at any other time. Evidence is based on these sessions, pupils' work and discussions with the co-ordinator and pupils. It is clear that pupils' attainment is well below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and when they leave the school in Year 3. The progress of pupils is poor throughout the school. Standards have fallen significantly since the last inspection.

110. Most pupils know the main part of the computer and can name, for example, the keyboard, space bar and mouse. They do not use information technology routinely to communicate ideas in writing or in symbols and most do not know how to enter, save and retrieve information. Most are unaware of the potential of information technology or its applications to everyday life.

111. Pupils' progress is poor because they have insufficient opportunities to use information technology in its many forms, for example word processing, data handling and modelling. Pupils have too few opportunities to develop and progress. Information technology has a low priority in the school. It is not used to support other areas of learning and pupils usually have access to computers when other tasks are completed. Few opportunities exist for collaborative and independent learning. Pupils do not see the potential of information technology as a tool for learning and investigation in other areas of the curriculum.

112. Overall the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. There are several reasons for this. The teaching of information technology takes place in the short sessions before or after break. Its status is devalued by its combination with the consumption of milk, which also serves as a session for the development of personal and social skills. The whole class is involved in these sessions and pupils have very little opportunity to have 'hands on'

experience. Some teachers use this session to reinforce pupils' knowledge of the basic functions of the keyboard, mouse and return bar, sometimes with the aid of helpful flashcards. However, often the teaching in these sessions is more about other areas of the curriculum rather than specific computer skills. For example, in one session, pupils sat round a computer and guessed what numbers a monster would eat from a hundred square. The teacher's vocabulary was mathematical and pupils were learning about number patterns in mathematics. The teacher controlled the keyboard and no reference to any learning in information technology was made. This was not untypical and in most sessions one pupil at a time would press a single button and return to the carpet.

113. Teachers lack confidence and competency in the teaching of the subject. This has been recognised in an analysis of training needs but these have yet to be addressed. The organisation of the school day does not give sufficient prominence or time to information technology and teachers do not recognise the potential of computers in their planning for other subjects. The co-ordinator has an interest in the subject but does not have the knowledge or expertise to lead staff at the moment. The equipment is adequate, although some of it is quite old. However it is not fully utilised.

Religious Education

114. Most pupils meet the requirements of the local Agreed Syllabus at the end of Key Stage 1 and are working at appropriate levels in Year 3. All pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their knowledge of religious belief and how people's beliefs effect their daily lives. This marks an improvement from the last inspection when standards were low.

115. One of the important factors in this improvement has been the development of a scheme of work, which gives clear guidance to teachers about learning objectives, suggested activities and resources. Work is organised in units that are relevant to pupils' lives. Consequently, pupils find the work interesting and make sound progress in developing their understanding and building up their knowledge of religion. In Key Stage 1, for example, pupils in Year 1 looked at birthdays in their work on special celebrations. They related this to feelings of happiness and thought carefully about what they would give to someone to bring them happiness. In Year 2, pupils thought about their worries within the context of relationships. They also shared their worries with each other and considered who else they might share them with. Their concerns reflected the individuality of the human spirit and ranged from everyday worries about starting school to concerns that animals might have been blinded by looking at the sun during the eclipse. This term pupils in Year 3 are studying Islam and have built up a bank of knowledge about the faith and religious practices. They know, for example, that the religion is based on the five pillars of Islam. They know that the holy book is called the Koran and that Ramadan is a holy festival. Some are beginning to understand the idea of fasting and the reasons for it. In all classes, pupils record their work on pieces of paper and sometimes in small books, like the 'all about me' books in Class 1. The collections of paper make it more difficult for pupils to look back over their work to remind them of what they have learnt.

116. Most pupils enjoy work in religious education. Most join in discussions with enthusiasm and are keen to share ideas with their friends. Some pupils in Year 3 were less enthusiastic than their peers and reluctant to ask and answer questions. This was a particularly large group, which made it more difficult for the teacher to involve everyone

actively in the introductory part of the lesson.

117. The quality of the teaching is satisfactory overall, although one good lesson was also seen during the inspection. This marks an improvement from the last inspection when some shortcomings were identified. Strengths in the teaching include the ways in which teachers bring the subject alive by inviting visitors into school and taking pupils to visit places of worship. Recently, for example, a visitor came to talk to pupils about the Moslem faith. She brought hats and scarves for pupils to try on and explained some of the everyday religious practices. The school has not built up the resources significantly since the last inspection, but teachers bring their own artefacts from home or borrow them from friends. Teachers also use drama well to help pupils to understand ideas and customs. Last year, for example, pupils in Key Stage 1 took place in a 'wedding', after one of the teachers had celebrated her own marriage. Pupils dressed up in special clothes and joined the teacher, who wore her wedding dress for the occasion. Assessment of what pupils know and understand is under developed at the moment and teachers do not keep individual records of pupils' progress. There are clear guidelines in the scheme of work for the targets for units of work, which could form a basis for measuring pupils' progress.

· **Art**

118. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection. Other evidence is taken from pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with the co-ordinator. This evidence indicates that pupils make satisfactory progress overall as they move through the school. They make particularly good progress at the end of Key Stage 1. In some aspects of its work the school has made improvements in its provision, for example the work of famous artists is now given much more prominence.

119. Pupils work with appropriate materials and tools to develop skills in a range of techniques. In Key Stage 1, they use pencil and felt tip pens to illustrate work. In Year 2, pupils make good progress in developing skills of observational drawing. In Year 3, some pupils are less successful in their observational drawing, failing to select appropriate colours to draw a Greek pot. The teaching of painting skills is often linked to study of famous artists. Pupils paint effectively in the style of Van Gogh. They look at the work of Rembrandt to develop their own skills in observational drawing. In Year 1, pupils paint pictures of their faces and, in Year 2, this is extended to careful mixing of primary colours to gain appropriate skin tone.

120. In the lesson seen the quality of teaching was very good. The planning was clear and there was very good instruction about approaches and techniques, which fostered good progress. In Year 2, introductions to lessons are sometimes given to both classes and this is effective developing a coherence of approach. Teachers develop good links between different parts of the curriculum. In Year 2, for example, the observational drawing developed from a history lesson comparing Victorian kitchen utensils with those of today and the more recent past. In Year 3, the work on Greek pots was closely related to pupils' history study. The pupils work well and with interest. They often show patience and attention to detail. They are well focused, interested and take pleasure in their tasks, and pride in their finished work.

121. Throughout the school, good use is made of pencil and paint although opportunities

to use other materials such as oil pastels are limited. Planning indicates that pupils also have opportunities to print and to work with fabrics and materials such as clay. Resources are satisfactory and include reproductions of the work of famous artists. Only limited reference is made to the art of other cultures through religious education, for example. Pupils develop an understanding of the richness of the European cultural heritage but insufficient opportunities exist to appreciate the rich contribution to art of non-western cultures. This was a weakness identified in the last inspection. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator, who has collated an effective scheme of work which ensures that pupils' skills are developed systematically. In some classes, displays are carefully presented to show a range of pupils' work. An after-school club is run once a week for pupils in Years 2 and 3. This club is well run and organised by the art co-ordinator and a colleague. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to further practise and extend their skills.

· **Design and Technology**

122. No lessons were seen during the inspection and only a few examples of pupils' work were available. Additional evidence is taken from teachers' planning and discussions with the co-ordinator. It is clear that pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school and that the quality of provision has been maintained, and in some areas, improved upon since the last inspection.

123. In Year 1, pupils design and make a variety of products from materials such as paper, card and plastic cups. For example, they make shakers having designed them on paper to their own individual specifications. The finished products show that they are developing skills in shaping and cutting and apply pleasing finishing touches, such as painting. In Year 2, pupils designed cat masks, having identified what they would need and giving clear step-by-step instructions about how the mask would be made. This resulted in some pleasing finished products. As part of their work on 'cooking through the ages' they gave instructions showing understanding of terms such as boil and melt. In Year 3, pupils designed and made moving buggies from balsa wood to a precise specification. Last year they also designed a package for a particular specified use, a magnetic game and a megaphone.

124. Although no teaching was seen, it is clear from teachers' planning that they have a clear understanding of the requirements of the subject. A range of interesting design and make activities is planned, with the objectives of each clearly identified. Over their three years in the school pupils work with a range of materials in a variety of contexts. However, although the school has a good selection of tools they are under-used because of concerns about health and safety. Similarly, whilst food technology does feature in the curriculum the co-ordinator is seeking to develop this further. A particular feature of the teaching is the very good links that are made with other subjects. For example, activities planned for Year 3 involving the designing of hats and umbrellas is clearly linked to science work on materials. Close connections are made between art and design and make activities. This will prepare the school well for the new National Curriculum in September 2000, which will make these links more explicit.

125. The co-ordinator has done much to raise the profile of the subject in the school and is well aware that the policy and schemes of work will need to be rewritten in the light of the forthcoming changes to the curriculum. Currently the subject rotates with music,

history, geography and art and it will be important to retain a distinctive focus on the subject when new curriculum plans are written for September 2000.

• **Geography**

126. No lessons were seen during the inspection. Evidence is taken from pupils' work, teachers' planning and from talking to pupils and the co-ordinator. Pupils make sound progress throughout the school, both in relation to their acquisition of geographical skills and knowledge of particular places. This indicates an improvement on the situation reported at the last inspection when pupils were given insufficient opportunities to develop the skills of geographical enquiry.

127. In Year 1 pupils undertake fieldwork, studying houses and facilities in the local area. They make a range of comparisons with the seaside. They know their home address and that they live in Milton Keynes. Pupils understand that they live in different areas and start to explain this, using concepts such as nearest and furthest. They begin elementary map work by planning the journey of the 'Billy Goats Gruff'. They relate this to their own environment, finding their way around the school. In Year 2, pupils develop their geographical understanding, identifying physical features of an area such as fields, hills, valleys and lakes. In a study of the Antarctic, they know that it is extremely cold and icy and that this has implications for the animals living in the area. They also develop their understanding of maps and begin to use atlases to locate places. In Year 3, pupils can identify the separate countries of the British Isles on a map and can locate Greece on a map of Europe. They know about the Greek landscape and climate and the effects of this on the way of life of the people, both now and in the past.

128. Although no lessons were seen, teachers' planning is good and it is clear that they understand the requirements of the subject. Planning covers all elements of the curriculum and identifies clearly what pupils are expected to learn. There are good links between different areas of the curriculum, for example in Year 3 the topic on the Ancient Greeks is used to develop geographical as well as historical skills. In Year 1, information about where pupils lived was analysed by using a mathematical Venn diagram. Resources are generally adequate, although there is not a globe in every classroom.

129. The new co-ordinator is aware that the current policy and planning tools will need to be revisited in the light of revisions to the National Curriculum for September 2000. Currently, geography rotates with history, music, art and design and technology. It will be important to ensure that the subject retains a secure place in the curriculum and is not marginalised by other curriculum demands.

• **History**

130. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection. Judgements are made on the basis of this lesson as well as examples of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with the co-ordinator. Throughout the school, pupils are making satisfactory progress in relation to their knowledge and understanding of the past and the skills of historical enquiry. They make particularly good progress towards the end of Key Stage 1. The positive picture of history outlined in the last inspection has been maintained.

131. In Year 1, pupils begin to develop their chronological understanding through a study of their own lives. They recognise how they have changed since they were babies and begin to use terms such as old, new, now and then to distinguish the past from the present. They also develop a sense of chronology through creating timelines, for example of toys through the ages. In Year 2, they develop their ability to sequence objects and events through a study of cooking through the ages. In the Year 3 topic on Ancient Greece, pupils know about the city states of Ancient Greece and some features of everyday life. They are also familiar with some Greek legends. They also develop their understanding of historical enquiry, for example that much of the knowledge of everyday life in ancient times is acquired through archaeological excavations. Pupils also learn about some significant historical figures such as Guy Fawkes.

132. Throughout the school, the quality of teachers' planning is good. They identify clearly what they want pupils to learn in lessons and tasks are generally interesting and well resourced. In the lesson seen, the quality of teaching was very good. The teacher had good subject knowledge and used the beginning of the lesson effectively to consolidate pupils' learning from a recent visit to the museum. She used a range of artefacts to demonstrate how cooking implements have changed over time. The teacher used questions skilfully to test pupils' existing knowledge and to get them to hypothesize about the use of the artefacts. Finally, they were asked to consider what would be used today to perform the task. The lesson thoroughly engaged the pupils and contributed significantly to their understanding of life in the past. Pupils clearly enjoy history and handle artefacts with care.

133. A particular strength of the history curriculum is the extensive use of artefacts to develop historical skills. The school is building up its own resources but also borrows from, as well as visits, the Stacey Hill Museum. There are also very good links with other areas of the curriculum. For example, a variety of oil lamps, cooking utensils and Greek vases are used effectively as starting points for observational drawing in art. The new co-ordinator is aware that the current policy and planning tools will need to be revisited in the light of revisions to the National Curriculum for September 2000. Currently, history rotates with geography, music, art and design and technology. It will be important to ensure that the subject retains a secure place in the curriculum and is not marginalised by other curriculum demands.

· **Music**

134. Based on the one lesson seen, pupils' singing and discussions about music in assembly, pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. There has been some improvement since the last inspection in teachers' planning and pupils' attitudes, but this still is not a strong area.

135. The timetable is organised so that each class has a lesson every three weeks and this means that it is more difficult to develop pupils' skills and understanding systematically because of the time lapse between each session. In the lesson seen, pupils in Year 1 worked with percussion instruments to repeat given rhythms and develop a sense of timing. Most undertook this successfully and showed great enjoyment in their performance of the 'music man' song. Some managed to sing and play their instruments simultaneously. They had built up an understanding of the names and purposes of most instruments and a few had remembered the names of more unusual instruments, such as

the kabassa. This particular lesson worked well because of the subject expertise of the teacher, who accompanied the pupils on her guitar and led the singing well.

136. The other thrust of the music teaching in the school is through the daily assemblies. Some emphasis is placed at these times on the listening and appraising aspect of the curriculum. A piece of taped music is played, for example, as the pupils enter and leave the hall. This is usually the same piece for the week, so that pupils become familiar with the composition. This is discussed at some time during the week, but the composer is not necessarily brought to the pupils' attention. Occasionally musicians visit the school and recently a brass ensemble played for the pupils. Some remembered the names of the instruments well. This visit was successfully followed up by a teacher. Two pupils from the middle school brought their cornets to show what it is like when one begins to learn an instrument. Currently pupils do not play tuned instruments, although the school has some recorders. Assemblies are also used as an opportunity to join in song, although this is not a daily activity. The pupils sing tunefully and most join in the singing. Pupils listen well in assemblies and obviously enjoy opportunities to hear music played.

Physical Education

137. Lessons were seen in every class and it is clear that the subject is a strength of the school. Pupils are provided with a curriculum that effectively covers all aspects of the National Curriculum. Overall, pupils make good progress throughout the school. The good provision identified in the last inspection has been maintained and developed in the areas of curriculum leadership and whole school planning.

138. In Year 1, pupils travel, turn and jump using space effectively. They respond well to an autumn theme adjusting their performance to the rhythm of the tambourine. They combine and develop simple movements into a sequence. In Year 2, pupils run and dodge using space very well. They bounce, throw, catch and roll balls at hoops with good levels of control. They develop their skills in over-arm throwing and targeting. In Year 3, pupils use space and work in pairs effectively to create tunnels and arches. They dribble balls through markers. They pass and receive a ball with considerable accuracy.

139. In most lessons, pupils' behaviour was of a high standard. Most pupils participated and all those who did were properly dressed for the lesson. Pupils listened well to instructions and generally sustained interest and concentration. They worked hard to improve their performance. Pupils are supportive and appreciative of each other when watching individuals practice skills.

140. The quality of teaching is generally good and sometimes very good. Teachers plan well and identify clearly what they want pupils to be able to do as a result of the lesson. All teachers were appropriately dressed, providing pupils with a good role model. Lessons start with a good warm-up activity and most teachers maintain a brisk pace throughout the lesson with a suitable calming activity at the end. In the best lessons, very high expectations of behaviour were set. In these lessons, good opportunities were given for pupils to develop skills and to demonstrate to peers. Teachers maintain good control and ensure that lessons proceed safely. They intervene well to improve pupils' work during lessons. They have high expectations of their pupils' attainment.

141. A good sized hall provides appropriate indoor space and there is an adequately sized outside hard surface area which is used to develop the games aspects of the curriculum. Provision is enhanced through a weekly after-school club for Year 2 and 3 pupils. This is well run by the co-ordinator and a colleague. The club is well attended and provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their skills further. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic about the subject and gives strong leadership to colleagues. She has developed the use of schemes of work in games and gymnastics and is planning to purchase and introduce a scheme for dance. She has organised resources to encourage pupil independence and to make apparatus more accessible. There are appropriate levels of apparatus and equipment to resource the full curriculum.

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PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

142. The team consisted of four inspectors, spending a total of twelve days in school over a four-day period. During the inspection, lessons were observed in English, mathematics, science, information technology, art, history, music, physical education and religious education. Inspectors visited assemblies and observed pupils during registration sessions, in the playground and whilst participating in after school clubs. A representative sample of pupils' work was scrutinised and inspectors listened to pupils read. In total, more than 47 hours were spent in direct contact with pupils or in examining their work. Inspectors interviewed all teachers and representatives of the support staff, governors and parents. Documentation provided by the school was analysed both before and during the inspection. Prior to the inspection, six parents attended a meeting held by the registered inspector to seek their views. There were 15 responses to a questionnaire sent to parents before the inspection.

· **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 – Y3	173.5	0	55	68

· **Teachers and classes**

· **Qualified teachers (YR – Y3)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	7.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	24

· **Education support staff (YR – Y3)**

Total number of education support staff:	5
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	125

Average class size:	29
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• **Financial data**

Financial year:	1998-1999
	£
Total Income	277690
Total Expenditure	303120
Expenditure per pupil	2229
Balance brought forward from previous year	14550
Balance carried forward to next year	-10880

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out: 190
 Number of questionnaires returned: 15

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	47	47	0	7	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	53	47	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	20	67	0	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	40	53	0	7	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	40	53	7	0	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	33	60	0	7	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	33	53	13	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	33	47	7	13	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	47	40	0	7	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	40	46	7	7	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	60	40	0	0	0

Other issues raised by parents

Some care must be exercised when analysing parental views as only six parents attended the meeting with the Registered Inspector and the response to the questionnaire was also very low. Nevertheless, in discussion with parents during the inspection no parent expressed any views which contradicted the positive view of the parents who responded. A particular concern for parents is the potential danger caused by parents parking immediately outside the school.