

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Widmer End Community School**

Widmer End, High Wycombe

LEA area : Buckinghamshire

Unique Reference Number : 110335

Headteacher : Miss H Perry

Reporting inspector : Marten Gallagher  
21571

Dates of inspection : 22<sup>nd</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707005

Inspection number: 185665

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

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### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school :	Infant and Junior
Type of control :	County
Age range of pupils :	4 to 11 years old
Gender of pupils :	Girls and boys
School address :	Estcourt Drive Widmer End High Wycombe HP15 6AH
Telephone number :	01494 714371
Fax number :	01494 717395
Appropriate authority :	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors :	Mrs C Aston
Date of previous inspection :	20 <sup>th</sup> - 24 <sup>th</sup> November 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

<b>Team members</b>	<b>Subject responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect responsibilities</b>
<b>Marten Gallagher</b> Registered Inspector	Information Technology Physical Education	Attainment and Progress Teaching Staffing, Accommodation & Learning Resources
<b>Martin Greenwood</b> Lay Inspector	---	Attendance Attitudes, Behaviour & Personal Development Support, Guidance and Children=s Welfare Partnership with Parents and the Community Equality of Opportunity
<b>Anne Hogbin</b>	Provision for the Under Fives Mathematics Art Music	Special Educational Needs
<b>John Tate</b>	English Religious Education	Curriculum and Assessment Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development
<b>Paul Evans</b>	Science Design and Technology History Geography	Leadership and Management Efficiency of the School

The inspection contractor was:

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

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## MAIN FINDINGS

Number of full-time pupils:	210 (about average)
Pupils with English as an additional language:	0%
Pupils entitled to free school meals:	Unknown
Pupils on register of special educational needs:	25% (above average)
Average class size:	27.5

### What the School Does Well

- ? Provision for the under fives is good.
- ? Provision for children with special educational needs throughout the school is good.
- ? The work of the special educational needs department is very good.
- ? Provision for social and moral development of children is good.
- ? The school has made a good start implementing the literacy hour and is already making good progress with the daily mathematics lesson.
- ? Children receive very good support and guidance from the staff because they know them and their families well.
- ? The school works well with parents and is involved with the local community.
- ? Financial planning is very good.
- ? The efficiency of financial control and school administration are good.

### Where the School Has Weaknesses

- ? Opportunities to develop independent learning skills and learning through research and investigation need further development.
- ? There is an imbalance towards knowledge-based learning and teacher directed activities.
- ? Short term assessment is inconsistently used to design future lessons for children of different attainment.

**The weaknesses are balanced 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 in addressing the key issues from the previous inspection, although there has been insufficient progress in the development of independent learning skills. The roles of senior management and of curriculum co-ordinators have improved. The school development plan, subject schemes of work and the staff development policy are also improved. Information technology provision and attainment are very much better. The school is soundly set to move forward and make further advances in its provision.

## Standards in Subjects

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key
			<i>Very high</i> A*
			<i>Well above average</i> A
			<i>Above average</i> B
			<i>Average</i> C
			<i>Below average</i> D
			<i>Well below average</i> E
			<i>Very low</i> E*
<b>English</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>	
<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>D</b>	
<b>Science</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>D</b>	

The table excludes children in the Specific Learning Difficulties department and reflects a year group unusually weak in their ability.

The comparison with schools regarded as similar on the basis of the percentage of children entitled to free school meals should be read cautiously since the number of children entitled to free school meals at this school is unknown.

The inspection found that attainment in English, mathematics and science meets expectations at the end of both key stages. Attainment in information technology meets national expectations at the end of both key stages: an improvement since the last inspection. In religious education, attainment meets that expected by the Locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of both key stages.

Progress is satisfactory in art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education.

## Quality of Teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5s	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
<b>English</b>	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
<b>Mathematics</b>	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
<b>Science</b>		Satisfactory	Satisfactory
<b>Information Technology</b>		Satisfactory	Satisfactory
<b>Religious Education</b>		Satisfactory	Satisfactory
<b>Other Subjects</b>	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

91% satisfactory or better; 60% good or better; 14% very good or excellent; 9% unsatisfactory.

*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
<b>Behaviour</b>	Behaviour in classrooms and around the school is good.
<b>Attendance</b>	Good.
<b>Ethos *</b>	Good.
<b>Leadership and management</b>	There is clear educational direction for the school. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The Headteacher provides good, effective leadership for the school.
<b>Curriculum</b>	Broad and balanced. Under-emphasis on the development of independence and initiative in children's learning and inconsistent use of assessment information to inform lesson planning for children of different ability.
<b>Pupils with special educational needs</b>	These children receive good support and they make sound progress.
<b>Spiritual, moral, social &amp; cultural development</b>	Provision for moral and social development is good. Spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
<b>Staffing, resources and accommodation</b>	Staffing is satisfactory. The accommodation is good. Learning resources are satisfactory.
<b>Value for money</b>	The school provides satisfactory value for money.

\* *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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>? Parents feel the school encourages positive attitudes in their children.</li> <li>? Most parents feel they are encouraged to take an active part in their children's education.</li> <li>? They feel that behaviour in the school is good.</li> </ul>	



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The inspection supports those positive views of parents. The issue of class sizes was not, in itself, found to adversely affect the children's education.

**KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

In order to raise standards and further develop the school's educational provision, the Governing Body, Headteacher and staff should:

Further develop the system by which the senior management team, supported by the Governing Body, can monitor the quality of teaching and learning, particularly but not exclusively at Key Stage 1, with particular attention to:

further developing independent learning skills and placing a greater emphasis on research and investigation;

providing a wider range of teaching approaches to reduce the proportion of knowledge-based and teacher directed activities;

making more consistent use of short term assessment so that future lessons are clearly matched to the different ability of individuals or groups.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Characteristics of the School**

Widmer End Community School has for eighteen months been a primary school with girls and boys from the age of four to eleven. This caused great changes to the school's organisation and planning. There are eight classes with an additional Specific Learning Difficulties department catering for children from the entire Wycombe area. There are 220 children on the roll, with a total of 40 children on the register of special educational needs including ten with a statement of special educational need including the members of the Specific Learning Difficulties department. There are no ethnic minorities within the school. The school does not provide school meals and so the percentage of children entitled to free school meals is unknown. Apart from no longer having a Year 7 in the school, the overall composition of the school remains unchanged since the previous inspection.

All local housing is privately owned although the socio-economic circumstances of this semi-urban area are about the national average. Attainment on entry as judged by the school's baseline assessment is about average. The school's general aims are sound and the current priorities are to introduce the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and plan towards the use of additional funding from the National Grid for Learning programme.

## Key Indicators

### Attainment at Key Stage 1

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	20	16	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of children at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	15	15	15
	Girls	15	14	14
	Total	30	29	29
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	86%	83%	83%
	National	80%	81%	84%

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of children at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	15	16	15
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	30	31	30
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	86%	89%	86%
	National	81%	85%	86%

### Attainment at Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	18	16	34

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of children at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	14	13	15
	Girls	11	11	10

	Total	25	24	25
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	74%	71%	74%
	National	65%	59%	69%

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of children at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	13	14	15
	Girls	9	10	11
	Total	22	24	26
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	65%	71%	76%
	National	65%	65%	72%

## Attendance

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

		%
Authorised absence	School	5.0
	National comparative data	5.6
Unauthorised absence	School	0.0
	National comparative data	0.5

## Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

## Quality of Teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	14
Satisfactory or better	91
Less than satisfactory	9



## **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

#### **Attainment and Progress**

The school's baseline assessment supports the inspection findings that attainment on entry to the school is about average. By the age of five children have made good progress in consolidating their skills and knowledge and are ready to start work on the National Curriculum.

National tests from 1996 to 1998 indicate that attainment is broadly in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and slightly above at the end of Key Stage 2. The figures for 1999 appear to indicate a drop in results particularly at the end of Key Stage 2. However, there is evidence to support the fact that this particular cohort of children was, on average, much weaker in ability than those in previous years and there was a higher than usual percentage of children in the Specific Learning Difficulties department (SPLD). Since this school does not provide meals, the number of children entitled to free school meals is unknown. This report makes no comparison with similar schools.

The inspection findings agree with the general run of test results: that attainment for the majority of children at the end of both key stages in English including literacy, mathematics including numeracy and science is in line with national expectations. Attainment in information technology is improved since the last inspection and is in line with national expectations. In religious education, attainment is in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. In general, children's knowledge of facts and details is strong, balanced by a weakness in their understanding and skills in science investigation and their application of mathematical ideas and knowledge.

Progress in art, design and technology, geography, history and music is satisfactory. In physical education, progress is satisfactory in swimming and in the limited aspects it was possible to judge. Children with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainments. Those children with statements of special educational need make good progress towards their targets. When children with identified special needs receive individual or small group support either in class or in withdrawal sessions they make very good progress as teaching is expertly focused on their needs. However, during general class lessons these children often have work that is too difficult for them to make good progress. Children under five with special educational needs make good progress because of carefully thought out teaching methods by the teacher and assistant to respond to the children's needs.

The school has set itself appropriate targets for attainment and has been achieving them.

#### **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

Most children show a positive attitude to learning, with interest and often enjoyment in their work. They sustain concentration and are develop a capacity for independent learning where there is strong teaching. However, the issue from the last inspection over the development of independent learning skills has not been fully addressed. Some teaching is still too prescriptive, with a lack of opportunities for open-ended discovery and research.

1. Children are happy to be at school and keen to contribute to lessons including those for literacy and numeracy. They are given regular spellings, reading and other homework well matched to their levels of ability. The great majority of parents are very impressed with the good attitudes and values which the school promotes. Children with special educational needs have satisfactory attitudes and behaviour in class. In

withdrawal sessions or where they are in very small groups with focused adult attention these areas become very good. Those on the schools special educational needs register for behavioural difficulties respond well to the positive behaviour management system. Their personal development is good, with those from the learning department being well integrated with the main school, taking on responsibilities such as assisting class teachers to prepare for the school day when they arrive at school.

2. Behaviour is good and is supported with a sound system of rewards and sanctions. There are some testing children in the school and where teachers are consistently using the positive behaviour management policy the effect is evident. However, this policy is not consistently applied across the school. There have been no exclusions in the last three years. Personal, social and health education lessons are well used to encourage responsibility and awareness of others. The good new home-school agreement has been developed with considerable care and seeks to develop the full potential of every child.
3. Children's good relationships with one another and with teachers and other adults in the school are open, easy and constructive. Integration with the special educational needs children is particularly good. Children are polite and welcoming to visitors. In the classroom children work well together and they are ready to show respect and appreciation for others. Children in all year groups, including those in the special educational needs department, are given responsibilities such as tidying classrooms and taking registers to the office. Year 6 have a good range of additional responsibilities, for example as house captains, librarians, reading partners with Year 1 and monitors for the infants. They evidently enjoy these responsibilities. However, they need more opportunities to show initiative and develop independent learning skills.

#### **Attendance**

4. Attendance is better than the national average. There is no unauthorised absence. The procedures for recording and monitoring lateness and extended absence are effective and the few problems of continuing lateness or extended absence are dealt with very efficiently. Registers are now returned to the office and not kept in the classrooms as they were at the last inspection. Lessons start and finish on time and little time is wasted moving around the school between classes.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

#### **Teaching**

5. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with the strongest teaching being that for the under fives. 32 per cent of lessons seen were satisfactory or better; 45 per cent were good and 14 per cent were very good or excellent. All teaching for the under fives was satisfactory or better. Teaching in Key Stage 2 was slightly stronger during the inspection than that seen in Key Stage 1.
6. The teaching of the under fives exhibits a well organised and stimulating environment and good curriculum based on the nationally accepted learning goals, supports children's physical social and intellectual development ensuring they make good progress and are ready for Key Stage 1. Good use is made of assessment and the work is well matched to the needs of each child. Relationships are very good. The teachers and support staff have high expectations and plan and evaluate their lessons very well together to the benefit of the children. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the teaching is satisfactory. The stronger lessons exhibited the good use of behaviour management to establish a good learning atmosphere, good lesson planning with clearly focused learning objectives for the lesson, good use of open ended questioning to challenge and extend children's thinking. In too few of these lessons, on the whole, was there any effective use of short term assessment to inform the planning of future lessons for individuals or groups of different ability. By contrast, this is done well in the teaching of the under fives. One significant outcome of this is that, while

lower-attainers and middle-attainers are, for the most part satisfactorily catered for, the higher-attainers are not always challenged at an appropriate level in their class work.

7. In general, there is a lack of emphasis on the teaching and development of independent learning skills. This was noted as an area for development in the previous inspection and while there has been some improvement it needs further development. Independent learning skills, the ability to research effectively in English and history, the ability to carry out investigations and use initiative in science and design and technology, the ability to work independently without undue dependence on the teacher are all vital characteristics of a full curriculum. There is a tendency in this school to over-direct activities and for the teacher to control the direction of activities too closely. This accounted for the unsatisfactory nature of some teaching.
8. Specialist teaching and support for children with identified special needs is very good enabling pupils to make very good progress towards the targets on their individual educational plans. Whilst non-specialist teaching is satisfactory, it is insufficiently modified across the whole curriculum, especially within Key Stage 2 and consequently progress is often limited. When adult help is available within the classroom teachers target it well to help groups containing pupils who need extra support. Teachers have made a good start with the literacy hour and are introducing the daily mathematics lesson well. Teaching of information technology is improved since the last inspection with a greater confidence and willingness to incorporate information and communications technology across the curriculum.

### **The Curriculum and Assessment**

9. The school has been successful in dealing with most of the curriculum issues in the last inspection report. The curriculum is broad and balanced, meets statutory requirements and promotes attainment in all subjects of the National Curriculum. Sex, health and drug education are all taught. Curriculum targets and priorities are detailed in the school development plan. There is a strong emphasis on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Teachers' expectations of children's learning and achievement have been raised and the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has had a positive effect. The curriculum for the under fives is very appropriately planned and carried through. Medium term curriculum planning and policies for all subjects have been developed, but short-term planning needs to be developed to include assessment strategies to inform future planning for individual children. This issue, together with the lack of opportunities for independent learning, prevents children reaching their potential and is of particular significance for higher-attainers. The provision for personal and social education is good and the school prepares the children well for the next stage in education.
10. The school provides satisfactory equality of access for all children to make progress within the curriculum and it promotes their personal, spiritual, social and cultural development. The time devoted to teaching English, mathematics and science is well used in both key stages. Subject co-ordinators and senior management evaluate planning but there is insufficient monitoring of standards and progress in all subject areas. The Governing Body curriculum committee maintains an oversight of developments and a designated governor has attended the various courses connected with the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Children now have good access to information technology.
11. Provision for children in the SPLD and for those with special educational needs is good. The requirements of the Code of Practice are fully implemented. Children with special educational needs have full access to all areas of the curriculum with very good quality extra support given where appropriate. Procedures for identifying pupils needs and placing them on the special needs register are clearly outlined and carried out well. However at present special needs provision centres on behavioural or language and literacy difficulties, whereas several children do have special needs related to mathematics, which are not identified or supported. Individual educational plans are of good quality, monitored and reviewed termly by the co-ordinator and head teacher and identify clear targets. However the time span of these is too long to enable class teachers to plan their teaching or to assess pupils progress precisely enough from week to week.

12. All children experience extra-curricular activities are satisfactory which include music, craft and line dancing. The nearby professional football club provides coaching.
13. The school carefully analyses the results of national and other published tests in English, mathematics and science. This information is used to set school targets for improvement and to raise standards. Clear policies on teaching and learning, and on marking, guide teachers towards an effective assessment of children's work and, in addition, portfolios of completed work are maintained in most subject areas and children are involved in individual target setting. Short-term assessment at both key stages is, however, inconsistent in its recording and in its use to inform the planning of future lessons for children of different ability. The evaluations at the ends of lessons are not sufficiently detailed to enable teachers to review later plans.

### **Pupils= Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

14. Provision for children's spiritual development is satisfactory. Whole school and other assemblies play an important part in children's lives and are carefully planned to ensure that a variety of themes are covered during the term. The atmosphere during collective worship encourages a quiet and thoughtful attitude. Children listen to music and readings presented by their peers and themes are chosen which promote spiritual and moral development and provide good opportunities for children to participate, reflect and respond upon relationships within the school and the wider community. Daily prayers and short periods for reflection are usually included. Assemblies contribute to the ethos of caring and mutual respect which the school actively fosters. The school also provides some good opportunities to gain knowledge of, and insights into children's own beliefs and values and those of others, through the provision for religious education and personal and social development. Statutory requirements for collective worship are met.
15. Provision for children's moral development is good. The school has a clear behaviour policy which emphasises the difference between right and wrong and between acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour. Within the friendly, caring and positive school environment, children are encouraged to think of others, control their own behaviour and to respect adults. Teachers provide good role models and are well supported by all those adults who work in, and visit, the school. The few children who experience behavioural problems benefit from the supportive moral code which prevails.
16. Provision for children's social development is also good and links well with the strength of children's moral development. Relationships in and out of the classroom are good. Children are natural, open and friendly towards adults and visitors. They are encouraged to think about others and to care for those people who are not as fortunate as they are. This process is underpinned by the social and health education programme and circle times during which difficult topics are discussed. Older children are given an increasing amount of responsibility which includes working with children in Key Stage 1. They raise funds for charities and collect food at Harvest which is distributed to pensioners in the local community.
17. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Children gain a good understanding of their own culture through historical studies and visits made to the Anglican church nearby. They learn to appreciate the contribution made to the world by ancient cultures. In religious education lessons and assemblies children are introduced to the major faiths and cultures but there are very few opportunities provided to go out and visit other places of worship or meet with and listen to representatives of other faiths and cultures.

### **Support, Guidance and Pupils= Welfare**

18. The school has very good procedures for supporting and guiding the children and for promoting their welfare. Teachers and support staff know and care for the children very well and sympathetically and there is a strong commitment to those with special educational needs. Children have easy access to staff if they have any problems. This caring and supportive attitude is a strength of the school. Child protection procedures are in place and all staff are fully aware of them. Parents agree that there are good induction procedures for children coming into Reception and very well planned preparation for children transferring to the many local secondary schools.
19. Procedures for monitoring children's academic progress and personal development are generally good, and very good for children with special needs and for children under five years old. Annual reports sent to parents meet all requirements and show good personal knowledge of the children. There are also target sheets for the children, where they comment on how they have improved and how they might improve further. The school=s high expectations are evident in the prospectus, class rules and the new home-school agreements. The school has very good procedures for promoting positive behaviour and for encouraging and monitoring good attendance and punctuality. The few instances of persistent lateness or extended absence are dealt with very efficiently.
20. The school takes its health and safety responsibilities very seriously. The caretaker is very caring and dedicated to the school and he is very alert to any possible problems on the site. In addition to his daily inspections he carries out termly inspections of the premises with the responsible governor. Any problems are reported to the premises committee and dealt with promptly. The school is cleaned to a high standard and very well maintained. First-aid and medical arrangements are thorough. Links with the educational welfare officer and other agencies are very good and there is an appropriate policy for health and sex education. Overall, the teachers and staff are very caring, there is a very happy atmosphere and the children clearly enjoy coming to school.

### **Partnership with Parents and the Community**

21. Parents, grandparents and carers are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school. They are made welcome and are very well organised to support learning in the classroom including literacy and numeracy. They assist with many other activities such as choir and music, netball coaching and on school trips. The homework policy, combined with progressive levels of work and homework and reading diaries, is very successful in encouraging parents to become involved with their children=s learning and make an effective contribution to it. The School Association is very supportive in organising children=s events and raising money. Parents say that they feel very involved in their children=s learning and the work of the school. This parental involvement is a strength of the school.
22. The school has a very effective partnership with parents and keeps them very well informed with regular newsletters and other leaflets. There are termly meetings with teachers, special meetings have been held on literacy and numeracy and there are plenty of opportunities for informal discussions. Annual reports on the children meet requirements and they are personal, informative, handwritten and include individual goals for the children. The reports include individual target sheets in which children, parents and teachers are involved. They have all been involved in the new home-school agreements which they have found to be a rewarding process.
23. The quality of information for parents is very good. The school has good links with the community. Liaison with the other local primary schools and with the local secondary schools is good and children make preliminary visits to their future schools. Parents agree that the transition is handled very smoothly. There are close links with the local police and other agencies. The choir joins other choirs to sing in a local theatre.

Children take harvest gifts to the elderly, some of whom have visited the school to discuss their experiences as evacuees in World War Two. There are links with local Christian churches and youth workers have visited and taken assembly.

24. A good range of educational visits supports the curriculum and enriches the children's learning. These include football, netball and cricket. Boys play in a football tournament and league and in a cricket competition. Wycombe Wanderers Football Club provide football coaching. Girls play in a netball league. Local visits include the Chair and Toy Museums, and various tours of High Wycombe with local expert David Dyson. Residential trips to Shortenills and the Peak District have been discontinued on cost grounds. These links all have a positive effect on the attainment and personal development of the children.

## **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### **Leadership and Management**

25. The Headteacher provides good effective leadership for the school. The senior management team, comprised of the Headteacher, deputy Headteacher, key stage co-ordinators, special educational needs co-ordinator and the head of the special educational needs department, meet regularly to consider issues concerning the various areas of the schools provision. Key stage and whole staff meetings are held every two weeks and the issues arising at these meetings are raised at meetings of the senior management team.
26. Governors meet with the Headteacher on a regular basis and the deputy Headteacher is a regular observer at Governing Body meetings. The Governing Body is now a supportive and proactive group who respect and admire the Headteacher but also ask probing questions and are soundly involved in the overall management of the school.
27. During the past year the school has been faced with a change of leaving age from twelve years to eleven and the academic and financial implications. The death of a member of staff and the chair of the School Association has affected the school deeply. A senior member of staff is absent on bereavement leave and another on maternity leave. These difficulties have been sensitively managed and the school is now soundly set to move forward.
28. The schools= previous inspection report required the school to develop the roles of senior management and curriculum co-ordinators to ensure more effective delegation and consultation and to prioritise initiatives within the school development plan, including action plans for each initiative together with methods of evaluations. These requirements have been satisfactorily met.
29. The school is aware that the monitoring of the quality of teaching is needs development. The Headteacher provides some non-contact time for co-ordinators but realises that this is presently insufficient. Co-ordinators need to develop a wider range of strategies to monitor their curriculum areas. There is a significant amount of over directed teaching within the school. Children are offered knowledge led instruction in many areas. The development of skills in research and investigation is unsatisfactory and children=s skills as independent learners are not being fully emphasised. This was an area of concern at the time of the last inspection and has not yet been satisfactorily addressed. The school's aims, values and policies are reflected well in all areas of its provision particularly in children=s personal development and in the involvement of parents in their children=s education.
30. The school governors are attached to classes and follow the class through the school. Literacy and numeracy awareness and training for governors are sound and the links with special educational needs are good. The school development plan identifies priorities, nominates responsibilities and is costed as appropriate. This is a sound document for the management of the school. Regular reviews guide modifications to future planning.

31. The school's ethos is good. Children are shown care and concern by all staff. The application of the schools= behaviour policy results in good levels of behaviour although greater consistency is needed. Relationships between staff and children are good. Very effective structures exist to manage the provision of special educational needs. Documentation is of a very high quality; paperwork and communication with outside agencies is managed very well. However there is no time set aside for the managers to liaise with each other nor for class teachers to liaise with the management. The school fully complies with statutory requirements in respect of statemented pupils and gives due regard to the Code of Practice.
32. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught throughout the school and all statutory requirements are met. The school has developed a good range of procedures for assessing what children learn. However, the collection and recording of this information is not consistent across the school. The information is not used to match future work to what individuals already know, understand and can do. In many lessons work is presented to all children at the same level irrespective of their abilities.

### **Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources**

33. The school is adequately staffed with well qualified and experienced teachers and welfare assistants. There is one newly qualified teacher who is appropriately supported. Professional development arrangements are satisfactory and are linked to professional development interviews for all staff and to the overall school needs and the needs of individuals. Welfare assistants are trained appropriately for their support work. Parents helping in the school are equally well-briefed.
34. The accommodation, inherited from the previous combined school, is good. The classrooms are adequate in size and there are extra teaching spaces making the delivery of the National Curriculum easier than for the average primary school of this size. Libraries for each key stage are satisfactorily stocked and used. There are satisfactory indoor and outdoor physical education facilities with hard and grassed play areas.
35. Learning resources for all subjects are satisfactory with plans to review the physical education equipment some of which is approaching the end of its useful life. There is no specific area for the under fives but there is large play equipment which is used in good weather. Information technology resources are set for further improvement under the terms of the National Grid for Learning.

### **The Efficiency of the School**

36. Budget planning is very good. There is close co-operation between the Headteacher, the senior management team and the finance and personnel committee of the Governing Body. The recent change of age resulted in a serious reduction in the school's budget. The resulting staffing and resourcing problems have been sensitively and professionally managed and the school=s finances are in a sound state. The school has identified staffing levels as having the greatest impact on the standards. This, together with all other areas of the schools= provision, is planned for in a sound school development document, which is costed where appropriate. The members of the governor's finance and personnel committee are knowledgeable about financial matters and work in close partnership with the Headteacher and the senior management team on the planning and monitoring of the schools= budgets.
37. Money, which is specifically targeted on the provision for children with special educational needs, is properly monitored and the school adds extra funds from its main budget. The grant for the professional training of staff and governors is suitably managed and effectively used.

38. The latest audit of the school's funds was less than a year ago. The auditors raised some matters, all of which have been satisfactorily dealt with. The use of teaching staff is sound. The use of welfare assistants is good. They are focused on the children who have the greatest need enabling these children to raise their standards. The school's learning resources are used well and good use is made of the school's buildings and grounds for teaching and learning which contributes positively to children's attainment.
  
39. The day to day efficiency of financial control and the school administration is good. The long serving bursar provides good quality financial information to the senior management team and the governors. She operates the internal financial controls smoothly and efficiently. Attainment on entry to the school is average. Children make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Considering the school's context, the amount of money it spends, the quality of education provided and the standards attainment by children, the school provides satisfactory value for money.



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

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

40. Provision for children under five is good. The quality of education the children receive in their first year is a strength of the school. A well organised and stimulating environment and good curriculum based on the nationally accepted learning goals, support children=s physical, social and intellectual development ensuring they make good progress and are ready for Key Stage 1. Good use is made of assessment and the work is well matched to the needs of each child. Relationships are very good. The teacher and support staff have high expectations and plan and evaluate their lessons very well together to the benefit of the children. The school has an effective induction programme and a staggered entry over several weeks, which allows children to settle into school happily.
41. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is broadly average and most children have had nursery or play group experience. There is a good ratio of experienced and well-qualified adults to children and this makes a significant contribution to their attainment and progress. Progress of children with special educational needs is good as teaching is based on expert advice, with achievable targets set and progress carefully monitored.
42. Children make good progress in their personal and social development and, by the time they are five, standards are above expected levels for the majority of children. They work, play and co-operate increasingly well with others and have very positive attitudes towards school and learning. Children react well to the high expectations of good behaviour and praise used in recognition of effort and achievement. They co-operate well to achieve the weekly class personal development target displayed on the wall; for example 'This week we will tidy up quickly and quietly'. Children are engaged by the stimulating teaching and the variety of interesting activities, which results in them developing enquiring minds. For example asking 'Is tap water still tap water now you have coloured it blue?' They move around the room calmly, and show a developing ability to make choices about which area of activity to work at when not specifically learning with an adult. However the range of situations where children can make choices and become independent learners is limited and is an area being developed by the teacher. During circle time they explore their feelings and reasons for them, with a growing awareness and respect for those of others in the class. Their consideration for others, adherence to school routines and interest in learning makes them very receptive to the good teaching they experience.
43. Children make good progress in their language and literacy and, by the time they are five, they meet the goals expected of their age. They develop their speaking skills well through classroom activities such as role-play in the post office and being encouraged to use talk with precision and a purpose. One example of the well-planned ideas to develop communication skills is the list of key questions and expected vocabulary near each activity for all adults to use. Children have positive attitudes towards books and learning to read. They take home library books and many choose to sit in the comfortable reading area of the classroom and look at the books between other activities. Daily sessions spent discussing large books and pictures help children to express their thoughts easily and develop good pre-reading skills such as looking in detail at the pictures as a clue to the content and predicting what will happen next. The youngest children develop good pencil control through tracing and practising writing patterns and letter formation connected with the class sound of the week.
44. Assessment shows that this years cohort of children is below average in writing skills, consequently a wide range of activities has been planned to strengthen this area, such as learning that writing conveys messages through pretending to write letters and post them in the post office. By five they effectively combine their knowledge of different sounds to spell simple words independently and a reading strategy.

45. Children make good progress in mathematics and by the age of five can name common shapes such as circle, square, rectangle and triangle. They recognise numbers to 10 and can count further which they demonstrate when counting the number of children present each day for the teacher to record in the register. Children sort mathematical shapes and equipment by colour, number and size and sequence patterns of two colours using structural apparatus or beads. Children are well taught. One very good lesson was seen where children were pouring water from large and small bottles into plastic cups to see which holds more and which less, and then counting the full cups thus making very good progress both in developing concepts of capacity and in counting real objects. Children use a variety of dice games such as snakes and ladders, fit together number jigsaws and sing number songs such as five little speckled frogs. Children use computer applications well to support their matching and number recognition skills.
46. Children make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They use the computers with confidence and are beginning to remember the terms for the hardware such as keyboard, printer and mouse. They bring photographs to school for a display to compare what they looked like as babies with now, which leads to much discussion of change over time and an understanding of long ago. By cooking gingerbread men and making clay lamps to celebrate Diwali children make good gains in understanding irreversible change in materials. They develop a good understanding of the local community and different adults contribution to it, such as the school caretaker and local doctor. Children talk readily about their homes and families and most know the name of the road and village where they live.
47. Progress in physical development is satisfactory. They follow a well planned physical education curriculum and make appropriate progress in their hall sessions. In gymnastics they move around the hall, using the space well and thinking of different ways to move, such as how to move on hands and feet without crawling. They learn the correct way to move the larger apparatus safely and begin to use games skills such as catching and throwing balls. In dance lessons children move imaginatively and rhythmically in response to the mood of music such as the Flight of the Bumble Bee or the Elephant from the Carnival of the Animals. Within the classroom, children develop increasing hand control through cutting and making activities and through fixing jigsaws and manipulating construction toys.
48. Satisfactory progress is made in creative development. Children use paint and printing well to make pictures for attractive wall displays. They learn to look carefully and use different media to interpret what they see. For example, they look into mirrors before making self-portraits in crayons or pastel. They know the names of the primary colours and experiment with making different colours from them. Children print using everyday objects such as the sides of boxes and with fruit cut in half at harvest time dipped in paint. Children make good progress when experimenting with the musical instruments and making up their own tunes and accompanying songs they know. However, opportunities for developing true creativity through purposeful and imaginative role play, drama, painting and movement are under-developed.

## **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

### **English**

49. The results of tests for children at the end of Key Stage 2 show that standards have remained fairly static, slightly better than the national average, over the past three years. Comparisons with similar schools is based on the number of children taking free school meals and since the meals service does not operate in the school they are statistically irrelevant. In 1998, Year 2 children reached above average levels of attainment in national tests in reading and results which were in line with national averages in writing. By comparison with children in similar schools, the standards of attainment in reading were much the same but less so in writing. Indications from 1999 suggest that there has been a slight improvement in standards.
50. By the end of Year 2 children talk and listen confidently and use an increasingly mature vocabulary. They have the confidence to speak in class, to answer questions and to enter into discussions. They understand the main

points in a discussion and listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. Children in Year 6 are capable of maintaining a sustained conversation at an adult level, as was seen when they discussed Anne Frank writing her diary during the war. Most children in nearly all the classes respond well to the strategies used by teachers in the literacy hours. Progress is sound and children with special needs are well supported.

51. Inspection findings show that attainment meets expectations at the end of both key stages. Many children are well supported at home. The National Literacy Strategy has been in place for one year and is used well to teach reading. Children in all classes are sure of the skills they have learned. They read aloud with confidence and enjoyment, as seen when Year 4 children read passages about Old Testament stories, written by themselves, to the whole school. As part of their social development, Year 6 children listen to readers in Key Stage 1 on a regular basis. This activity is of mutual benefit. The two libraries are well resourced with books for reference and fiction. Children are encouraged to use the libraries during the school day but during the inspection very few children were seen doing so. Children can describe how to find books but above average children do not have sufficient opportunity to develop higher order reading skills, nor are they given enough opportunities for research. Children in the SPLD and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

52. Children's skills in writing meet expectations at both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1, children use interesting vocabulary in their writing and develop their ideas into a sequence of sentences. Their work is punctuated using full stops and capital letters appropriately. Simple words are usually spelt correctly. Children's handwriting is consistent in size and correctly formed but presentation is variable. By the end of Key Stage 2, children write complex sentences and use paragraphs appropriately. Their spelling is usually correct and punctuation accurate. Handwriting is fluent, joined and legible. Most children are developing their own style of handwriting. Opportunities to undertake extended pieces of writing are limited in English and across the curriculum. Above average children, in particular, are given insufficient opportunity to develop these skills. Children with special educational needs make sound progress.

53. During the literacy lessons, children in classes throughout the school almost always make satisfactory progress. The literacy hour has been implemented successfully. Most lessons are planned carefully in order to contain an appropriate mix of activities, although in a minority of lessons the process has not yet been sufficiently well thought through, the pace is slow and progress is limited.

54. Children's attitude to learning is generally satisfactory. They behave appropriately and concentrate on their work except when teachers do not set out clear objectives, or when the text for shared reading is too difficult. In a few classes in both key stages, some children sometimes lose interest and do not pay attention. This is often a result of sitting still for too long or because instructions have not been made clear and children are unsure of what is required of them.

55. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. It varies between unsatisfactory and good at Key Stage 1. There is a higher proportion of good teaching at Key Stage 2 where all lessons seen were satisfactory or better. Teachers are generally confident in teaching according to the National Literacy Strategy and plan their work competently, making good use of the classroom assistants. Children are therefore well focused in their tasks. Planning takes good account of the needs of lower ability children with suitably differentiated work, but higher-attainers do not have enough extension work in some lessons. In good lessons, teachers use resources, such as big books or exciting texts, to good effect and to stimulate interest. Most teachers have trained the children well to work in groups, independently or under supervision. Guided reading is well organised. In most classes, marking is up-to-date and reading records are well maintained. Children take reading books home regularly. Throughout the school insufficient use is made of ongoing assessment used to inform the teacher's planning. This particularly affects higher-attainers.

56. The English programme of study is co-ordinated by the Headteacher who has produced a sound policy document. Standards of attainment and quality of teaching are being monitored satisfactorily. Special

educational needs are being met and all children are given equal access and opportunity in the subject.

57. There is evidence of the use of English skills in other areas of the curriculum. However, work is too often teacher directed and children have too few opportunities to develop independent learning skills.

## **Mathematics**

58. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 usually meets national expectations, although the results of 1999 national tests were below the national average and those in similar schools and a considerable dip from the previous three years when attainment was above the national average. This is partly explained by an unusually large number of children in the year group with special educational needs resulting in a third of the cohort not reaching the nationally expected level. However, there was a drop in the number of children attaining at a level higher than average at the end of both key stages. There is no significant difference in performance of boys and girls.
59. Children begin the school with average levels of attainment and make satisfactory progress overall, but higher attainers make insufficient progress. Children on the school's special educational needs register make satisfactory progress. When they work in small groups with extra adult classroom support they make good progress and when withdrawn to work with a specialist teacher where methods and explanations exactly match their level of competence they make very good progress.
60. At the end of Key Stage 1 children attainment is in line with national expectations. The majority of children make satisfactory progress across the different strands of the curriculum with plenty of practical experiences. They make good progress in manipulating numbers in their heads in the opening part of lessons devoted to developing mental strategies. By the end of the key stage most children understand the pattern of odd and even numbers, recognise coins and use them well in shopping problems. They measure pencils and chairs using arbitrary units, such as body parts and estimate whether their table is longer or shorter than a metre. They recognise different two and three dimensional shapes and make and interpret simple tally charts and block graphs. Greater challenge is needed for higher attainers. For example at the start of the key stage children work on positional value, understanding second comes after first and so on and those with higher prior attainment make no new knowledge gains. Towards the end of the key stage there is little evidence of children working within National Curriculum Level 3 although it is evident they have the prior attainment to do so.
61. Progress of children at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall, although the majority of children make insufficient progress in thinking mathematically, developing mental strategies, solving real mathematical problems or applying their knowledge of the number system as they have less opportunities to do so. By the end of year 6 children have a satisfactory understanding of the number system and how to use the four rules. They understand place value and show recognition of proportion by using fractions and percentages. Higher-attainers understand relationships such as multiple factor and square.
62. Children's attitudes to mathematics are satisfactory. When teaching makes mathematics stimulating and allows children to become fully involved at an appropriate level they have good behaviour and concentration which makes a positive contribution to their rates of progress. This was evident in Year 5. Throughout the school all children have good attitudes during the introductory part of the lesson when there is a whole class mental activity and teachers gear their questions to engage all children.
63. The teaching of mathematics is broadly satisfactory although one unsatisfactory lesson was seen, where the temporary supply teacher had insufficient information about what children already knew and consequently the class made unsatisfactory progress. All teachers permanently appointed to the school have introduced the

format of lessons suggested in the National Numeracy Strategy and are using time and the new resources effectively. They have sufficient subject knowledge to teach the different elements of the curriculum and use homework well to extend and reinforce classroom learning. All teachers emphasise the importance of committing number facts to memory and working out problems mentally. Teachers are making a good start in encompassing the new style of teaching, moving away from a dependency on setting children to work silently from text books or examples on the board. The school is aware it needs to encourage teachers to develop a style of teaching that will help children form their own mental strategies and think for themselves, to enable them to be able to solve mathematical problems and use mathematics in real situations. There is already some good practice. Lessons are insufficiently planned according to what groups of children already know and can do and need to do next. Too often the newly introduced published scheme of lesson plans is used unaltered and therefore does not meet the needs of the particular set of children. Teachers mark books well and test children's knowledge regularly, but make insufficient use of the results as a basis for planning further development. Year 5 is making good progress as the teacher has expert subject knowledge and enthusiasm, and matches the tasks exactly to the differing needs within the class, and supporting those who need it.

64. Children make satisfactory use of their numeracy skills across the curriculum. For example plotting co-ordinates in geography and using logo in information technology. However mathematics occurs incidentally within other subjects rather than being planned within the schemes of work.
65. The co-ordinator and Headteacher have a satisfactory overview and have ensured that governors, teachers, support staff and parent helpers have been involved in understanding the numeracy framework. Each teacher has identified his or her own strengths and weaknesses to enable future professional development sessions to be planned. Systems for long-term assessment are satisfactory with a range of statutory, formal and informal testing that gives evidence of children attainment and progress from term to term and year to year. Statutory tests are analysed to see where the curriculum needs strengthening and to set future targets to raise standards at the end of Key Stage 2. The Headteacher monitors teaching and medium term planning and talks over her findings with the co-ordinator.

## Science

66. In the 1999 national tests and assessment at the end of Key Stage 2 the proportion of children reaching or exceeding the expected level for eleven year olds, was below the national average. This was a fall from the school's steady attainment trend in previous years. The unusual balance of children's abilities within the year group caused this. A comparison of these results with those of similar schools is not possible because the number of children entitled to free school meals is unknown.
67. Inspection evidence, including work scrutiny, indicates average attainment and progress in both key stages. Work seen in class during the inspection shows average standards and gradual improvement, particularly in knowledge and understanding. If this is sustained it should lead to satisfactory results in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2.
68. Progress for the majority of children is satisfactory. Lessons are taught to whole classes with limited modification for those of lower ability and a lack of real extension for higher attainers. Teachers give sound levels of instruction and support, which enables children to gain a satisfactory level of knowledge and understanding of all elements of science. Too often, experimentation or investigation is offered at a low level and teachers predetermine outcomes.

69. The children are interested in science and are keen to learn. They are largely attentive to their teachers and are ready to ask and answer questions. There is a small number of children in each class that is easily distracted, some having emotional and behavioural difficulties. However, good behaviour management by teachers enables the class to remain focused.

70. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in both key stages. When teaching is good or very good lesson planning is clear and developmental, the use of specific scientific vocabulary is good and learning builds on children's first hand experiences. In a lesson for Year 3 children the teacher showed very good subject knowledge and understanding when teaching children to learn about the qualities of different types of wood. This was linked to a visit to the Wycombe Chair Museum as a part of their history studies. When teaching is unsatisfactory the level of tasks are not suited to the age or abilities of the children. In one Key Stage 2 class older children were discovering that the volume of water remained the same no matter what size or shape of vessel it was poured into. This is a concept, which is fully understood by much younger children. The teaching of science often includes cross-curricular work. In a series of lessons in Key Stage 1 a scientific concept was introduced during the literacy hour and in a later lesson that concept was tested using food technology skills.

71. The school has adopted the latest guidelines on science to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. The school devotes sufficient time to science and includes sex, health and drugs education appropriate to the age of the children and statutory requirements are met. The majority of experiences for children in science are instructional. Teachers do not fully understand the process of building skills through open-ended investigation and discovery. When investigation or experimentation is included in lessons it is very teacher directed and limits children's opportunities to research and discover.

72. The policy and scheme of work are both sound. The subject co-ordinator ensures that all aspects of science are covered. The annual test results are analysed to identify areas of weakness and this leads to discussion of possible changes to the scheme of work. Resources for the teaching and learning of the subject are satisfactory in quantity and quality of textbooks and equipment. They are well labeled and easily accessible. Teachers use resources appropriately and children treat them with respect.

## **OTHER SUBJECTS**

### **Information Technology**

73. At the end of both key stages, attainment meets national expectations. Children have a wide range of experience of using computers at home: some are competent at using the keyboard and mouse, others have little or no experience. By the end of Key Stage 1 children use the keyboard and mouse to issue instructions and most children understand and explain their thinking when doing so. They can, with adult support, use the computer to classify data and talk about using a programmable robot and describe some of the commands they might give it to achieve a specific purpose. By the end of Key Stage 2, children have gained a greater insight into the ways in which information technology can be used to support their learning such as in presenting ideas and analysing data. These children lack the full depth of experiences in information technology since the subject was under-emphasised at the time of the last inspection. However, the school is now providing a more coherent skills and knowledge based approach from Reception onwards and is rapidly and successfully addressing the heritage of under-achievement through direct teaching of skills and focused activities for the older children.

74. Teaching is satisfactory. It has improved since the last inspection. There is good use of cross-curricular links which contributes both to children's wider understanding of the use of information technology and to the effective use of time by, for example, combining information technology teaching time with the literacy hour. Teachers' confidence, knowledge and understanding is sound.

75. The subject is effectively led by a competent subject co-ordinator who, as a by-product of her role as the SPLD teacher, is able to monitor the subject=s development in all classes. This also enables her to provide direct support to teachers as necessary. The use of assessment is in its early stages but along with other aspects of the subject is benefiting from good support form the local education authority. The subject co-ordinator has a clear picture of the subject and its developmental needs and the action plan for the subject contributes to the school=s overall development plan. Both hardware and software resources are being reviewed in the light of the funding anticipated under the National Grid for Learning.

### **Religious Education**

76. At Key Stage 1 children reach standards expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. They have a developing understanding of Christianity and receive an introduction to other world faiths. Children in the Reception class are encouraged to think about the unique nature of themselves and of others and they develop an impression of those things which distinguish one person from another. They find out about the Hindu festival of Diwali and make Rangoli patterns. Year 2 find out that most Egyptians are Muslims by faith. They listen to stories about slavery in ancient times and discuss the possible relationship between master and slave. Children make satisfactory progress in learning about religion and learning from religion.
77. Key Stage 2 children reach standards expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Children continue to make satisfactory progress in building on their knowledge and understanding. Thematic stories are used to emphasise the importance of the individual and the good qualities inherent in everyone. Year 5 visit the nearby Anglican church and study the architecture and symbolism of the building. Most children identify the main features correctly and name the characters which appear in the stained glass windows. They know that the Cross is the most important focal point inside the church. Year 6 find out about the stories of the Old Testament. They know about the origins of Judaism and relate these to present day Israel. All children at Key Stage 2 increase their knowledge of different beliefs and forms of worship through their studies of the major world faiths and by the end of Year 6 have an appreciation of the importance of religion in many aspects of life.
78. Religious education lessons support children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Teachers are skilled at helping children to understand the elements of worship and in lessons they create an atmosphere of respect and reflection. The moral and social teaching of different faiths are well emphasised and children are encouraged to link these to their own experiences. Religious education also promotes literacy skills well. At both key stages children engage in lively discussions which help to develop their speaking and listening skills. Opportunities are provided for recording their ideas and opinions which helps to develop expressive thought through their writing.
79. Children's attitudes are positive in both key stages. At Key Stage 1, children are generally attentive and interested and take part in discussions very well. At Key Stage 2, the quality of debate and of children's perception of other people and cultures can be very stimulating. Circle time is well used in this respect and is a good vehicle by which to explore sensitive issues.
80. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. At Key Stage 1 the quality of teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to good. In the best examples, lessons are well planned and move along at a brisk pace. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject and their aims are clear. At Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory. Teachers are skilled at explaining the significance of religion and promoting good discussion. Lesson plans are sometimes variable in quality but teachers are generally sure in their knowledge of the subject. At all times and in both key stages, teachers are careful and sensitive, and children receive a balanced programme based on the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

81. The Headteacher is responsible for religious education and gives good support to the staff. A wide selection of books and artefacts has been provided to enable teachers to plan effective activities for the children. A portfolio of work is maintained but assessment is generally informal and procedures to discover what children understand, know and can do needs to be developed. Overall, standards have been sustained since the last inspection and provided assessment and monitoring are enhanced, it has a sound capacity for improvement.

## **Art**

82. During the inspection it was not possible to observe any lessons. Evidence was gained through looking at displayed work and available documentation and talking to teachers and children. Satisfactory progress is made in all elements of the curriculum.
83. Children know about the work of famous artists. Year 1 look at Van Gogh's sunflower picture and make their own large painted display inspired by it and Year 6 children know about the life of Seurat and draw in his style of pointillism. Children make good progress in drawing through observation, using this skill to enhance other subjects such as in science where children copy animals and flowers in detail to make a tree diagram. Throughout the school children use pastel, paint and felt tip drawings to make informative and attractive wall displays connected to the current topic, such as the main events and discoveries of Queen Victoria's reign. In Year 5 there is evidence of good progress being made in developing skills and techniques. Here children paint imaginatively with skill, applying their knowledge of how to mix and use tones and tints of colour effectively.
84. Recognising that the art policy and scheme of work need updating and that not all teachers feel confident in teaching the skills required by the art curriculum, the school has bought and introduced a new published scheme this academic year which is gradually being introduced.

## **Design and Technology**

85. Due to the structure of the timetable it was not possible to observe sufficient lessons to make a reliable judgement on teaching. Evidence was obtained from talking to children about their work, talking to subject co-ordinator, looking at samples of past work and examining planning and policy documents. Children in both key stages make satisfactory progress in design and technology.
86. In Key Stage 1 children draw pictures of the artefacts they are going to make. These, when compared with the finished articles, are of a satisfactory standard showing the main elements of the intended outcome. They learn to cut and join materials and use stitching to join fabrics. A display of Year 2 work shows sound hand drawn plans alongside individual hand and finger puppets, which are properly finished. Throughout the school children's plans show a growing sophistication and the standards of planning and production are sound by the end of Key Stage 2.
87. All children have experiences in the good food technology area, which are linked with dietary studies in science. Other activities in design and technology are linked to historical studies such as the design and construction of frames for weaving when studying the Celts.

## **Geography**

88. Due to the structure of the timetable it was not possible to observe sufficient lessons to make a reliable judgement on teaching. Evidence was obtained from talking to children about their work, talking to subject



co-ordinator, looking at samples of past work and examining planning and policy documents. Children in both key stages make satisfactory progress in geography.

89. Studies in Key Stage 1 centre on children's knowledge and understanding of their immediate environment. They begin to develop simple mapping skills, which are built on soundly throughout the school. Geographical vocabulary is developed consistently and young children understand and explain how to follow a path through the school. Children supplement their studies in geography by visiting the model village at Beckenscot.
90. Skills in mapping continue to develop well throughout Key Stage 2. There is a growing use of geographical skills in other subjects. Year 5 children have produced some very good artwork when studying St. Lucia and when looking at trees. The work of Year 6 children is somewhat restricted by the preparation for, and taking of, the eleven-plus and National Curriculum tests. However, they link mapping to literacy studies for example hand drawn maps produced from the story of "101 Dalmatians" and some good extended writing was seen in a study of volcanoes.

## **History**

91. Due to the structure of the timetable it was not possible to observe sufficient lessons to make a reliable judgement on teaching. Evidence was obtained from talking to children about their work, talking to subject co-ordinator, looking at samples of past work and examining planning and policy documents. Children in both key stages make satisfactory progress in history.
92. Children begin to study the events and personalities of the seventeenth century in Key Stage 1. This develops from the early studies of family history and their own development. Year 2 children talked freely about their study of the Great Fire of London. They knew about the source of the fire and that Samuel Pepys wrote about what happened in his diary. Children have some understanding of chronology knowing that 1800 was after the Great Fire. Historical studies are well embedded in the curriculum. Children study Angles and Saxons, Ancient Greeks, Romans, Egyptians and the Victorian era and also the Second World War. In one Key Stage 2 classroom children have contributed to a large mural of the 'Battle of Britain'. There is a professional scale model of a Spitfire suspended from the classroom ceiling and a book of children's writing, some word processed, based on their discussions with adults who took part in the war or were evacuees. In another class children have contributed hand-written and word-processed work to a large display of the Victorian era. A good range of artefacts supports this.
93. The school is proud that it has been able to protect the breadth and balance of the curriculum through the integration of studies such as design and technology, geography and history into successful cross-curricular themes.

## **Music**

94. Due to the structure of the timetable it was not possible to observe sufficient lessons to make a reliable judgement on teaching. Evidence is supplemented through talking to children and staff and looking at available documentation.
95. Progress is satisfactory, with singing being the strongest element. Children work hard to learn hymns for assembly and songs for public performances such as Christmas concerts and school productions and, by Year 6 children confidently sing songs in parts or as rounds. Children who join the school choir, have musical tuition in school from visiting specialists, or belong to one of the recorder groups make good progress, take part in local music festivals with other schools and sing in church for the local elderly. All children use percussion instruments enthusiastically and by Year 6 compose their own tunes with tuned and untuned percussion and recorders, which they record on manuscript paper and tape. Each day children listen to different styles of music as they enter and leave assembly and make satisfactory progress in recognising

the styles of some composers. However there is little listening and appraising of music and consequently children make less progress in this area. This will be addressed by the implementation of the new music scheme of work.

96. The co-ordinator who is the school pianist ensures high quality performances through her expertise and accomplished piano playing. Recognising that not all teachers feel confident in teaching music, the school has bought and introduced a new scheme this academic year which is already showing signs of increasing the progress made in all elements of music.

### **Physical Education**

97. Due to the constraints of the timetable and the bad weather during the inspection it was only possible to judge children's physical confidence when in the playground. During Key Stages 1 and 2 they make satisfactory progress in their confidence and by the age of eleven they have the physical abilities, confidence and skills expected for their age.

### **Swimming**

98. The inspection of this school included a focused view of swimming, which is reported below.
99. Children in Years 5 and 6 are given swimming instruction once each week in terms one and three respectively. During lessons observed at the local swimming pool during the week of the inspection children in Years 5 were undergoing instruction.
100. Specific instruction is given to children in three distinct ability groups, beginners, improvers and swimmers. Each group receives a thirty minute lesson, which includes specific instruction and practice time. A qualified swimming instructor, a teacher and a welfare assistant from the school takes charge of each group. Activities were provided at an appropriate level for each group. The lowest attainers, led by the qualified instructor, covered a number of teaching points including specific swimming skills and survival activities. The teacher's group, middle-attainers, were developing their skills in backstroke and front crawl. The welfare assistant worked with the higher-attainers. The improvers group made good progress in confidence in the water and in improving their quality of stroke and movement without flotation aids. They made good progress in basic survival activities. The middle attainers group all improved the quality of their breaststroke and front crawl during the initial instruction and later practice session.
101. The high quality instruction was co-ordinated by the swimming pool's qualified instructor who oversees all the activities taking place. The provision is well organised and effective. Little time is wasted and all these children are set to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum by the end of Key Stage 2.

## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The team consisted of 5 inspectors who spent a total of 14 inspector days in the school. The inspection team:

- . spent 31.5 hours observing 56 lessons or part lessons and reviewing children=s work and talking to children about their work;
- . attended a sample of registration sessions;
- . attended assemblies and a range of extra-curricular activities;
- . had lunch with children;
- . observed children's arrival at, and departure from, school;
- . observed all teachers at least once and most several times;
- . had discussions with the Headteacher, teaching and non-teaching staff, the Chair of Governors and other governors;
- . reviewed all available written work of a representative sample of three children from each year group and talked with these and other children about their reading;
- . held discussions with many children;
- . analysed a large amount of documentation provided by the school both before and during the inspection, including:
  - the school prospectus;
  - school policies;
  - the Governors' Annual Report to Parents;
  - minutes of governors' meetings;
  - financial statements;
  - the School Development Plan;
  - subject policies and planning;
  - pupils' reports and records;
  - special educational needs records;
- . held a meeting attended by 15 parents and considered 50 responses from parents to a questionnaire asking about their views of the school.

## DATA AND INDICATORS

### Pupil data

	Number of children on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of children with statements of SEN	Number of children on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time children eligible for free school meals
YR - Y6	210	10	40	0

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	10
Number of children per qualified teacher	20

#### Education support staff (YR - Y6)

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked each week	83

Average class size:	27.5
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### Financial data

Financial year:	1998/99
	?
Total Income	375 227
Total Expenditure	373 922
Expenditure per child	1 677
Balance brought forward from previous year	19 127
Balance carried forward to next year	20 432

**PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:

149
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Number of questionnaires returned:

50
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**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	30	50	8	10	2
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	44	46	2	6	2
The school handles complaints from parents well	18	42	31	7	2
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	22	55	12	8	2
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	29	53	12	4	2
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	20	53	16	6	4
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	15	34	30	13	9
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	20	57	2	12	8
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	41	49	6	0	4
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	39	51	8	2	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	57	29	10	4	0

**Other issues raised by parents**

Eleven questionnaires were received with additional written comments. Four of these were very supportive of the school and its work. The remaining seven expressed concerns covering a variety of topics. All of these have been examined in the course of the inspection and, where appropriate, the report refers to them either directly or indirectly.