

INSPECTION REPORT

CHURCH END LOWER SCHOOL

Marston Moretaine, Bedford

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109470

Headteacher: Mrs J Phillips

Reporting inspector: Gloria Hitchcock
2535

Dates of inspection: 14th – 17th May 2001

Inspection number: 186212

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Lower
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 – 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Church Walk Marston Moretaine Bedford
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Armagan
Date of previous inspection:	November 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2535	Gloria Hitchcock	Registered inspector	Science Geography Religious education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13526	Richard Barnard	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23566	John Iles	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Equal opportunities Special educational needs	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
23453	Carole Cressey	Team inspector	English Art and design History Music Foundation stage English as an additional language	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Church End is a large lower school for pupils aged four to nine. The school has grown since the last inspection when there were 145 pupils. There are now 205 pupils (98 boys and 107 girls) in the main school, 17 of whom are in the reception year. In addition there are 15 full time (7 boys and 8 girls) and 24 part-time children (13 boys and 11 girls) in the nursery. Pupils are taught in nine classes, including the nursery. The proportion of pupils claiming eligibility for free school meals is below average. Twenty-two per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs in Key Stage 1, which is average, but this rises to 30 per cent in Key Stage 2, which is above average. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational is average. A very small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is below average and both pupils who speak English as an additional language do so fluently and, therefore, receive no external support. Traveller children attend the school, but were not present at the time of the inspection. Pupils come from a wide range of social and financial backgrounds and have a wide range of attainments when they start school, but overall they start school with broadly average attainments.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school that effectively promotes high standards and quality. Pupils achieve very well and have very good attitudes to school. The school makes high quality provision for the pupils through very good teaching and a very good range of learning opportunities. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is supported strongly by the staff and governors. This is achieved with an income that is broadly average; consequently the school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English, mathematics, information and communication technology, art and design and design and technology are well above average.
- Teaching is of a consistently high quality.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership, which is moving the school forward rapidly.
- The provision for children in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception) is of high quality.
- Very good relationships develop an eagerness for learning in pupils and encourage them to behave well.
- The organisation of the school is successfully geared towards raising standards.
- Very good accommodation is enhanced by high quality displays.

What could be improved

- Information parents receive about what their children are going to learn and how they are getting on.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvements since the last inspection resulting in higher standards and a better quality of education. All the issues identified for improvement in the last report have been successfully tackled and as a result there are now clear procedures for supporting new teachers and a start has been made on using a flexible approach to teaching subjects, so that teachers' particular expertise can be used to benefit other classes. The comparatively recent development of a system of classroom observation by senior staff followed by feed back to staff is having a positive effect on the quality of teaching. Leadership and management have improved whilst the positive atmosphere has been maintained. The school is on course to exceed its targets for English and mathematics in 2001.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven-year-olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	A	C	A	C
Writing	B	B	B	C
Mathematics	A	B	B	C

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

Children start school at the age of four with a wide range of attainments but overall standards are about average. They make rapid progress in the nursery and reception classes, due to the very good and often excellent teaching, so that by the time they enter Year 1 standards are above average.

They continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2, so that standards in the last set of Key Stage 1 national tests for seven-year-olds were above average in writing and mathematics and well above average in reading in comparison with all schools nationally. Compared with similar schools they were average. Since the last inspection, standards in the tests for seven-year-olds have risen broadly in line with the national trend. The standard of work of Year 2 pupils seen during the inspection was generally consistent with the 2000 national test results but there has been an improvement in the standards of a significant proportion of lower attaining pupils. Pupils make very good progress in Years 3 and 4, partly due to the way the school organises support for the comparatively high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, and the high quality of this support from teachers and classroom assistants. Judging from the work seen during the inspection, standards attained by the time pupils leave the school at nine in English and mathematics have risen from 'sound and often good' at the time of the last inspection to well above average. Standards in information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology well exceed national expectations at seven and nine whereas in science, geography and religious education standards exceed expectations at both ages. In physical education standards are as expected at seven and above expectations at nine. No judgements could be made about attainment in history or music.

Pupils achieve very well, with standards moving from broadly average when they start school to well above average by the time they leave. This is influenced by the drive for improvement, which is a characteristic of the school, and the high expectations of teachers. The concentrated support focussed on the average and lower attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4 has led to significant progress for these pupils and has raised standards overall. More able pupils are also supported well, which results in a high proportion of pupils achieving standards above those expected for their age. There are particular strengths in pupils' skills in speaking and listening, in reading and in number. The school exceeded its targets for 2000 and is on course to exceed its realistic targets for 2001.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. They have an outstanding enthusiasm for school and are eager to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are very polite and their very good behaviour contributes to the significant progress they make.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils take responsibility willingly and relationships are very good.
Attendance	Above average. Pupils are keen to come to school and the very small amount of unauthorised absence is well below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

Teaching was at least good in 86 per cent of lessons observed. It was very good in 40 per cent of lessons and excellent in a further 24 per cent, an exceptionally high proportion. In 14 per cent of lessons teaching was satisfactory and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. The high proportion of very good and excellent teaching has a direct impact on the standards pupils achieve and the progress they make. In particular, teachers are successful at teaching pupils different ways of tackling problems. They also make their lessons interesting, so that pupils are eager to learn. The teaching of reading is very effective, so that the school achieves well above average standards compared with other schools. The teamwork between teaching and support staff has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teaching has improved since the last inspection when it was judged good overall but with some outstanding and some unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers meet the needs of all pupils very well; those with special educational needs are supported very effectively, so that many achieve the national average by the time they leave school. The more able pupils are challenged effectively, which is reflected in the high proportion of pupils achieving high standards. Teachers ensure that pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are included fully in all learning activities and children from Traveller families are supported well when they are in the school. As a result pupils from all groups learn very well. The teaching of English and mathematics is very good and numeracy and literacy are taught very effectively. The very high expectations of teachers and the way they make full use of every minute of the lessons are major factors in the progress pupils make and the success of their learning in lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school places strong emphasis on teaching literacy and numeracy but ensures that there is a wide range of other opportunities for learning, which, for example, enables pupils to excel in art.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Teachers and support assistants work together very well to provide relevant support; this is made even more effective by the way the school allocates support on the basis of those who need it most, rather than on the age of the pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The very small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language are included fully in all learning opportunities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Particular strengths are the provision for spiritual, moral and social development, which play an important part in the progress pupils make in understanding their responsibilities in the school community.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are very good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, within a caring atmosphere, which still expects pupils to work hard and do their best.

The mutual respect between teachers and pupils is an important part of the school's provision. The school generally works well in partnership with parents but aspects of the information provided on what their children are going to learn and how they are getting on during the year could be improved. This has already been recognised by the headteacher, who has good plans to improve this element.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is very well led and managed. In particular, the headteacher provides excellent leadership, has a clear idea of what she wants the school to be and how to achieve it. The staff and governors support her very well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are committed and perform their duties conscientiously. They visit the school to observe lessons and use the information they gain to shape their decisions. There is a very good working relationship between the headteacher and governing body, which has a positive influence on the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are very good procedures for identifying areas for improvement which, although only introduced comparatively recently, are already having a positive impact on the quality of teaching, especially in mathematics. There is an excellent shared commitment to succeed.
The strategic use of resources	The headteacher and governors make very good use of the resources available to the school, as shown in the way classes are grouped in Key Stage 2, and the way support assistants are allocated to classes which need them most; both of these examples support lower attaining pupils and help to raise standards

The accommodation is very good. There are attractive, spacious classrooms in the main building, although the nursery is a little cramped. There is a good level of staffing, as a result of the school's decision to make staff a priority in its spending plans. The school is well resourced overall. The principles of best value are applied well by the headteacher and governors.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teaching is good. • Behaviour is very good. • The school is well led and managed. • They would feel comfortable approaching the school with suggestions or complaints. • Children are expected to work hard. • Their children like school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information about how their children are getting on. • The amount of out-of-school activities. • The extent to which the school works closely with parents. • The amount of homework (some parents thought there was too much and some thought there was too little).

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views. They also agree with parents' wish to have more information about what their child is studying and how their child is getting on during the year, whilst recognising that the annual written reports to parents provide a good level of information. The amount of homework is within national guidelines and the inspectors judged that it was used effectively. There is a good range of out-of-school activities available to pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school has set realistic targets for improvement and is on course to meet them. The headteacher and senior staff are rigorous in their pursuit of ways to raise standards, which have improved since the last inspection. Early indications are that the school will exceed its targets significantly in the 2001 national tests. By providing additional support for lower attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4 the school is on track to raise the standards of these pupils by the time they leave school at the age of nine. There are already strong indications that this is the case. As a result of the well focussed support provided by the school, standards of seven-year-olds at the end of Key Stage 1 and when they leave school at the end of Year 4 at nine years old are well above the average for pupils of similar ages. Standards have risen since the last inspection, when they were judged 'sound and often good'.
2. In the 2000 national tests for seven-year-olds standards were well above average in reading, and above average in writing and mathematics compared with all schools nationally. Compared with similar schools the standards were average in all three subjects. However, this picture conceals some major differences in the standards reached by different groups of pupils. The proportion of seven-year-olds reaching the higher than expected Level 3 was well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, an analysis of the test results revealed that a higher than expected proportion was either failing or just reaching the standard expected of seven-year-olds. This was particularly the case in mathematics. The analysis that, while high attainers were doing well or very well, it was likely that pupils of average and below average ability were not doing as well as they should.
3. The headteacher, who was comparatively new at that time, took steps to provide additional support for the average and below average pupils in that year group. One strategy was the setting up of a mixed age class for pupils needing additional support, and the pupils who took the national tests in 1999 and 2000 are now making very good progress and standards are being raised. The school has been successful in raising the standards of average and below average pupils throughout the school through a combination of well targeted support, where those who need most help, regardless of their age, receive it. The indications from unconfirmed test results for the current year are that standards overall have improved considerably for the middle and lower attaining pupils as a result of the targeted support and high quality of teaching. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
4. When children start school in the nursery at the age of four attainment is broadly average. By the time they leave the Foundation Stage at the end of the reception year standards have risen to above average due to the very good and often excellent teaching they receive. This is because there is a very good combination of play and interesting experiences that challenge children, who respond and learn very well. The teaching is often inspirational. Children engage in conversations confidently with adults and after only a short time in the nursery most are able to recognise their own name. Above average children in the reception class write simple sentences about the life cycle of a butterfly. During the reception year children attain the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.
5. Pupils make very good progress through the two years of Key Stage 1 and the first two years of Key Stage 2 due to the very good teaching which gives a good grounding in reading, writing and mathematics. This gives pupils confidence to succeed in other, creative activities as well. They

respond to challenges as when a pupil who described a poem as 'excellent' was asked to explain why. This extended her thinking and speaking skills and she came up with 'because it made me think about the sun'. Standards in reading are very good; for example, above average pupils read aloud with confidence and understanding and explain that they choose books because they are 'exciting' or 'scary'. By the age of nine, pupils offer detailed opinions about why they prefer the earlier 'Harry Potter' books to later ones.

6. Standards in writing are very good. By the age of seven pupils write for a range of purposes, such as making party invitations, and use punctuation such as full stops and capital letters confidently, while above average writers use exclamation marks, speech marks and adjectives to liven up their work. Nine-year-olds show their understanding of different types of rhyming such as Haiku, cinquain and rondolet.
7. In mathematics, standards observed during the inspection were well above average. Challenging teaching, to which pupils respond well, stretches them and consequently they make very good progress in their learning. Teachers make learning fun, as in a Year 1 lesson when a pupil was blindfolded and a shape fixed to the blindfold. Members of the class gave clues such as 'It's a 2D shape'; the excitement generated was a powerful influence on pupils' learning. A particular feature of standards in mathematics is pupils' skill in using a wide range of strategies for solving problems. For example in a Year 4 lesson when a pupil was asked how he remembered the product of 7×8 he replied; ' $7 \times 7 = 49$. 49 is a square number, add another 7 and the answer is 56. Or $2 \times 7 = 14$, double it to get 28, double it again to get 56'. These skills in solving problems result from the teachers' constant focus on making lessons challenging and exciting, and giving pupils confidence to tackle problems with which they are unfamiliar.
8. Standards in science are above those expected of pupils aged seven and nine. Pupils make good progress due to the good teaching they receive. A comparative weakness in science is the presentation of work, much of which is completed on loose sheets of paper. However, pupils' understanding exceeds the quality of recording of their investigation. All the pupils in Year 2 could complete an electrical circuit by connecting a switch, battery and bulb to light up. This was brought to life for them by the teachers challenging pupils to incorporate their circuits into a three-dimensional animal that they constructed, with the eyes lighting up when the circuit was connected. Nine-year-olds demonstrate a good understanding of the properties of light and were inventive and totally engrossed in a number of challenges in one Year 4 lesson, such as; 'How do we make light travel around corners?' When describing the way the eye receives light, on pupil said; 'The optic nerve sends a message to the brain, which turns it the right way up'.
9. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are well above expectations due to the very good, knowledgeable teaching they receive. By the age of nine almost all pupils have very good word processing skills, which enable them to make their own newspaper. They send e-mails confidently and download information from the Internet. They use ICT frequently to support their learning in other subjects, such as the graphs they produce in science and the photographs from digital cameras that effectively illustrate their work.
10. Standards in art and design and design and technology are also well above expectations, with some excellent two and three-dimensional work on giraffes in an eye-catching display by the front door. Pupils also displayed their talent in art in decorating pots and plates in the style of canal boat artists, with the support of their own teacher and the 'Travellers' Support' teacher. Standards in geography and religious education exceed expectations at both seven and nine. Standards in physical education are in line with expected standards at seven but above those standards by the time pupils are nine. Too little music was observed during the inspection and too little evidence of the study of history was seen on which to base judgements about standards in those two subjects.

11. Literacy and numeracy are used well in other subjects, as in the 'Search for Hidden Treasure' in geography in Key Stage 1, the use of graphs to record class information in a study of healthy living in science and researching the life of Mary Seacole in history.
12. The small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language are very well supported through the teaching, as are the children from Traveller families, although there were no Traveller children in school during the inspection

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' very good attitudes to school; very good behaviour and personal development have a significant impact on their achievements in school. Pupils love coming to school and are very keen to learn. Excellent enthusiasm for learning is maintained consistently throughout the school encouraged by very good teaching. Very high standards have been maintained since the previous report.
14. The youngest children, in the nursery and reception year, show a very mature attitude to learning and behave very well. They listen very well, work very well together and have very good relationships which all contribute to their very good learning; for example, in a mathematics lesson with reception year children everyone concentrated for the whole of the lesson and their excellent co-operation, especially in relation to sharing resources, helped all to quickly develop their understanding of number.
15. Throughout the school pupils show very good attitudes in lessons. They show they are very interested and involved in activities; for example, in a Year 3/4 mathematics lesson pupils cannot wait to get on with tasks concerning money and menus in a cafe. Their enthusiasm, encouraged by the teacher's very trusting approach in using real money and menus, had a very positive impact on their learning. In particular, pupils' very good attitudes to information and communication technology (ICT) and art and design are having a very positive impact on standards in these subjects.
16. Pupils' behaviour in lessons, assemblies, around the school and in the playground is very good. There have been no permanent or temporary exclusions since the previous inspection, a figure well below the national average. Pupils respond very well to the high standards of behaviour expected by staff. Pupils know the rules very well and are developing a very mature awareness of how to behave appropriately. They are very polite, courteous and friendly.
17. Relationships are very good. Pupils play and work together very well. Those with special educational needs are included in all activities. All pupils show very good respect for the feelings and values of others, and appreciate their efforts and the efforts of their teachers; for example, in a Year 3/4 ICT lesson pupils showed delight when creating a circle on the screen using pre-determined instructions.
18. Pupils' personal development is very good. They willingly undertake a range of tasks such as returning registers to the office and helping to clear up resources. They have a very mature sense of responsibility and show a very good response to opportunities to show their initiative. From an early age groups get on with tasks very well with the minimum support from staff.
19. Attendance levels are good, and are above the national average. There are very few cases of unauthorised absence or lateness. Good levels of attendance reflect pupils' love for their school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching is very good and sometimes excellent. Teaching was at least good in 86 per cent of lessons observed. It was very good in 40 per cent of lessons and excellent in a further 24 per cent, an exceptionally high proportion. In 22 per cent of lessons the teaching was good and in 14 per cent it was satisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. During the inspection it was never less than very good in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception) and in the nursery 63 per cent of teaching was excellent. These figures represent an improvement in teaching across the school since the last inspection when it was judged good and occasionally outstanding. The improvement is due partly to improved planning and teachers sharing what they want pupils to learn with the children. It is also the consequence of the fairly recently introduced classroom observation scheme as part of which the headteacher, and other members of staff too, observe lessons and provide feedback on ways that teaching could be improved.
21. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good, as is the teaching of the small proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, which has a positive effect on the learning of these pupils. Teachers' planning for the teaching of Traveller pupils shows that this is also very good though there were no Traveller pupils in the school at the time of the inspection. Higher ability pupils are challenged well, as demonstrated by the well above average proportion of pupils who achieve the higher than expected Level 3 in the national tests for seven-year-olds.
22. The introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategy has also had a very positive impact on the quality of teaching. Teachers have responded well and have implemented the strategies enthusiastically and thoughtfully, making well-judged adjustments to the timings of the strategies in order to match the needs of their own pupils. They are determined that their pupils will succeed and this rubs off on the pupils, who are confident in their learning and consequently make very good progress in their achievements. The teachers' approach means that pupils are willing to 'have a go' and are not afraid of feeling foolish if they get an answer wrong. The teaching of basic skills such as reading, writing and number is very good and has a positive impact on the overall standards pupils achieve.
23. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use the correct technical language very well, which increases pupils' confidence in their learning. For example, in a Year 4 science lesson pupils used words such as cornea, retina and iris freely. One explained; 'the optic nerve sends a message to the brain which turns the picture the right way up'.
24. In the foundation stage a clear strength of the teaching is the way teachers make the learning exciting. They have a very good understanding of how young children learn and continually check the children's understanding. For example, when working on measurement they ask questions such as; 'Is it taller than you?' which helps children to understand the concept of taller and shorter.
25. In the small proportion of lessons where teaching was satisfactory, the pace of lessons and management of pupils was not as effective as in the majority of lessons but nevertheless, the teaching was of satisfactory quality overall.
26. Teachers' use of time and resources is excellent; not a minute is wasted and pupils cram a wide range of activities into the day and work at a fast pace. They respond to the challenge of teachers' very high expectations of their effort and behaviour and this has a very positive impact on their learning. Another major strength is the way teachers and support assistants work together to support the pupils' learning. The pupils who need help most receive most help, but the team is flexible so that sometimes support staff work with groups of pupils doing practical activities, in order to help them get the most out of their learning.

27. Teachers work hard to make lessons interesting for pupils and they are almost always successful in achieving this. In two very good science lessons in Year 2 teachers reinforced the importance of healthy living by organising a range of practical activities including covering hands in green paint and then washing them while blindfold, to stress the importance of thorough washing to get rid of germs. They also manage pupils very well, which means that pupils spend their time learning. An example of this was in an excellent Year 4 science lesson in which pupils were engaged in a range of exciting practical activities, such as trying to discover how to make light travel around corners. One quiet word 'Stop' from the teacher resulted in more than 30 pupils stopping instantly in order to hear the next instruction.
28. A strength of the teaching is the success in helping pupils conquer a range of different strategies for tackling problems. This was illustrated in a Year 3 mathematics lesson when pupils were challenged to find the missing number in the sequence $52 + ? = 132$; the pupils offered a range of good ideas for working this out. This approach of giving pupils the means of working out problems has the result of instilling confidence into pupils so that they are not thrown off course when they meet a task that they cannot immediately answer. In almost all lessons teachers are challenging and inspiring. This has a major impact on pupils' learning, as they are always eager to learn and do well. It is reflected even outside the lesson time so that during the inspection there was always a group of Year 2 pupils in the corridor attempting a geography challenge on the environment.
29. Teachers use assessment very well, especially in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), and change their lessons according to how well the pupils are learning. ICT is used very effectively to support all other subjects; for example, in one Year 4 lesson pupils calculated the angle of turn to create sequences and produce regular shapes. Homework is used effectively to extend pupils' learning, ranging from reading and spelling for the younger pupils to researching information for their topics for the older pupils.

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

30. The school provides a curriculum that is broad, balanced and relevant to the ages, needs and interests of the pupils. It includes all subjects in the National Curriculum and religious education and complies with all legal requirements.
31. In the previous report the school was criticised for not having a common approach to lesson planning. This has been addressed through discussion and is now secure. Staff apply a common planning format which is monitored by the headteacher. The curriculum ensures progression in learning for all age groups. All policies are systematically reviewed and amended as appropriate. The staff share their ideas within the framework of national guidelines and work as a team to provide a curriculum of high quality.
32. The school has implemented the national literacy and numeracy strategies very successfully. They are very well linked to other subjects. There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in a wide variety of situations, for example, in discussions about design criteria in design and technology and the ways in which information and communication technology (ICT) supports the curriculum. Mathematics supports learning in design and technology, science and ICT.
33. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PHSE) is very good. It is a discrete subject that is taught throughout the school. Its influence permeates the life of the school; for example, there are planned opportunities for pupils to consider how their attitudes, beliefs and actions affect the lives of others. The emphasis this term is on road safety. In a good quality lesson pupils demonstrated a very good awareness of safety issues and made sensible

suggestions about how road safety in their village could be improved. Sex education is not taught but pupils' questions are answered sensitively. The school has planned a drugs awareness policy that awaits consideration by the governing body at its next meeting.

34. The personal development of pupils is very good and substantial importance is placed on this aspect of the school's work. For example, older pupils support younger pupils in the playground. The older pupils are pleased to share responsibilities; for example, they help to co-ordinate the collection of computer vouchers and are overjoyed when asked to help their teachers at break and lunchtimes. Through these activities they reflect the pride they have in their school.
35. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. They are very well challenged and with very good support they make very good progress. The requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs are met in full.
36. ICT provides very good support for subjects across the curriculum. Many pupils in Year 4 work independently, accessing the Internet and sending e-mail. Plans for a new purpose built computer suite are being refined and when it is built standards should improve further
37. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Sports, music, dance and French clubs are very popular and enjoyed by a large number of pupils. The library is available for parents and pupils to share and the school benefits from a bookshop. Visits, for example, to Randall's Farm and places of historical interest extend pupils' learning beyond the classroom.
38. The school is developing good quality links with the community. As part of the millennium project pupils took part in planting bulbs across the village. Links with the church are strengthening. The school celebrated the Harvest Festival in the church. Later, the produce collected was distributed to families in the village. The vicar visits school and leads assemblies. The Storytellers, a voluntary religious group, dramatises Bible stories and presents them to the pupils at assemblies. They are very popular with pupils and provide an innovative way of sharing Bible stories with young people. The school took part in a model building project in conjunction with the Education and Business Partnership based in Luton.
39. The school is a member of a strong local group of schools. A good range of work on joint projects contributes to improving the quality of education for pupils. Joint initiatives have included assessment procedures and the teaching of phonics. Cluster meetings for core subjects are working very well. The school's arrangements for preparing pupils for the next stage of their education are very good. For example, pupils in Year 4 use bridging exercise books, which they take with them to their middle schools when they transfer. This contributes to very good standards of work being maintained to the end of term.
40. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Assembly time is used to further the spiritual development of pupils through quiet reflection, prayer, drama and music. Very good quality pupils' work in many parts of the school encourages pupils to reflect on beauty, for example, art displays throughout the school. The visits of the Storytellers provide very good opportunities to enhance pupils' spiritual development. Pupils are fully attentive throughout the performances and, in discussion with a group of pupils, it is clear that they think deeply about the messages they receive during assembly times. Additionally, opportunities in PSHE enable pupils to focus on individual feelings and responses.
41. The provision for moral education is very good. The principles of right and wrong are well taught and understood by all pupils. PSHE makes a valuable contribution to promoting the differences between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The quality of education at the school encourages pupils to strive for the best and not to compromise opportunities for others.

The staff provide very good role models. A short list of school rules appears on the doors of every classroom. They were identified in assembly by the pupils and are proving effective if, at any time, a pupil needs reminding of the standards expected at the school.

42. The school encourages pupils to support one another, effectively ensuring those who are less confident or successful build self-esteem. Mutual support underpins the success in establishing strong relationships among pupils. Staff provide excellent role models for pupils in the respectful way they speak to them
43. The school has a strong musical tradition, the quality of artwork is high and the overall provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The curriculum provides them with a good range of local experiences, and pupils learn about a range of religions, many of them well represented in contemporary Britain, in religious education. The school is currently working to further enhance the aspects of its provision that will help pupils better understand the cultural diversity of our society.
44. Overall, the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The school provides very good care for its pupils. Staff know their pupils very well and this helps them ensure all pupils feel valued and cared for. High standards of care have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils' academic and personal development is monitored and supported very well.
46. Health and safety procedures are very effective in identifying and dealing with potential risks. Child protection procedures and awareness are very good. The school is very clean, tidy and secure. First-aid arrangements are good, and health awareness is promoted well. The care provided helps pupils learn confidently in a very secure and caring environment. Pupils new to the school quickly settle in this environment and quickly start to make very good progress.
47. A very good behaviour policy that is implemented consistently by all staff encourages pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes to learning. The use of praise and rewards is particularly effective in achieving these standards. For example, a learning support assistant was seen using praise very effectively in a Year 3/4 mathematics lesson. She praised a pupil for making an effort to give an answer, even though it was incorrect, rather than telling him he was wrong, which resulted in him being encouraged to try again and get the answer correct. The inspection found no bullying or oppressive behaviour. All staff work very hard to maintain a happy school with very good relationships. The absence of exclusions demonstrates the school's positive attitude towards all its pupils.
48. Good promotion and monitoring of attendance have ensured the maintenance of above average levels of attendance since the previous inspection. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good and are used very effectively to provide a very good curriculum. The school uses base-line assessment very effectively on children's entry to the nursery. This allows nursery and reception staff to plan very effectively and assists children's good achievement in relation to the statutory early learning goals.
49. Throughout the school regular tests in mathematics and English are used very well both to measure pupils' progress and to set individual targets for pupils which are precise and linked very well to individual needs. Procedures for monitoring the progress of pupils with special educational needs are very good and are having a positive impact on their very good achievements, especially in Years 3 and 4.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. The school has a good partnership with parents which has a positive effect on pupils' achievements. Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting, completed the parents' questionnaire, and were interviewed during the inspection are very well pleased with the school. They feel their children like coming to school, make good progress and receive a good standard of education. About one-fifth of parents raised concerns about the level of homework, information they receive about progress, the number of consultation sessions and the range of extra-curricular activities. Inspection evidence fully supports the parents' very positive views of the school. The level of homework set is appropriate for the pupils at the school.
51. Written reports provide parents with good information about their children's attainment and progress; reports include targets for development and are very effective in setting out specifically what pupils have to do next to improve their achievements. The school holds two formal consultation evenings one in the autumn and one in the summer term. Although the school has a good open door policy which allows parents to consult staff if they have concerns the lack of a meeting in the spring term limits the information parents receive about progress. A good range of extra-curricular events is provided.
52. The school provides parents with good information in the school prospectus and governors' annual report. Newsletters give good information about the life of the school and reviews of policies but contain no information on the curriculum of topics to be studied by classes. Staff, including the headteacher, are readily available and approachable and any concerns are dealt with in a prompt and effective manner.
53. The contribution of parents to their children's learning at school and at home is good. They ensure their prompt and regular attendance. Many give good help in the classroom, with visits and supervising swimming. CHESS (parents and supporters association) provides good financial support and a wide range of social events to encourage pupils and parents feel a part of the school community.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The leadership and management of the school overall are very good and have improved since the last inspection. In particular, the headteacher provides excellent leadership; she has a clear vision of where the school should be and what should be done to achieve it. She is supported very strongly by the staff and governors and this makes a significant contribution to the school's success in meeting its aims. There is a strong, shared commitment to improvement, which has a strong impact on the standards pupils achieve and the very good progress they make.
55. An example of the clear leadership is the way that the school's decision to make staffing a priority for spending has been implemented by grouping pupils and allocating additional support to those who need most help, rather than simply by age. This is particularly effective in the mixed Year 3/4 class, where pupils have, as a result, made significant progress and contributed to raising the overall standards achieved by the school. There is good delegation of responsibility to teachers so that subject co-ordinators, many of whom are new to their role, are clear about what they need to do to raise standards further, and all teachers play some part in the management of the school.
56. There is a very good system of monitoring teaching. The headteacher and subject co-ordinators observe lessons and give feedback to staff. This is a comparatively recent innovation and has not yet spread to all subjects as the school is following the priorities in the school development plan. It is already having a clear impact on the quality of teaching and the standards pupils achieve, especially in mathematics. The priorities set out in the school development plan and the

new five year strategic plan are clear and concentrate on what the school needs to do to improve.

57. The governing body fulfils its legal responsibilities well and carries out its work effectively. Although a number of governors are new, the governing body has a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They visit the school to observe lessons and feed back the results of their observations to the whole governing body. This has a positive impact on their ability to shape the future direction of the school. The governors have carried out their responsibilities in setting targets for the headteacher.
58. Financial planning of the school is very effective. Initiatives are costed and prioritised in the School Development Plan and budget allocations linked very closely to educational priorities. The allocation of teaching and learning support assistants is planned very effectively to the benefit of pupils' learning. Subject co-ordinators are allocated funds to reflect the level of priority of their subject. A small surplus had been built up in an appropriately planned manner to assist in the provision of a computer suite. Financial management is very effective and budgetary control secure. Specific funds, for example for pupils with special educational needs, are used very effectively.
59. Day-to-day administration is good and contributes well to the smooth running of the school. The school has a good grasp of the principles of Best Value and applies them well. This is reflected in the very good development of learning support assistants, which is having a very positive impact on standards. New technology is used very effectively; for example, pupils' results are systematically recorded on a spreadsheet.
60. The school benefits from a very good level of staffing. Co-ordinators' skills are matched very well to their subjects. The very good number of learning support assistants are very well deployed.
61. Accommodation in the school is very good. Classrooms are spacious and the whole school is enhanced by the consistently excellent use of display. It provides a stimulating and warm environment, which encourages pupils' learning most effectively.
62. The nursery has satisfactory space available for activities but it is used most effectively to provide a wide range of stimulating activities. Resources are good overall. In particular, the very good range and quality of resources for mathematics, information and communication technology (software) physical education, design and technology, and art and design is having a positive impact on standards in these subjects.
63. The school provides very good value for money because of the combination of:
 - very high standards at seven and nine;
 - very good teaching;
 - very good leadership and management; and
 - the average level of cost per pupil.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. Church End Lower School is a very good school with no significant areas of weakness. Nevertheless the governing body, headteacher and senior management team may wish to include the following point in their development plan:

- * Improve communications with parents by providing parents with more information about what their children are going to learn in the next term and a further planned

opportunity during the course of the year for parents to find out how well their children are getting on.

(Paras: 51-2)

*** indicates that the school has recognised this issue and is currently addressing it.**

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	50
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
24	40	22	14	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	27	205
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		17

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	48

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	18	26	44

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	15	15
	Girls	24	23	23
	Total	38	38	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (81)	86 (85)	86 (85)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	24	23	24
	Total	38	37	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (85)	84 (83)	86 (85)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	186
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28.6
Average class size	28.6

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	118

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	42

Number of pupils per FTE adult	11
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	418,054
Total expenditure	393,982
Expenditure per pupil	1,751
Balance brought forward from previous year	4,638
Balance carried forward to next year	28,170

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	221
Number of questionnaires returned	109

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	28	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	35	5	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	38	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	47	13	1	4
The teaching is good.	68	28	0	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	40	19	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	27	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	30	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	37	46	16	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	62	33	3	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	42	6	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	38	17	3	7

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

65. The school's provision for children in the nursery and reception classes has improved further since the previous inspection and is now very good. The curriculum is based on the nationally approved 'Six areas of learning' and provides the children with very broad and balanced experiences. The school provides a wide range of stimulating, challenging and focussed experiences to promote the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.
66. The overall attainment levels of most children entering the nursery are similar to those expected nationally. This is confirmed by the results of the baseline assessment. Teaching in the nursery and reception is consistently of a very high standard and this has a very positive effect on children's learning. As a result, most children achieve well and before they finish the reception year most children have already met the early learning goals in all six areas of learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

67. Children's personal, social and emotional development is given a very high priority. Very effective teaching ensures the majority of children meet the early learning goals well before they move into Year 1. Children enjoy coming to school and happily leave their parents and carers at the start of sessions. They eagerly choose from the wide range of stimulating activities available and are evidently keen to learn new skills and to explore new ideas. The very caring ethos helps children to settle quickly into the rules and routines of nursery and school life. Emphasis is placed on helping children to develop an understanding of appropriate behaviour and what is right and wrong. Children are learning to share and work together in a variety of situations, such as role-play and outdoor play. In the craft area negotiations are conducted in an atmosphere of sharing and co-operation as children ask; 'Can I have some of your pink paint please?' Older children work independently for sustained periods of time and take pride in their reading and writing successes. They work hard at difficult tasks, such as improving their number formation, writing independently or completing complex constructions. Relationships are very positive and children are encouraged to reflect on their feelings, actions and experiences. Children in reception are encouraged to reflect on what makes them happy or sad. They are encouraged to consider the feelings of other children and understand the consequences of their actions. There are well-planned opportunities for children to develop a sensitivity and awareness of other people, their different religions, cultures and ways of life. Family connections from other parts of the world are valued, as a photograph of a grandma living in Italy is included in the nursery topic on homes.

Communication, language and literacy

68. The teaching of communication, language and literacy is very good, ensuring that the majority of children reach the early learning goals before they move into Year 1. In both year groups communication, language and literacy are given a very high priority. The nursery and reception classes provide a wide range of effective experiences and activities to develop and extend children's language and literacy skills. Children are encouraged to become good listeners and enjoy stories and rhymes, joining in familiar ones. Structured play situations, snack times and together times provide opportunities for children to talk about their own experiences and extend their vocabulary. Considerable emphasis is placed on developing thinking skills and staff are continually asking children challenging questions as they interact with them during activities such

as drawing. A child's picture of a tractor was used very effectively to extend thinking and language as the teacher asked 'Have you seen a tractor? What did it look like? As a result, a simple picture became much more interesting as the child added new information based on his experiences and memory. Children are encouraged to reconsider their answers. For example, children had to think of another word for 'ant' and were helped to come up with 'insect'. Children confidently engage in conversations with adults and are given very good role models to extend their spoken language. Clearly labelled displays, alphabet and sound friezes and individual name cards help children develop early reading and writing skills. Stimulating writing areas, containing a wealth of exciting resources and individual diaries, encourage children to make marks on paper and develop their reading and writing skills. Structured teacher directed activities help children to recognise familiar letters, sounds and words in a fun way. Older nursery children had involved their parents in collecting a range of objects beginning with particular sounds.

69. Imaginative teaching created exciting mobiles containing snakes, saxophones and nail polish to reinforce learning and most children in the group were able to recognise initial sounds. Above average children in the reception class write their own simple sentences about the life cycle of the butterfly using familiar letters, sounds and words as well as capital letters and full stops. After only a short time in nursery children recognise their own names and most children in reception write their own names with accuracy using capital and small letters. Comfortable and inviting book corners promote a love of books and children are learning to handle books with care. Higher attaining reception children are becoming confident independent readers as they read simple books from the reading scheme. Children choose books as an activity and all children take books home on a regular basis to share with family members. This has a very positive effect on children's progress in learning to read. Appropriate elements of the literacy strategy are implemented for older children in the reception class and this has a positive effect on children's achievements.

Mathematical development

70. The teaching of mathematics is very good. The nursery and reception classes provide a wide range of activities to promote mathematical understanding. Very effective teaching ensures the majority of children meet the early learning goals before they move into Year 1. Children enjoy mathematics and learn to use mathematical ideas and skills in real situations. For example, when making imaginary 999 telephone calls to call out the fire brigade or discussing with their teacher how many children are four and how many are five. In both classes children have many exciting opportunities to compare, match, sort, order, sequence and count using a wide range of games, routines and experiences. A very beautiful blue bowl of glass shells encouraged children to count, sort and match interesting objects. Through well-planned topic work they explore number, pattern, shape and measurement. Number lines are used effectively to develop an understanding of order and position and nursery children are able to join in with the teacher and count to thirty. Older children develop an understanding of more than and less than and can identify numbers between, for example, ten and fifteen.
71. Teachers place great emphasis on developing appropriate mathematical language. Children consider size, shape and position when playing with small world toys or emptying and filling containers in the water and sand play area. They discuss with their teacher the height of their constructions and how they can make them taller than themselves. Children are encouraged to solve simple problems as they make their own three-dimensional models of houses. They recognise triangle, rectangle and are introduced to cuboids. Learning is extended in the reception class as children look for shapes with and without corners and work out how many can play in the different activities. Staff use number rhymes such as 'five currant buns' very effectively to develop children's ideas of early addition and subtraction. Appropriate elements

of the numeracy strategy are implemented for older children in the reception class and this has a positive effect on children's achievements.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

72. The teaching of knowledge and understanding of the world is very good. Children are developing a good understanding of the world around them. Very effective teaching ensures the majority of children meet the early learning goals before they move into Year 1. The natural curiosity of young children is enhanced as staff continually encourage them to talk about their discoveries and experiences, to ask questions and to explore made and natural materials using magnifying glasses. After discovering a beetle in the garden staff encouraged a group of children to look closely at their movements, colour and characteristics and to search through books to discover if beetles could fly. Care for living creatures is encouraged as nursery children look after Molly and Polly their pet gerbils and reception children care for stick insects. Children observe the changes that occur as they watch seeds growing and tadpoles turning into frogs. They learn about the passage of time through celebrating birthdays, talking about the days of the week and the changing seasons and weather.
73. Reception children learn about other cultures through examining different forms of dress such as saris, salwar and kemmeze. A wide range of materials helps children develop their skills of cutting, folding and sticking. Children choose from glue, cellotape and string to join their models. The computer and tape recorders are popular choices and many children are confident and competent in using the 'mouse' and using different programs to support their learning in mathematics and language and literacy. Construction toys and a range of tools and materials, such as wrenches, screwdrivers, nails, hammers and wood are used very well to encourage children to design and make their own models and to discover how things work.

Physical development

74. Very effective teaching ensures the majority of children meet the early learning goals before they move into Year 1. Very good provision is made for children's physical development. Children's natural exuberance and energy is catered for well. Through planned lessons and routines children are reminded of the importance of healthy eating and exercise. A very good range of challenging large equipment is available on a daily basis to help children develop their climbing and balancing skills. Confidence and skill are exhibited as children balance, climb and swing on the good equipment available. There is a wide range of wheeled toys which children manoeuvre well avoiding other children and obstacles as they incorporate them into their dramatic play situations, such as fire fighting. In the nursery and reception class children have structured physical education lessons to promote further their development. In these lessons children are developing good spatial awareness, control and imagination as they respond to music and ideas from their teachers. They are learning to run, hop, skip, jump and balance with increasing co-ordination and confidence. Reception children are learning to handle large apparatus safely and are encouraged to travel along, through, over and under with increasing skill and control. Emphasis is placed on developing children's skills when handling tools, construction toys and malleable materials and they are becoming competent and skilled as they handle a variety of tools and materials safely and with care.

Creative development

75. Children enjoy a very good range of experiences in art, music, story and imaginative play. Very effective teaching ensures the majority of children meet the early learning goals before they move into Year 1. Through such experiences children are encouraged to use appropriate vocabulary and to develop their use of language to express ideas. A very good range of musical instruments, songs and rhymes helps to develop children's understanding of sound and rhythm and pattern. Children learn to appreciate different forms of music and art as the nursery listen to Vivaldi's 'Spring' and reception children create imaginative pictures in the style of Guiseppe Arcumbolda. Children enjoy taking part in the many very good role-play situations which

exciting resources promote. The roles of fire officers and police constables are combined with post office staff and family members. All combine to enhance children's imagination and extend their language and creativity. There are many activities available for children to develop their senses through investigating texture, shape and colour. Staff provide materials with interesting real and made textures from which children can choose to create their own designs, pictures, models and collages. They work with clay, wood and junk materials to create two and three-dimensional pictures and models. Materials such as paint, sand and water are available for children to explore on a daily basis.

76. Teaching in the early years is consistently very good. It is often inspirational and exciting, capturing children's imagination and making them eager learners. All staff have a very secure understanding of how young children learn and of the importance of play and first hand experiences. This has a very positive effect on the good progress children make towards the early learning goals and provides a very firm foundation for learning in Year 1. Lesson plans and schemes provide a very good framework for learning. They are very clear and detailed with appropriate learning objectives linked to the early learning goals. Experiences are interesting, challenging and of a very high quality and are focussed very closely on what children need to learn in relationship to the stepping-stones. Activities are extremely well organised and appropriate to promote communication, language, literacy and mathematical development. There is a very good balance of teacher directed activities and child initiated ones. Staff provide very effective support for all activities, continually interacting to check and extend children's understanding. For example, when developing children's understanding of measurement, staff ask questions such as; 'Is it as tall as you?' and 'How can we make it taller?'
77. Praise and encouragement are very effective in promoting positive behaviour and personal, social and emotional development. Staff use questions, comments and observations very well to extend learning and to assess children's progress in order to plan for future learning. Baseline assessment is shared with parents and is used effectively to help teachers plan an appropriate learning environment for children under five. Staff are developing a very useful record system to indicate children's progress towards the early learning goals. Staff work very well together and this has a positive effect on the quality of the learning. Teachers and classroom support assistants are experienced and enthusiastic and have very high expectations of the children. They make school an enjoyable experience that promotes a love of learning. Parents are actively involved in their children's learning through sharing story books and early reading scheme books at home or, whenever they can, working alongside their children in the nursery or reception class.

ENGLISH

78. Since the last inspection standards in English for seven and nine-year-olds have improved and are now well above those expected nationally. In the last set of national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 the school's results were well above average in reading and above average in writing. Compared to similar schools results were average. During the last four years the school has been particularly successful in raising the standard of achievement for above average pupils. This is reflected in the 2000 national test results when standards overall were well above the average of all schools and of similar schools. However, the results were less favourable for lower and average attainers. Standards nationally were in line for these pupils but when compared to similar schools they were below for reading and well below for writing. During the last two years the school has addressed this issue with rigour and has been very successful in raising the achievement of all pupils in all year groups including lower attainers, average attainers and those with special educational needs. This has had a significant effect on the overall standards of the school and is reflected in recent teaching assessments in both key stages.

79. Literacy is given a very high priority throughout the school and a number of strategies have been implemented to improve the standards. Smaller classes for lower attaining pupils ensure they receive the necessary support they need to make progress. Additional staff support pupils of all attainments enhancing progress considerably. The school has enthusiastically implemented the National Literacy's Strategy. Emphasis is placed on reading, writing and speaking and listening in a variety of contexts and for a wide range of purposes. Pupils use their reading and writing skills well in other areas of the curriculum, for example, when recording their investigations in science lessons or researching the life of Mary Seacole as part of a history topic. Teachers share the learning outcomes with the pupils and lessons have an atmosphere of hard work. Pupils are very eager to do their best to achieve the highest standards they are capable of.
80. Standards in speaking and listening are well above national expectations. In assemblies and lessons pupils have opportunities to express their ideas and opinions, confident that they will be listened to and taken seriously. All pupils are eager to engage adults and each other in mature conversations, listening with interest to each other's contributions. Speaking and listening skills make a positive contribution to the good behaviour and orderly running of the school as pupils listen well to adults following instructions carefully to improve their work and behaviour. By the age of seven the pupils are confident speakers, eager to answer questions and to talk and evaluate their work. They initiate and enjoy conversations and express themselves clearly when relating family events, answering questions or explaining their tasks. Throughout the school the emphasis is on encouraging pupils to think about their work and to express themselves well using interesting and grammatically accurate language. For example, at the end of one lesson pupils were engaged in evaluating each other's poems. One pupil, who described a poem as 'excellent', was challenged to say how and why it was thought to be so good. This focussed the pupil's thinking and speaking skills and extended her use of appropriate vocabulary as she explained; 'It made me think just about the sun!' Year 4 pupils add to the quality of assemblies as they read poetry with expression and interest. They discuss each other's work sensitively giving and receiving tips on how to improve their work.
81. Standards in reading are very good. Pupils make good and enthusiastic readers. The youngest pupils read simple books with accuracy and understanding. They are aware of authors and illustrators and identify the main characters and events in their favourite books. An understanding of sounds, word families and spellings give pupils confidence in tackling unfamiliar words and this has a very positive effect on the progress they make in becoming fluent and confident readers. Above average pupils in Year 2 use a variety of strategies to help them recognise unfamiliar words, such as letter patterns and sounds, context and pictures. They read aloud with confidence, expression and considerable understanding and choose books because they are 'exciting' or 'scary'. Dictionary and glossary skills are taught well to further extend pupils' confidence in becoming independent readers and confident users of the library. Pupils are encouraged to read with expression and teachers are always on hand to check they understand difficult words and phrases such as 'mournful' or 'stalked' whilst reading a non-fiction book about the African Bush.
82. Exciting tasks such as following instructions to search for 'hidden treasure' encourage pupils to read for different purposes. Books are taken home regularly and family members hear their children read. This has a very positive effect on pupils' standards and progress. By the age of nine most are enthusiastic readers of a wide range of texts. Their reading is fluent and accurate and good expression conveys meanings such as humour or sadness. Older pupils express a preference for particular authors and they choose books because of interests such as humour or adventure. Above average and average attaining pupils understand plot, setting and characterisation. They show a mature understanding of different writers' styles and accounts and are able to make deductions and inferences from their reading. Higher attaining pupils were able to offer a detailed opinion as to why they preferred the earlier Harry Potter books to later ones, bringing in characterisation and setting. Through well planned lessons pupils have

opportunities to read to their teachers and classroom support assistants regularly. They are developing good independent research skills as they use dictionaries, thesaurus, encyclopaedias, CD-ROMs and non-fiction books to seek out the information they need. Books are very well matched to pupils' attainment and interest levels and are carefully chosen to interest boys and girls. Staff ensure that individual pupils who are particularly skilled in reading have a challenging range of books to read and are not limited to the reading schemes.

83. Standards in writing are very good. By the age of seven the majority of pupils are spelling common words correctly and making good attempts to spell more complex words. They write for a variety of purposes such as making invitations for a party using appropriate layout and vocabulary. Pupils observe the rules of punctuation, using full stops and capital letters to add interest to their work. Above average pupils use question marks, exclamation marks, speech marks and adjectives appropriately to enliven their writing. Handwriting is given a particularly high priority. Writing is almost always very neat, well formed and presented and most pupils are developing a good handwriting style. However, there are several inconsistencies in the development of a joined writing style that limit some pupils' attainment.
84. Pupils progressively develop their ability to write for different purposes using a wide range of styles. Interesting diagrams and posters support their work in other subjects such as science, geography and history. Work shows an awareness of the need for different presentation skills, vocabulary and style and a very good use of well chosen vocabulary to enliven stories and accounts to capture the imagination of the reader. They write their own exciting and moving poems, and show a very good understanding of different forms of rhyming, such as Haiku, cinquain and rondelet. Pupils' letter writing skills are developed very well through very creative teaching. For example, as part of a history topic on the Vikings pupils imagined they were a part of a religious order on Lindesfarne just after the Vikings first attack. The results were of a very high quality and developed a range of writing skills as well as historical ones. Pupils' letters showed an understanding of appropriate opening and closing and a real engagement of the reader's interest as family members were urged to flee from the 'vicious horrifying men'. Writing is well organised and by the age of nine most pupils show a good awareness of spelling rules, grammar and punctuation. Above average pupils invariably use correct punctuation, spelling and complex grammatical structures in their work. They show an understanding of paragraphing and use rich appropriate vocabulary to enliven their writing. By the age of nine most pupils have developed a neat, flowing and legible style of handwriting. Information and communication technology is used well to support pupils' literacy skills.
85. Pupils show very positive attitudes to learning and enjoy constructive relationships with their teachers. Teachers and pupils have a mutual respect for each other which has a very profound effect on the quality of behaviour in lessons. This makes a considerable contribution to pupils' rate of progress and the standards achieved. There is an eagerness and love of learning; pupils concentrate on and persevere at difficult tasks and show very good levels of independence in their learning. Pupils are aware of the individual targets set to improve their handwriting, presentation skills and knowledge and understanding and are keen to improve their work. Opportunities to work collaboratively and to develop personal skills are well used. Pupils enjoy English lessons and respond very well to the structure of the Literacy Hour.
86. Teaching is almost always of a very high quality, with the majority of lessons seen being very good or excellent. All teachers confidently implement the 'Literacy Hour'. Teaching is very carefully structured and well planned to meet the needs of pupils of all attainment levels. Teachers share the learning objectives with the pupils to ensure they are very clear about what it is they are expected to learn. Throughout the lesson they use praise, comments and questions very effectively to check understanding and extend thinking. Speaking and listening continues to be given a high priority. Handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar are given a particularly high priority and pupils' knowledge and understanding of basic skills are apparent in their

extended writing and when writing in other subjects. High expectations and the teachers' enthusiasm, explanations and knowledge have a very positive effect on attainment and progress. In a Year 1 lesson on developing an understanding of word patterns, the teacher's imaginative use of resources, lively questions, explanations and well-chosen examples quickly developed an understanding of the 'ai' and 'ee' sounds. Nothing but the best was expected or accepted from the pupils and where this did not occur additional support and encouragement was on hand. As a result, pupils made rapid progress and by the end of the lesson were able to spell a wide range of words with 'ai' and 'ee' sounds in them and use them to write interesting sentences. Individual targets are effective in reminding pupils of the strategies they need to improve their work such as good handwriting, correct spelling and punctuation. However, not all staff consistently remind pupils of these targets and as a result there are some missed opportunities to extend learning further. Plenary sessions are very effective to check understanding, extend pupils' thinking and push them just that bit further. Teachers and pupils share the same purpose and there is an expectation on both parts that learning is an enjoyable and challenging activity. Relationships are very good and pupils are encouraged to believe in their own ability to succeed. Teachers have very high expectations of behaviour and attainment resulting in very good discipline and high standards.

87. There is a range of appropriate, imaginative and high quality resources to support the teaching of literacy. This has a very positive effect on the quality of the provision, making the teaching and learning of English challenging and interesting. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils receive very good support from classroom assistants and teachers and a significant number achieve the standards expected for their age.
88. Assessment and record keeping are of a very high quality. Teachers mark work on a regular basis and provide pupils with helpful suggestions on how they can improve their work. National and school test results and teacher assessments are carefully scrutinised to improve standards, track pupils' progress and set targets for the school and individual pupils. Detailed records on pupils' progress from the time they enter the school provide very useful information on the progress pupils make and how well they achieve in relation to their prior attainment. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the subject. Formal monitoring of the teaching and planning takes place and staff are given feedback on how to improve the quality of their teaching. This has a very positive effect on the high quality of teaching and learning.

MATHEMATICS

89. In last year's National Curriculum tests for pupils aged seven the school's results were above the national average and in line with those of similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was well above the national average. Standards have improved since the previous inspection when they were described as 'sound and often good.' Inspection evidence and unconfirmed test results for the current year indicate that standards are now well above average in Year 2 and when pupils leave the school, aged nine. This represents very good progress. Taking into account the imbalance in the number of boys and girls in some classes, where some classes have substantially more boys, they achieve equally well. A particular strength is the standards in number; pupils' ability to solve problems and to tackle unfamiliar tasks confidently, has a direct impact on the standards they achieve.
90. The school has been very successful in raising the standards of average and below average pupils. This has been achieved through high quality teaching with over 60 per cent of lessons being judged as very good or better. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. In all lessons there was an emphasis on teaching pupils to recognise relationships in mathematics that in turn enable pupils to confidently identify strategies to solve problems and calculate accurately. Every lesson was a themed investigative adventure that teachers and pupils enjoyed. All pupils made very good progress.

91. During the current year the school has established a programme to monitor teaching and learning in mathematics. Good practice has been highlighted and shared across the school to support the raising of standards. The provision of targeted additional support has contributed to improving attainment across the school. The National Numeracy Strategy is very well implemented.
92. In a very good quality lesson in Year 1 the teacher placed strong emphasis on the use of language to ensure pupils at all levels took part in the lesson and fully understood the mathematics involved. For example, a pupil was blindfolded and a shape fixed to the blindfold. Members of the class gave clues to the pupil – “It’s a 2D shape”, “It has four corners”, “It’s got four edges the same, the sides, I mean”. The teacher gently prompted by asking the question, “What could it be?” The pupil triumphantly identified a square. The combination of mathematics, language and excitement was a powerful tool for learning. Pupils in a Year 2 class demonstrated their ability to instantly recall doubles and halves of numbers, using a variety of strategies including partitioning and rounding up and down. For example, a pupil’s response to calculating the sum of 67 and 18 was, “round 18 to 20. 67 and 20 is 87. We mustn’t forget to take off 2. The answer is 85.” The teacher used language skilfully to promote learning. Correct mathematical vocabulary was used and understood by pupils. They knew that their challenging task was to identify the number operation needed to solve a problem. Through their teacher’s skill and with her support the pupils achieved their tasks. The quality of learning was good as mathematical questions were raised and addressed, mostly by the pupils, through good quality teaching.
93. Very good progress is maintained when pupils advance through the school. Year 3 pupils were challenged to find the missing number in the sentence $52 + ? = 132$. The teacher gave pupils opportunities to identify ways to calculate the answer. The pupils responded with a good range of ideas. For example, adding on in 10s, in 20s, adding on to 100 and then adding on the final amount. Higher achieving pupils checked their answers using inverse operations. Pupils were encouraged to record their ‘jottings’ in their exercise books for the teacher to review later. All members of the class completed this work neatly. They clearly respected their teacher and recognised the learning opportunities that her work provided. Throughout this lesson the teaching was very effective through high quality language used to identify strategies for calculation. No pupil gave up, or said, “I can’t”.
94. The very good attitudes of pupils to learning mathematics contribute to the success in raising standards. Teachers equip their pupils with the tools to calculate, to estimate and to make predictions in their mathematics. Strategies, language and jottings have become the tools that enable pupils to make very good progress. This was evident in a mixed Year 3/4 class which includes a very high proportion of special needs pupils. Through innovative, supportive teaching most pupils recorded very significant gains in progress. For example, nine Year 4 pupils with special educational needs are expected to achieve at least Level 3 in the optional national tests at the end of the year. Teachers predict that three of them will achieve Level 4.
95. By the time pupils reach Year 4 their number awareness is very good. Again, mathematical strategy is a key to success. For example, when a pupil was asked how he remembered the product of 7 and 8 replied, “ $7 \times 7 = 49$. 49 is a square number, add another 7 and the answer is 56. Or, $2 \times 7 = 14$, double it to get 28, double it again to get 56.” The main objective of the lesson was to use all four operations to use word problems involving numbers in real life. Pupils read a selection of problems and, with teacher support, devised a strategy to attack the problems. Together they decided that the important parts of the statements should be highlighted. One pupil explained his method of calculating the mathematical sentence $37 + 52$ as “I add 30 and 50 which is 80, $7 + 2 = 9$, so 80 and 9 is 89.” Very simple, but an example of very effective teaching and learning.

96. Pupils cover a wide range of work from all attainment targets. The work is very well presented, reflecting pride in achievement and a recognition of value by pupils. Pupils' work is marked carefully with suggestions made by their teachers on ways for pupils to improve their work further. Staff predict their pupils' progress and this is carefully tracked. This information informs teaching, enabling pupils to receive precise learning opportunities to support learning objectives. Teachers respond readily to changes in performances and predictions can be modified.
97. The headteacher co-ordinates mathematics. She has very good subject knowledge, has a thorough knowledge of how pupils learn and is establishing a mathematical curriculum of very high quality. In service training has included using the information and communication technology (ICT) co-ordinator's skills and knowledge to familiarise learning support staff with the ways in which ICT can support teaching and learning in mathematics.

SCIENCE

98. Standards in science are above expectations at the age of seven and when pupils leave school at the age of nine. This is similar to the standards at the time of the last inspection. The teacher assessments in the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 showed that the proportion of pupils reaching the level expected for their age was below average compared with all schools nationally, but the proportion gaining the higher level (Level 3) was well above the national average. When compared with similar schools the proportion reaching the expected level for their age was well below average, but the proportion gaining the higher level was above average. The school has taken steps to improve the support for lower and average attaining pupils and this has had a positive impact on standards, so that they are now above average overall, and this is confirmed by the findings of the inspection.
99. By the age of seven pupils conduct experiments with enthusiasm, as when Year 2 pupils working on healthy living carried out a range of investigations, including one to test the effect of exercise on their rate of breathing. By the end of the lesson they could all explain that the number of breaths they took per minute increased after exercise and most extended this to explain that their heart rate also increased. They have a good understanding of why exercise is important and the importance of a healthy diet; for example, most pupils could identify a menu for lunch that would help them to keep healthy.
100. Overall, learning is good in all aspects of science at Key Stage 1 because the teachers make lessons interesting and challenge pupils to think independently, as when they carried out practical experiments on the effects of careful hand washing to eliminate germs. Pupils have a good understanding of the life cycle of the butterfly as shown in the very good displays of pupils' work in both Year 2 classrooms. Year 1 pupils accurately identify the major organs of the body, which they demonstrated by choosing labels and pinning them onto a diagram to show the heart, brain and stomach. They also had a good understanding of the basic function of the skeleton. One pupil said; 'Bones are tube-shaped and strong', while another said; 'They protect our insides'.
101. Pupils demonstrate that they know how to construct electric circuits using batteries, switches and bulbs in their excellent display of animals made out of cardboard, with eyes that light up if pupils looking at the display connect the wires to complete a circuit.
102. By the age of nine pupils reach standards that are above expectations, despite the fact that there is a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in Key Stage 2. This is because:
- they receive very good teaching;
 - extra, well targeted support is provided for the lower and average attaining pupils;

- good use is made of the subject expertise of teachers, so that one teacher takes all the science lessons for two classes.
103. Pupils have a good understanding of some of the properties of light, for example, one lower ability pupil said; 'The light shines onto the mirror then back to your eye', while another, working on reflections, said; 'If you stick half a ball onto a mirror it looks like a whole ball in the reflection'. In a lesson in Year 4 pupils explained that light travels in straight lines used scientific language in their explanations as when one said; '...because the optic nerve sends a message to the brain which turns it the right way up' when explaining the inverted picture received on the retina'.
 104. Pupils know the difference between solids, liquids and gases. They use their learning from mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) well to construct a series of graphs and pie charts in their study of healthy living, to present their findings on which types of shower gel were used by the whole class. Pupils in Year 3 drew on their findings in a practical investigation of habitats to identify the type of habitat in which they found a range of insects, including woodlice, grasshoppers and ants.
 105. Pupils have very positive attitudes to science and behave very well in class. They concentrate well and use equipment sensibly. This was evident when pupils in a mixed Year3/4 class were involved in a variety of practical investigations into the properties of light. The whole classroom was alive with the buzz of conversation and pupils moving around and using equipment to try to find answers to the challenges they had been set. Throughout the lesson all the pupils concentrated on their tasks and there was no misbehaviour. Their very good attitudes to learning have a very positive impact on the standards they achieve.
 106. Teaching of science is very good and occasionally outstanding. A strength is the teachers' determination to make lessons interesting and to encourage pupils to think for themselves. Questioning is often used well to probe understanding. An example of this was in Year 2 when teachers used green paint on the pupils' hands to symbolise 'visible germs' and then asked pupils to identify the activities they might pick up germs. This resulted in answers such as: 'playing with the dog,' 'after being in the garden,' 'when you go to the toilet,' and 'when the baby's nappy is changed'.
 107. A strong element of the teaching is the high expectations that teachers have that pupils will work hard and do their best. In some excellent teaching in Year 4 the expectation that pupils will not waste a minute in tackling challenges such as how to shine a light on a target around a corner resulted in the whole class being engrossed for a full two hours. This had a significant impact on the outstanding learning they achieved about the properties of light.
 108. The relationships between teachers and support staff, who work together very effectively for the benefit of the pupils, and the relationships between adults and pupils are very good and contribute to pupils' progress. A comparative weakness in the science is the fact that much of the work is done on loose worksheets, which are kept in a folder. This detracts from the quality of presentation and the ability of pupils to see clear evidence of progress as they move through the year.
 109. There has been very little observation of classroom teaching in science; the two new science co-ordinators have good plans for developing the teaching of science further, including staff training and the observation of lessons. This is scheduled for next year when science is a priority on the School Development Plan. Teachers' plans are monitored and teachers take account of the results of school and national assessments. There are sufficient resources, which the school augments by borrowing some equipment such as a large skeleton.

ART AND DESIGN

110. The standards achieved by pupils aged seven and nine are well above national expectations and most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in comparison to their prior attainment. This is a further improvement since the last inspection.
111. Due to the schools timetabling arrangements it was not possible to observe any teaching in Key Stage 2. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning indicates that the school provides pupils with a very wide range of experiences to develop their skills, techniques and knowledge and understanding of art and design. The learning environment continues to be greatly enhanced by the display of pupils' work. Work is well displayed indicating the value teachers place on pupils' work and generally adding to the ambience and attractiveness of the building. For example, excellent two and three-dimensional work on giraffes created an imaginative eye catching display in the entrance area to the school demonstrating pupils very skilful use of design, colour, pattern and texture.
112. The curriculum co-ordinator is very experienced, enthusiastic and innovative and this has a very positive effect on the standards and progress pupils make. She works closely with staff to raise their confidence and skills in the teaching of art.
113. From an early age, pupils learn to use colours well, appreciate shade and texture and to apply paint effectively to produce their own images and pictures. Throughout the school pupils study a wide range of different artists and recreate their style with accuracy. Pupils are becoming very skilled at colour mixing to create mood and required effects in the style of Van Gough, Monet, Picasso, Mondrian and Seurat. Year 2 pupils show considerable artistic skill in using different materials, brush strokes, texture, pattern and colour to create pictures in the style of Rousseau's 'Tropical Storm'.
114. Year 2 pupils work with different tools to create three-dimensional models of cats from clay. An awareness of art in different cultures is developed very well in Year 2 as the pupils' decorate pots and plates in the style of 'Canal Boat Artists.' Pupils work with their own teacher and the 'Traveller's support teacher', who had previously been in the school supporting Traveller children, with considerable concentration to create brightly coloured designs using a range of different implements and techniques.
115. In the lessons observed in Key Stage 1 teaching was almost always of a very high standard. One excellent, highly imaginative and skilled lesson involved pupils using colour very effectively to produce pictures of the African bush. Their selection of 'hot' colours recreated the image of Africa very well and provided interesting atmospheric backgrounds on which to put silhouettes of African animals and plants. In the same lesson other pupils developed further their skills of working with the medium of paper maché to make three-dimensional figures of elephants.
116. Lessons were very well organised and pupils are provided with a clear focus to their learning. Previous skills are built on well and teachers provided pupils with very good strategies and reminders on how to improve their work. Art is very effectively linked to other areas of the curriculum such as history, information and communication technology (ICT) and science. For example, as part of their topic on the history of transport, pupils in Year 2 made detailed sketches of bicycles through the last century. Close observations of the snail resulted in pupils producing high quality work as they wove different textiles to re-create the pattern and texture of the snail's shell. ICT and artistic skills were effectively combined as pupils used a computer program to produce designs in the style of Piet Mondrian.
117. Through a well-planned curriculum and enthusiastic and confident teaching, pupils' natural creativity is fostered well. Pupils work co-operatively, share ideas and appreciate the work of

others. Teachers provide a wide range of opportunities, resources and a variety of exciting stimuli to catch pupils' imagination and interest.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

118. Only one technology lesson was observed during the period of the inspection. Design and technology is blocked with art and design and during the inspection it was the time of the term when art was the focus. Judgements about standards are supplemented by discussions with teachers, a review of the documentation and the scrutiny of work. The curriculum is based upon QCA guidelines. Standards are well above those expected for the age ranges. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when they were described as good.
119. During Key Stage 1 pupils work with a wide range of materials. In a Year 1 class pupils made windmills to give them experience of cutting and joining materials together using split pins. Making and designing bags for various uses challenged pupils in Year 2. Pupils considered the size of the bag, how the bag could be best assembled, ways of joining various surfaces and the most appropriate way of carrying the bag. Some pupils chose handles made from string, while others preferred to cut out handles. In another second year class pupils worked with wool, felting it together to make attractive butterflies. These were decorated and displayed with pride in the school.
120. In Key Stage 2 pupils designed a garden and planned a library. The design criteria for planning the library were to use the available space efficiently. A display of pupils' designs reflected pupils' ideas and plans.
121. In the one lesson observed pupils in Year 3 considered design criteria. The objectives of the lesson were that pupils should be aware of the importance of design specifications, the purpose of the item to be made and the need for a step by step work plan. This was one lesson in a series. Much preparatory work had been completed when pupils were given opportunities to consider a range of ideas to assist them make decisions about the design of money containers. A pupil suggested; "It (the money belt) must have spaces for plastic cards, to have a space to hold banknotes and have a zipped space for change". The teacher had provided a very good range of money containers to help the pupils make decisions about their designs. Further choices were demanded of the pupils concerning the materials and colours that should be considered for their containers. The very good subject knowledge of the teacher was evident in the way she guided pupils' thinking yet still enabled them to make choices and give reasons for their decisions. There were very good links with speaking and listening and with writing when pupils were asked to list their criteria using bullet points. Pupils were focussed on the task throughout the lesson. The teacher, through very good planning, ensured that the best use was made of the time and resources available and this had a very positive effect upon learning with pupils making very good gains in progress.
122. The co-ordinator, who is new to her post, has great enthusiasm and this transfers to the pupils. The very high standards she sets in teaching and learning will make a significant impact on standards throughout the school. The school is very well resourced for design and technology.

GEOGRAPHY

123. Only three geography lessons were observed during the inspection, but on the basis of these lessons, pupils' work and teachers' planning, standards are above those expected for pupils aged seven and nine. This is similar to the last inspection when standards were judged to be above average. Those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress.

124. In Key Stage 1 pupils gain a good understanding of how maps can be used to find their way. In one lesson pupils in Year 1 built on the work they had done earlier on identifying key points in Marston Moretaine, such as the church and the pub, to record their own routes to school. Almost all could make a good attempt of 'showing the teacher' what features they passed and where they took different roads. Their confidence in working with the idea of maps was illustrated when the teacher told a story of Red Riding Hood's journey to her Grandma, when one highlighted different turnings and tracks on the map, while the class contributed suggestions.
125. In Year 2 pupils have a good knowledge of the impact of human activity on the environment. Pupils were horrified to see a local newspaper with a photograph of rubbish left in the local 'Milton Keynes Bowl'. One pupil said; 'They are killing our environment'. They went on to identify nine different places where unwanted objects could be placed, including bottle-banks, local authority recycling schemes and compost heaps. Pupils make good comparisons between the features of their local area and the Isle of Wight.
126. In Key Stage 2 pupils know the key features of rivers and produce neat work on the use of symbols to identify places of interest on a map, such as Stonehenge and the Houses of Parliament. They make interesting comparisons between Milton Keynes and Kenya, with indications of population density. They also have a good understanding of the different fruits grown in Kenya. Pupils continue their study of their local area and the environment by developing their mapping skills and using this to identify areas that had been used for building and areas where the environment would be harmed by development. In a Year 3 lesson pupils made good suggestions about things that could be improved and things that humans could do to improve the environment. For example, they identified that one group of people in the village regularly picks up litter voluntarily, while another group plant flowers and shrubs.
127. The quality of teaching is very good, with high expectations of pupils; this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Resources are used well as in the use of a digital camera to take photographs of pupils' homes and places of local interest, which are then used on a map of the area. The teaching in lessons is reinforced well by additional challenges, such as the very good display on the environment in Key Stage 1. This includes a range of photographs such as a tanker discharging waste, traffic jams and oiled seabirds, with several questions associated with each. Pupils were invited to take part in a competition by completing the answers to the questions
128. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and this, together with the teachers' high expectation, means that they learn very well, as shown in their grasp of issues concerning the environment and their understanding of maps. This was illustrated by one pupil referring to a challenge to a 'Find the Treasure' display in Year 1 who said 'It's easy to find the treasure 'cos we have a map'. On another occasion a pupil looking for a particular room in the school said; 'If only we had a map we could find it'. Pupils are keen, eager to learn and behave very well. The fact that during every break and lunchtime during the inspection there were groups of pupils working on the environment competition reflects their keenness and interest in what they learn.
129. The subject co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and appropriate plans to develop the subject further.

HISTORY

130. Due to the timing of the inspection and the school's timetabling arrangements, there was insufficient evidence available to make a full evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning in history.

131. The curriculum for history is imaginative and well planned in order to motivate pupils' interest in people and events of the past. As pupils move through the school they are encouraged to think of themselves as historians as they consider the authenticity of evidence and use a range of artefacts, photographs, the Internet and books to gain knowledge and understanding of past times. Pupils have a good understanding of history and know the significance and contribution of key periods, people and events such as the Anglo-Saxons, Vikings, Romans, Guy Fawkes, Florence Nightingale and Mary Secole. Imaginative teaching encourages pupils to get under the skin of characters from the past and to imagine what life was really like for an Anglo Saxon monk, a Roman soldier or a child in Victorian England.
132. Pupils' attitudes to history are very good. They enjoy being challenged to think and the quality of their work reflects a pride in presentation. Pupils are interested in how people lived in past times. They are keen to explore new ideas and exchange these with each other. Topics are studied in depth as pupils research homes, transport, religion and education. Links with the present day are used effectively to provide evidence of past events and bring the subject alive for pupils. Pupils research place names on maps to identify ancient Roman, Viking and Anglo-Saxon settlements.
133. Insufficient lessons were seen during the inspection to form a judgement on teaching. However, a scrutiny of teachers planning and pupils' work indicates that teachers have secure subject knowledge and a good understanding of the subject. Pupils are encouraged to organise their own work and record their findings in their own words.
134. History is very effectively co-ordinated and makes an important contribution to the aims of the school. This helps teachers to provide pupils with good opportunities to extend their historical skills, knowledge and understanding skills.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

135. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 1 during the inspection. Judgements about standards are supplemented by discussions with teachers, a review of the documentation and the scrutiny of work. The curriculum is based upon QCA guidelines. Pupils achieve well above the expected levels by the ages of seven and nine. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection when standards were described as appropriate to age. Improved teacher knowledge and the excellent leadership of the subject co-ordinator have made important contributions to the improvement in standards.
136. All aspects of the programmes of study are well planned. Pupils receive a wide range of learning opportunities to extend their skills in ICT across subjects. There is a systematic approach to teaching and learning that ensures pupils make very good progress in relation to their prior learning.
137. In Year 1 pupils are developing their keyboard skills confidently. They are aware of the function of a range of keys, for example, 'caps lock' and 'shift'. In Year 2 pupils move text and understand that different fonts have different applications. They use CD-ROMs to access information and control devices to find routes. Pupils in the infants contributed to a display of data handling skills, some of which were computer generated.
138. By the age of nine many pupils work independently, particularly those pupils who benefit from using computers at home. They have very good word processing skills that enable them to create their own newspapers. They import pictures from CD-ROMs and photographs using a digital camera to illustrate their work. Pupils programme screen turtles and make and test predictions about the shapes they make. Pupils use e-mail facilities confidently and retrieve information from the Internet.

139. The quality of teaching is at least very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. They prepare their lessons thoroughly, have very good classroom management strategies, motivate and challenge pupils. The pupils thoroughly enjoy the work and work equally well as a class, in pairs and individually. Teaching included very good cross-curricular links. For example, pupils in a Year 4 class calculate the angles of turn to create sequences and produce regular shapes. Pupils are encouraged to internalise geometric constructions before they test their predictions. A high priority is placed upon pupils' correct use of technical language to describe their work. Teachers have high expectations and are rewarded by the commitment to task shown by pupils.
140. Resources are good. The prospects for future development are very exciting. A new computer suite is planned and this facility will further enhance learning. The school has a good range of software to support learning and the skills of the staff to evaluate the effectiveness of new materials.
141. ICT skills support most areas of the curriculum in all parts of the school. From the time pupils enter the school they are prepared for the exciting advantages and efficiency that technology can bring to learning. Pupils develop a wide base for learning at an early age and this prepares them very well for the next stages in their education.

MUSIC

142. Due to the schools timetabling arrangements it was not possible to observe any teaching in Key Stage 2 and only a limited number of lessons in Key Stage 1. As a result it is not possible to make judgements on attainment or teaching.
143. Music makes a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, cultural and personal development and adds to the quality of assemblies. A three-year program encompasses an understanding of musical instruments, different composers and music from around the world. The playing of an appropriate piece of music sets a reverent atmosphere for reflection and worship as pupils arrive for assemblies. The school recorder and xylophone groups add to the musical quality of the assembly and develop well pupils' skills and confidence in performing. All pupils have opportunities to develop their singing skills through whole school singing lessons and hymn practises. Songs and hymns are challenging and pupils sing with enthusiasm. Pupils are encouraged to sing with accuracy, expression, controlled phrasing and articulation as they learn new songs such as 'Peace Perfect Peace'.
144. Younger pupils in Year 1 show a good understanding of musical ideas as they use their voices and unpitched percussion instruments to accompany familiar songs. Pupils have a good sense of rhythm and can clap a steady beat. An appreciation of the different forms and moods of music is developed in Year 1 as pupils play 'ocean music' to add interest to their 'Aquarium' role-play. Imaginative teaching in Year 2 helped pupils to compose and record their own piece of music. They used a range of percussion instruments to express the sights they might see from a railway carriage.
145. In Key Stage 2 pupils develop further their appreciation of composers and pupils are encouraged to research the music of famous composers.
146. A scrutiny of teachers' planning indicates a very good balance of performing, composing and appraising. Pupils are given clear strategies to improve their skills. They are encouraged to think as 'musicians' and to use correct musical terms to describe their tasks. Good provision is made for those pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an

additional language. A few pupils benefit from their parents opting to pay for the specialist teaching of the violin and piano during school time.

147. Music is very effectively co-ordinated and makes an important contribution to the aims of the school. The co-ordinator has specialist skills which are used well to develop a full range of activities to promote effective learning of music. This helps teachers to provide pupils with good opportunities to extend their creative skills.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

148. Standards in physical education are in line with those expected for seven-year-olds and above those expected for nine-year-olds. They are similar to those at the previous inspection when they were described as 'sound to good'. All aspects of the physical education curriculum are taught at the school. During the period of inspection it was possible to observe dance and games.
149. The school benefits from having its own outdoor swimming pool, which is operational from the beginning of the second half of the summer term. All classes are timetabled for swimming and this enables the school to provide a structured swimming curriculum. Many pupils have private swimming lessons in addition to the school's provision and this further supports pupils' standards in swimming. The school has a good reputation for swimming with almost all of its pupils being able to swim by the time they transfer to middle school.
150. Pupils recognise the importance of warming up and cooling down before and after exercise. They enjoy dancing and pupils from the second year classes combined to develop a sequence of movements that focused on bicycles. Pupils have good awareness of space and safety and this is particularly important when two classes perform in the restricted area of the school hall. They change speed and vary their levels of movement in line with the music. The mood of the music is reflected in other ways, for example, through changes in their facial expressions. All pupils enjoyed the lesson. Although they became very excited, good classroom management strategies ensured that levels of behaviour and work rates were not diminished. Teachers used the good quality performances of pupils to demonstrate techniques to the classes. This pleased all pupils, performers and audience alike. Pupils, with teacher support, assessed their own work. One class identified good performances as they watched the other class. They did not, however, give reasons for their choices and identify the strengths of the performances.
151. Pupils in Year 1 enjoyed their games lesson when they learnt to develop their skills in controlling a ball with a bat. At first, the task was to balance a ball on the hand and walk around the playground. From a good selection of small apparatus pupils chose a bat and were challenged by their teacher to bounce the balls six times with their bats. Almost all pupils found this skill difficult at first but with the teacher's encouragement some praiseworthy efforts emerged. Successful performers were invited to show the rest of the class their skills and this had an inspiring effect on the spectators who very rapidly improved their efforts. Pupils were delighted with their success and one boy was heard to comment that he "wished the lesson did not have to end."
152. Very poor weather forced changes in lessons that were observed with pupils in Year 3 and 4. However, teachers amended their plans for outside activities to the more restricting environment of the school hall. This work was particularly challenging as the programme lesson planned was tag rugby! Lessons began with a review of the game, followed with practising a range of skills which included passing the ball and avoiding being tagged through side stepping strategies. Teachers used their initiatives to adapt paired games to suit the imposed limitations of the indoor environment. The quality of teaching was good with praise used in recognition of hard work to

improve skills. The value of the experiences was reflected by the enjoyment that pupils gained from their experiences,

153. Facilities for physical education at the school are good. The school has good quality hard play areas which are marked for games, a spacious playing field, challenging large wooden apparatus and a plentiful range of small apparatus for pupils to share. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and is keen to further develop challenging opportunities for pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

154. Standards in religious education are above those expected in the locally agreed syllabus at seven and nine. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Throughout the school pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in understanding the values, beliefs and traditions of the Christian faith and those of other world faiths. Their knowledge and understanding is better than their written work, which is sometimes rather sketchy. The quality of pupils' learning throughout the school is good, partly because of their very positive attitudes to learning and partly because of the good teaching they receive.
155. In Key Stage 1 pupils know that Jesus was a very special person in the Christian faith and can explain that he performed miracles and told parables. For example, in one lesson in Year 2 pupils discussed their view that parables were a way of Jesus telling us how to lead our lives and one said; 'He told stories that had a moral'. When they heard the parable of the man who built his house upon sand and the other who built it on rock, they talked about the difference between wise and foolish people. One suggested; 'Foolish people may listen to what they're told, but don't really think about it and do as they are told'. Their learning in religious education is enhanced by the way they apply their knowledge to everyday life.
156. In Key Stage 2 pupils continue the study of special places of worship, begun in Key Stage 1. They know the names of the places of worship for Sikhism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam and have produced a good display showing the special features of each. Pupils can further differentiate between some elements of the Christian faith by carrying out a comparison of the two places of worship in their village - a Church of England church and a Methodist chapel. In a Year 4 lesson on Judaism, almost all pupils knew that the Torah is the special book for the Jews and could make clear links between the 'rules' contained in the Torah and the rules governing their own everyday lives.
157. The teaching is good overall. Teachers make the lessons interesting, as when the older pupils were asked to use Hebrew language to translate a sentence from a Jewish prayer and then to translate their own names into Hebrew. The effective links teachers make between what pupils learn in lessons and their everyday lives has a positive impact on their learning. Teachers create an atmosphere in class and whole school assemblies in which pupils can reflect and their spiritual development is promoted, as in an assembly where pupils were encouraged to seek peace and reflect quietly as a way of dealing with some of the worries and pressures of life. Pupils generally have good attitudes to learning religious education, which occasionally rise to excellent, as in a Year 2 lesson where pupils acted out the parable of the men building their houses on sand or rock, without any prior notice, and with real enthusiasm.
158. The new co-ordinator is making a good start in managing the subject; there are sufficient resources, but the co-ordinator has good plans to improve the resources by purchasing objects that are used in specific religions.