

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Beecroft Lower School**  
Dunstable

LEA area : Bedfordshire

Unique Reference Number : 109445

Headteacher : Mrs D Ponting

Reporting inspector : Mr P Laverick  
22259

Dates of inspection : 15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706955

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school :	First
Type of control :	County
Age range of pupils :	4 – 9 years
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	Westfield Road Dunstable Bedfordshire LU6 1DW
Telephone number :	01582 663 486
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Appropriate authority :	Governing body
Name of chair of governors :	Mr F Macdonald
Date of previous inspection :	February 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr P Laverick, RgI	Mathematics Religious education Under fives	Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management
Mr L Kuraishi, Lay Inspector		Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Mrs P Peaker, Team Inspector	English History Music Special educational needs	Curriculum and assessment
Mr R Fry, Team Inspector	Science Geography Physical education	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources The efficiency of the school
Mrs A Tapsfield, Team Inspector	Design and technology Information technology Art Equal opportunities	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

It makes outstanding provision for the children under five including very good teaching.

- The standard of writing is good in both key stages.
- Standards in mathematics are high and lessons are well planned.
- Teaching is of good quality, for example in English and information technology.
- Strong and purposeful leadership provides a clear direction for the school and effective monitoring.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced with good procedures for assessment.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils' moral and social development is promoted well within the good ethos of the school.
- Good professional support is given to newly qualified teachers.
- Good use is made of the resources and accommodation including the swimming pool.
- The school gives good value for money.

### Where the school has weaknesses

Some strategies in the behaviour policy are not applied consistently, and a minority of pupils do not behave in an appropriate manner.

- I. Opportunities to develop pupils' multi-cultural awareness are not sufficiently developed.
- II. The setting of homework is not always consistent.

**The strengths outweigh the weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.**

### How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. Standards in mathematics have risen and are now above the national average. Attendance rates have improved and are now in line with the national average. The school has made a good response to the key issues and the positive approach to improvement, has been maintained by the school. The curriculum is planned well, including opportunities for creative subjects. Monitoring procedures have been introduced and the governors have become more involved in the strategic management of the school. The systems for financial management have been reviewed successfully and the school provides good value for money. The provision for information technology has been improved giving pupils more opportunities to develop their skills. The storage and display of reading material has been made more attractive. The management and provision for the children under five has been improved. There is a good capacity for the school to continue improving and raising standards.

## Standards in subjects

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

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

The information shows that standards in writing and mathematics are above average and, compared with similar schools are well above average. In reading, the school reaches national standards. These results show an improvement upon the 1998 performance, especially when compared with schools similar to Beecroft. Standards in information technology and religious education are in line with those expected of pupils this age, as are the standards in other subjects of the curriculum. In swimming, the standards are above those usually expected for Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils.

## Quality of teaching

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

The overall standard of teaching is good. Teaching is at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of lessons. In 10 per cent, it is very good or better, 39 per cent good, 47 per cent satisfactory and unsatisfactory in 4 per cent. The quality of teaching for children under five is very good and excellent in some lessons. Teachers in both key stages have a secure understanding of all subjects and plan their lessons well. In some lessons, discipline could be better. Teaching in music and physical education is good.

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



## Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Most pupils have a positive attitude towards their work and behave well around the school. However, a minority of pupils' behaviour is unsatisfactory.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Similar to the national average.
Ethos*	The school is committed and successful in promoting high academic standards. Relationships are positive and most pupils have a sensible attitude towards their work. There is a good ethos and this makes a significant contribution towards pupils' learning.
Leadership and management	The headteacher provides strong, purposeful leadership and is supported well by governors and senior members of staff. There is a clear sense of direction through the school's development plan.
Curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced, with good assessment procedures. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. There is outstanding provision for the children under five.
Pupils with special educational needs	The pupils are well supported and make good progress.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good overall with strengths in the social and moral development. The success of pupils is celebrated well. Opportunities for multi-cultural education need to be developed further.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good overall. Newly qualified teachers are very well supported. The support staff make a very positive contribution to the work of the school. The school is spacious with some very good facilities, including an information technology suite and swimming pool. Resources are good and used well.
Value for money	Good. This represents an improvement upon the previous inspection report

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

## The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
III. The friendly atmosphere of the school. IV. It is easy to approach the staff. V. The provision for children starting school. VI. The quality of help and care provided for their children. VII. They are encouraged to take part in the life of the school. VIII. The standard of work, which children achieve. IX. Children are happy to come to school. X. Appreciate the values and attitudes of the school.	XI. The information provided regarding their XII. The inconsistent approach to homework XIII. Bullying at playtime. XIV. The different ways teachers deal with

The inspection judgements support the positive view of parents. There is a caring atmosphere and there are no subjects where standards are below national expectations. The school actively seeks to involve the parents in the life of the school. The school recognises the need for more consistency in the setting of homework and a policy has recently been introduced. The information provided for parents is satisfactory and the school has provided workshops on literacy and numeracy. However, some strategies of the behaviour policy are not applied consistently and there is some unsatisfactory behaviour. No incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection.

## KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order for the school to continue to improve the quality of education and raise standards, the governors, headteacher and staff should: (paragraph references: 20, 29, 50, 51, 102, 114, 125, 133 and 143)

1. Improve the inappropriate behaviour displayed by a minority of pupils by:
  - a. holding a whole staff review to identify patterns of inappropriate behaviour.
  - b. promoting a consistent approach to the use of the school's behaviour policy, including the effective use of sanctions.
  - c. continuing to acknowledge the behaviour of the majority of pupils, where it is appropriate and praiseworthy.
1. Provide more opportunities to increase pupils' awareness of the multi-cultural nature of society. (paragraph references: 47 and 61)
2. Ensure that appropriate homework is given consistently throughout the school. (paragraph references: 31, 35 and 57)

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

3. improving the presentation of some pupils' work; (paragraph references: 117 and 125)
4. providing more opportunities for pupils to develop skills in independent learning; (paragraph references: 18 and 22)
5. provide health and safety training for the appropriate personnel. (paragraph reference: 54)

## INTRODUCTION

### Characteristics of the school

- 1 Beecroft Lower School is situated in the north west corner of Dunstable, in the county of Bedfordshire. There are 249 pupils on roll, aged from four to nine. Of these, 145 are boys and 104 are girls, including 25 part-time children, who attend the school's '4+Unit'. There are 50 pupils on the school's register of special needs. Four of these pupils are at Stage 5 of the Code of Practice and have a statement for their needs. This represents 1.6% of the school population and is slightly above the local authority average of 1.4 per cent. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is 42 and this represents approximately 19 per cent of the school roll. However, at the end of the last academic year the percentage of free school meals was about 22 per cent. This is slightly above the national average.
- 2 Most pupils live within the surrounding residential area. On the same site as the school is a separate nursery and most pupils attend this before starting school in the term following their fourth birthday. Two per cent of the pupils are from non-white ethnic groups. Less than one per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language. Statistics from the most recent census (1991) show that the percentage of children in high social class households and the percentage of adults in the area with experience of higher education is well below the national averages.
- 3 When children first enter the school into the '4+Unit', their overall level of attainment is below that expected for children of their age. By the age of five, most have reached standards appropriate to the national expectations.
- 4 The school is set in spacious grounds, which include a swimming pool. The school aims to provide young children 'with an excellent introduction to school life' and to 'provide quality education for all children' in a caring atmosphere, where each individual is valued. The school is dedicated to lifetime learning and is part of the 'Shire Foundation', which trains future teachers. A future ambition of the school is to become a centre of learning within the community.
- 5 The school was previously inspected in February 1996. Since then, a number of staff changes have taken place and, at the time of the inspection, three newly qualified teachers were in the school. The outdoor provision for the 4+ Unit has been improved. In the summer term of 1999, the library and a computer teaching suite were completed.

## Key Indicators

### Attainment at Key Stage 1<sup>1</sup>

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	33	20	53

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils At NC Level 2 or Above	Boys	28	30	30
	Girls	17	20	19
	Total	45	50	49
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	85 (80)	94 (85)	94 (95)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils At NC Level 2 or Above	Boys	27	30	29
	Girls	18	19	18
	Total	45	49	47
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	87 (82)	94 (95)	89 (83)
	National	82 (81)	86 (80)	87 (86)

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<sup>1</sup>

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

## Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) Missed through absence for the Latest complete reporting year			%
Authorised Absence	School		7.3
	National comparative data		5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School		0.6
	National comparative data		0.5

## Exclusions

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

## Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :			%
	Very good or better		10
	Satisfactory or better		96
	Less than satisfactory		4

## 5 PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

### EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

#### Attainment and progress

- 1 When children first start school, in the '4+ Unit', their standard of attainment is below that usually expected for children of their age. This judgement is supported by evidence from assessment made soon after children enter the unit. Children make good progress in the 'early years' department and, by the age of five, they reach National Desirable Outcomes for their learning. Most children are likely to reach the expected standard in numeracy and literacy.
- 2 In the 1999 National Curriculum tests taken by pupils at the end of the Key Stage 1, results in reading were slightly above the national average. In writing the schools' performance was well above the national norm. In mathematics, the school's results were above the national average and well above those of similar schools. In the end of key stage teacher assessment for science, results were broadly in line with national averages.
- 3 The inspection took place in the third month of the academic year and the findings show pupils to be reaching national standards in reading and science and already reaching above national expectations in writing and mathematics. The standards of the oldest pupils in Key Stage 2, the Year 4 pupils, show that in English and science, pupils achieve levels in line with national expectations. Standards in mathematics are above those expected for pupils in Year 4.
- 4 In both key stages, pupils make satisfactory progress in English and science and good progress in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress in relation to their prior attainment in both key stages. Due to the imbalance of the numbers of boys compared with girls, it is not possible to make an accurate comparative analysis based upon gender. Pupils in both key stages make good progress in developing their skills in literacy and numeracy. Pupils' standards in speaking and listening are in line with national expectations in both key stages. Most pupils listen carefully and express their ideas when speaking. However, a minority of pupils do not concentrate fully during oral parts of lessons, and speak in an inappropriate manner by calling out.
- 5 Pupils' reading skills are at the appropriate levels. In Key Stage 1, higher attaining pupils read poetry with good expression. Average attaining pupils read with confidence, although some have limited usage of phonics. Pupils of lower attainment are enthusiastic and eager to make progress. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 are becoming knowledgeable about writers and can select the main points of passages. Research skills are beginning to emerge.
- 6 At the end of Key Stage 1, standards in writing, especially the pupils' understanding of sentences, punctuation and rhyme is above national expectations. Higher attaining pupils are accurate in their spelling. At the end of Key Stage 2, Year 4 pupils are also above national standards, for example in their editing and redrafting skills. Higher attaining pupils express interesting ideas. Average attaining pupils present their work neatly, but lower attaining pupils have difficulty in recording their ideas. In relation to their learning needs, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in Key Stage 2.
- 7 In mathematics, higher attaining pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 know multiplication facts for the 2, 5, and 10 times table. They can also read and write numbers up to 1000. Pupils of average attainment are developing equally secure knowledge and understanding of multiplication tables and numbers up to 100. They can add and subtract pairs of numbers up to 20. Lower attaining pupils can count in 2's and 5's and, with support, add and subtract numbers up to 10 correctly. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 can divide numbers successfully and work with money at levels appropriate to their prior levels of understanding. For example, higher attaining pupils can divide tens and units, expressing their answers in whole numbers and the remainder as a fraction. They can calculate addition and subtraction of money up to fifty pounds.

- 8 In science at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 4, pupils are on course to reach standards expected for pupils their ages. Pupils make satisfactory progress, for example in Year 1, where they learn about senses and parts of the human body. In Year 2, they understand what is required for a complete circuit in electricity. Higher attaining pupils can suggest reasons why circuits may not work, and average attaining pupils are aware of the working of doorbells at home. Lower attaining pupils understand the concepts, but find it difficult to record their work. In Key Stage 2, pupils develop their skills in making predictions, consolidate their understanding of the link between health and food and begin to discover magnetism and forces. At the end of the key stage in Year 4, pupils develop skills in making scientific investigations and higher attaining pupils demonstrate a grasp of making accurate predictions. Average attaining pupils understand the requirements of a fair test and lower attaining pupils make reliable measurements in their work.
- 9 Overall, across the school, standards in literacy and numeracy are being well developed, for example in vocabulary and the use of statistics. Standards in information technology are in line with those expected at the end of Key Stage 1 and for pupils in Year 4. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout both key stages. For example, pupils in Year 2 have appropriate keyboard skills and can use their word processing skills to retrieve, edit, save and print their work. They collate data gathered from questionnaires and present it in a range of graphical forms. Pupils have some experience of information technology simulations.
- 10 Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 4, have reached an appropriate level of understanding in religious education and make satisfactory progress. For example, pupils in Year 2 can talk in simple terms about Jewish traditions and artefacts. Year 4 pupils have an adequate knowledge of Moses and the Passover celebrations, together with developing an understanding of Christian celebrations. Levels of attainment are in line with those set out in the Locally Agreed Syllabus.
- 11 In other subjects of the National Curriculum, pupils' achievements are in line with expectations at the end of both key stages in design technology, history, geography and art. Pupils make good progress in all these subjects. Pupils make good progress in music in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2. Standards in music are broadly in line with those expected for pupils this age.
- 12 Standards in physical education are also similar to those expected of pupils of this age and pupils make satisfactory progress. However, standards in swimming are above the national expectations. The school benefits from its own pool and this helps to raise standards.

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

- 13 Pupils have satisfactory attitudes to their work. They settle quickly and concentrate well on their individual tasks, particularly when these are highly structured. When tasks are less well defined and require research or collaborative working with classmates, some pupils find it harder to concentrate. Pupils have few opportunities to develop skills for personal study. Opportunities for independent research and the development of study skills are limited. Few tasks are open-ended and it is not possible to judge how successful pupils would be under those circumstances.
- 14 The children who are under five, relate well to each other and adults. They play happily together and show a lot of interest in classroom activities. During circle time they listened attentively to each other and they fully understood about taking turns and the need for appreciation of each other's contributions. At the end of sessions, the children are highly co-operative and help to clean up.



- 15 The majority of pupils behave well around the school. They are courteous and trustworthy and show respect for their teachers and for each other. However, there is a minority of pupils whose behaviour is unsatisfactory. This is particularly noticeable during some class discussions when these pupils require a great deal of reminding to pay attention to one another's contributions. This poor behaviour is having an impact on learning in that time is being wasted in lessons while teachers seek to correct the inappropriate behaviour. These pupils show little evidence of considering the consequence of their actions, both for themselves and for their classmates. Similarly, in the playground a small number of pupils behave in such a way as to be dangerous to themselves and others. For example, a pupil was observed riding on the back of another pupil, in contradiction to the instructions of a member of staff close by. This inappropriate behaviour is promptly dealt with by staff.
- 16 Relationships in the school are good. Most pupils are considerate of one another. They share equipment well, particularly in information technology and physical education lessons, for example when awaiting their turn on a favoured activity. Only a few opportunities for pupils to work together were observed. However, these included good examples of a collaborative nature in identifying holiday locations that met given criteria, and in groups using the computers to compose a musical phrase. Most relationships observed on the playground are good, both between pupils and between pupils and staff. Pupils share playground equipment and often join in big group games such as skipping. They often show respect for other people's points of view. During circle time pupils show an awareness of how their actions and words can affect other children and how easy it is to hurt people's feelings. Older pupils particularly demonstrated an awareness of this, and were observed being encouraging and supportive of weaker readers in their class.
- 17 Some pupils show that they are able to use their initiative. For example, in a lesson in the computer suite, several pupils anticipated their teacher's next objective. They printed their own work early, so as to limit the queue to the printer. In general, however, pupils show little inclination to take responsibilities around the school, and there were few instances observed of pupils using their initiative.

### **Attendance**

- 18 Attendance levels and rates of unauthorised absence have improved since the last inspection and both are now in line with the national average. The school has put in place the procedures for dealing with incidences of absence and unpunctuality. However, some children arrive late and this has a detrimental effect on teacher's workload due to the additional help these children require to catch up with the lesson.
- 19 Attendance registers are correctly completed and registration procedures meet statutory requirements.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### **Teaching**

- 20 The overall quality of teaching is good in both key stages and very good for the children under five. Overall, in the lessons observed, four per cent were excellent, six per cent were very good, 39 per cent good, 47 per cent satisfactory and four per cent unsatisfactory. Standards in teaching have been maintained since the previous inspection, with evidence of emerging excellence in the '4+ Unit'.
- 21 The quality of teaching for the children under five is very good, with some excellent features, for example the use of the information technology suite. It is a strength of the school. The staff have a clear understanding and detailed knowledge of the needs of young children. The objectives for lessons are specific and are securely based upon the National Desirable Outcomes for children's learning. The teachers' excellent use of assessment makes a significant contribution towards accelerating pupils' progress.

- 22 In the rest of the school teachers have a good understanding of the subjects which they teach and skilfully provide a broad and balanced curriculum. For example, the practical work is a strength of the science teaching and helps to develop pupils' investigative skills. The teacher's understanding and knowledge of the Anglican communion service in religious education enabled pupils to gain a good insight into Christian acts of worship. Teachers have considerable experience and expertise of the National Numeracy Strategy, as the school was involved in a pilot project. An excellent mathematics lesson was seen in Year 2. Teachers also have a good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy. Teachers are hard working and effective in their teaching of these two national strategies.
- 23 The standard of teachers' planning is good. Most lessons have clear learning objectives, which build upon previous lessons and the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject. This represents an improvement upon the findings of the previous inspection. Work set for pupils of different levels of attainment, is an effective feature of the planning. This is well illustrated in many of the English and mathematics lessons. In these lessons, the needs of lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, are particularly well planned and good provision is made for them. The expectations which teachers hold for the academic performance of their pupils are usually high, especially in Year 2. There is some evidence of low expectations in Key Stage 2, where lessons are occasionally insufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils in information technology. In science, whilst expectations are satisfactory, they could be higher.
- 24 Teachers use a range of methods and organisational strategies to good effect. For example, in an English lesson, the pupils' were stimulated by the tasting of fruit to enable them develop skills in recording adjectives. In other lessons, the method of asking pupils clearly focused questions helped to develop their understanding and thinking, for example, in information technology and history. Few examples of pupils undertaking individual research were observed and some lessons were over directed. There are some unsatisfactory features in the management of pupils' behaviour, for example in a Year 1 mathematics lesson. In some lessons, teachers are too tolerant of pupils who are slow to start work and who call out and disturb the progress of others. There are some strategies of the behaviour policy which teachers do not apply consistently.
- 25 Teachers use the schools' resources well and are good at gaining access to other materials, for example in religious education lessons, where Jewish artefacts are used and also Anglican vestments and elements relating to celebrating communion. In their use of resources, the teachers also reinforce pupils' vocabulary, as in history in the use of words such as 'invaders', 'settlers' and 'evacuees'. The teachers made good use of a visiting 'Life Bus' to develop pupils' awareness and understanding of health and safety issues. The classroom assistants and other adults are well organised and make a significant contribution towards enabling pupils to make good progress, including those with special educational needs. Lessons start on time, but the length of some sessions seemed too long to sustain pupils' full concentration. Occasionally lessons finished abruptly and plenary sessions were curtailed, as seen in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, where pupils' behaviour was not satisfactory. The expertise of senior members of staff used to support newly qualified teachers is a resource which is particularly well deployed. A good example included a demonstration physical education lesson taken by the headteacher.
- 26 Teachers and support staff monitor pupils' progress carefully. The school's assessment procedures are used well and make an effective impact upon raising standards. The results are used by teachers to plan the next step in pupils' learning. Homework is set by teachers, but there was not always a consistent approach. A policy to amend the situation is being introduced.

## The curriculum and assessment

- 27 The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which reflects the National Curriculum requirements and prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. It makes a good contribution to the standards which pupils attain. There is a strong emphasis on pupils' acquisition of key literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils with special educational needs, benefit from full access to the planned curriculum. All pupils have the same opportunities regardless of specific need, ability or gender. The curriculum provision for children under the age of five reflects clearly the national guidelines and the overall planning for under fives is very good. The curriculum ensures that the vast majority of children reach the Desirable Outcomes for their learning.
- 28 Since the last inspection, the school has conducted a systematic review of existing policies and schemes of work which was recommended as a key issue in that report. National Curriculum guidance given to schools over the last eighteen months has resulted in some significant changes, for example the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the subsequent reduction of time allocated to the foundation subjects. National schemes for information technology, design and technology, history and geography have been adopted. An appropriately high proportion of time is given to the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Additional time is given to English to enhance writing skills, drama and speaking and listening.
- 29 There is a policy for drugs education which sets out aims and teaching through part of a planned personal, social and health education programme linked to other areas of the curriculum in support of this programme. During the inspection week pupils had a session in the local authority Life Bus which made one of its regular visits to the school. There is at present no formal structure for sex education but the governors have agreed a statement which will give a structure to the subject within the personal, social and health education programme in the Spring term.
- 30 There is a draft homework policy but there is at present some inconsistency in its implementation. Where it works well, as in English, parents have the opportunity to help in the consolidation of the skills taught in school. The reading diary indicates that an effective partnership is emerging between home and school.
- 31 The school development plan details a continuing programme of curriculum review. There is a strong commitment to raising standards of attainment and the curriculum is developed alongside assessment procedures. Curriculum planning takes account of what has gone before and what will follow and builds systematically on pupils' learning. Progression between year groups and key stages is effective and consistency between classes is good because of shared planning and evaluation by the teachers in each year group. Continuity in pupils learning is further supported by effective liaison within each stage and with partner schools. Arrangements include visits from teachers in these schools. Consequently, the pupils are well-prepared for the next phase of their education.
- 32 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual education plans are now specific and relevant and are used well by class teachers and learning support assistants. The plans provide a clear direction for teaching and learning. Reviews are appropriately conducted. All requirements of the Code of Practice are met. The policy for special educational needs is informed by the Code of Practice. Clear guidance describes the circumstances which may lead a class teacher implementing the staged process of the Code of Practice. Statutory requirements relating to pupils with statements of special educational need are met.
- 33 The provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. The range of activities includes a computer club, art club, games dance and choir. There is a football club of three teams run by the parents. Pupils play against neighbouring schools with some considerable success. The school belongs to the Dunstable and District Music Association. Pupils in Years 2 and 4 take part in annual events with the association.

- 34 Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment is good overall. There is a clear policy statement which outlines the purposes and principles of effective assessment. Its implementation contributes directly to the standards achieved in the school. Assessment procedures for the children under five are excellent and staff make very good use of the information to promote children's progress. These records are passed on each year to the next teacher so that each pupil can be tracked through to Year 4 in the cumulative record. Year group teachers evaluate the effectiveness of the lessons they have jointly planned. The information is used to modify as appropriate the content of future lessons. The school analyses the national test results and school-based tests and uses the information to set individual targets, particularly in mathematics, and overall targets for the forthcoming year. Information is used to group pupils appropriately for literacy and numeracy, and to identify those who may need additional help or may need to work at a higher level. The latter has been the case in mathematics. The co-ordinator for assessment monitors the marking policy to ensure that it is being consistently applied. There is evidence that pupils respond to teachers' written comments and this has a positive effect on subsequent pieces of work.
- 35 Arrangements for the assessment of pupils with special educational needs are good. The previous inspection found that targets in the individual education plans were imprecise. Targets seen during this inspection are more precise and achievable. They provide clear direction for pupils' learning and criteria for success. There is generous provision to support these pupils. The learning support assistants play an important role, helping pupils by reinforcing teaching points and helping to implement the Additional Literacy Scheme. The pupils make good progress appropriate to their abilities.

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

- 36 Provision for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.
- 37 Provision for pupils' spiritual development is sound. In several areas of the curriculum pupils are given opportunities to reflect on their own and other people's beliefs and ways of life. Particularly in religious education pupils discuss the beliefs of the major world faiths. They visit places of worship, such as the church and the Hindu temple. Staff make good use of foods to give pupils experience of the customs and tradition of other faiths, and to help them think about how it might feel to be, for example in a Jewish household or to be a Hindi child. They consider celebrations throughout the year, and learn about how people celebrate and the meanings of particular festivals. Staff value pupils' ideas in all areas of the curriculum, and are keen to encourage pupils to value each other's contributions too.
- 38 The daily act of collective worship meets statutory requirements, and gives pupils opportunities to reflect upon their own and others in such a way as to develop their spiritual awareness. Assemblies are used effectively to encourage pupils to consider other people's feelings, such as children who are left out of playground games. They think about moral issues such as those prompted by the story of the Good Samaritan.
- 39 The provision for pupils' moral development is good. The organisation of the curriculum for personal, social and health education encourages pupils to consider the principles that distinguish right from wrong. Pupils discuss school rules and the consequences when they are broken, and the need for rules in a community. Pupils consider the feelings of themselves and of others and how these are caused. They review their own rights and responsibilities, alongside the need of caring for others. There is a strong emphasis on the importance of pupils' individual roles within the school community and an ethos of celebrating each other's successes.

- 40 The provision for pupils' social development is good. The school has discipline and anti-bullying policies that give clear guidance to staff. Where these are being used fully they are effective. The school discipline policy contains clear details of incentives and sanctions to promote good behaviour around the school. Pupils' social development is promoted at all times and in all situations. Staff provide good role models for pupils, particularly in the way they relate positively with one another. During lunchtimes mid-day supervisors actively promote good relationships between pupils, often supervising or initiating games, or example turning the rope for a big skipping game. Pupils are involved in charity fund-raising events such as diving for pennies in the school pool and a sponsored spell.
- 41 Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are taught to appreciate their own culture well. The school participates in local music festivals and organises a range of interesting trips out, for example to the Planetarium, and visitors to the school, such as the Life Bus. Pupils consider the work of famous artists and authors. They are encouraged to consider these in relation to other areas of the curriculum, such as information technology when pupils consider the value of computers in aiding the production of fine art. A broad range of pupils' artwork is displayed effectively, giving the school a bright and cheerful atmosphere and having a positive effect on pupils' self-esteem. Staff run a variety of extra-curricular clubs which are open to all pupils in the school. These include dance, a choir, and an art club.
- 42 Stories from a range of cultures, such as 'The Mango Tree', are used to support work in the Literacy Hour. An attractive 'big book' of an African alphabet, is being used in the class for children under five. Pupils are given some experience of lifestyles in other cultures. For instance, they have visited a Hindu temple and they enjoy making and tasting foods traditional in festivals of other countries. The school has a good selection of artefacts from other faiths. However, although there is a good range of displays in the school, none have a multi-cultural theme, except those concerned with religious education. Very few books with a multi-cultural element are on display or in regular use and pupils' awareness of Britain as a multi-cultural society is weak.

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

- 43 The school provides a caring and secure place for all its pupils. This is in line with the findings at the last inspection. Good individual records on pupil's academic and social achievement are kept and used well to guide curriculum provision for pupils, but the use of these records to provide pastoral support is inconsistent. Very good support is provided for children under five, enabling them to settle well in the 4+ unit. There is good support for pupil's with special educational needs. The only child who speaks English as an additional language is integrated well in the school community.
- 44 Teachers know their pupils well and provide sufficient opportunities for personal development, for example to work as class monitors and in the school assemblies to manage overhead projector. This enables pupils to develop self-esteem and improve leadership qualities.
- 45 Following the previous inspection the school has reviewed its behaviour and discipline policy and the school is now well placed to build upon what it has already achieved. However, not all the staff have been trained properly, therefore implementation of some strategies of the policy is inconsistent and generally ineffective in some classes. The lack of consistency leads to unsatisfactory levels of behaviour and personal development of a minority of pupils. Mid-day staff and the teachers deal with behaviour matters sensitively but they are not always successful. This hinders progress in some lessons.
- 46 The opinion of some parents is that there is an inconsistent application of sanctions especially exclusion of pupils from lessons for minor misbehaviour. This was not seen during the inspection. Parents expressed concern for bullying during the playtime. The inspectors noted that, while some pupils behaved in a manner less desirable than the normal exuberance of playground conduct there was no serious discipline problem. No bullying was seen during the inspection.

- 47 The school's attendance policy complies with the statutory requirements. Attendance registers are completed correctly. The newly appointed secretary is familiar with monitoring procedures for attendance. However the school does not prepare absence summaries on a regular basis. In practice, there is limited follow up for persistent irregular attendance, but an 'early riser' shield is awarded for early attendance.
- 48 The school meets the requirements with child protection procedures and the responsible person has received proper training. The school is aware of the need to be alert to incidences of child abuse and liaises as necessary and with sensitivity with the agencies concerned.
- 49 The school has a health and safety policy, which was reviewed recently. The school caretaker has been appointed as health and safety liaison officer, but has yet to receive training in risk assessment. This situation is not satisfactory. However, when a hazard was drawn to the schools' attention, it received prompt attention. A range of policies and practices ensure that pupil's well being is considered on a day-to-day basis. There are suitable routines for dealing with sickness, first aid and more serious injuries. The governor responsible for health and safety matters oversees regular checks and pays appropriate attention to safety procedures. Adults are generally aware of their responsibilities in providing a safe environment. The building is clean and well maintained by the caretaker.

### **Partnership with parents and the community**

- 50 The quality of the school's partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents are generally supportive of the school and value the work of the staff. They appreciate the friendly atmosphere and find the teachers approachable. The parents present at the meeting were pleased with the values and attitudes that the school promotes which help their children to develop confidence and self-esteem.
- 51 There are regular newsletters to parents which give information about school events and dates. Letters advising parents of forthcoming functions, such as parent's workshop on numeracy and literacy, are sent in good time. There are two parents evenings each year. There is good arrangement for induction of new pupils to the school. For example, parents of those children who have places in 4+ classes are invited to the pre-school induction meeting and given an introductory pack which contains details about school life. Sensible arrangements are in place for smooth transfer to the middle school.
- 52 A small minority of parents is not satisfied with the information provided by the school on their children's work in the school. They also consider that the homework is inconsistent throughout the school. This view was confirmed during the inspection through work sampling and discussions with children. The school is already aware of this and is taking steps to formalise the homework policy, which at present is at draft stage.
- 53 The annual reports to parents are satisfactory and contain information on pupil's attainment and progress. The majority of parents are happy with the quality of information contained in the annual reports. The governing body's annual report to the parents for 1998 contains statutory information. The annual report for 1999 is given to parents in December and was not available at the time of the inspection. The school prospectus is concise and easy to read.
- 54 The school recognises the importance of a partnership between home and school. Since the last inspection the staff have continued to make efforts to involve parents in the life of the school but, overall progress has been slow. Some parents occasionally help in the classrooms with reading or numeracy project. However, the help is not consistently available throughout the school. Some parents help their children with homework and the school festivals are well supported. A group of parents run the Saturday football club which is successful and popular with the children.
- 55 Parents attend school functions to raise school funds, for example family fun day, school disco, Summer Fayre and Christmas club. Some parents help their children with homework and form a dialogue with teachers through their children's reading diaries.

- 56 The school has established satisfactory links with the community and provides placement facilities for trainee teachers from the Shire Foundation School Centred Initial Teacher Training. Joint curriculum links with the feeder schools are not fully developed. The inspectors noted that the contacts with the major religions of the world other than Christianity are not firmly established. This makes it difficult for pupils to achieve a shared understanding of cultural, religious and ethnic differences in the multicultural society within which pupils will grow up and play their part. A large majority of parents feel that their children like school and are happy to come.
- 57 Links with the local businesses and the wider community are established to raise pupil's cultural awareness and understanding of the world beyond their school environment, such as raising funds for a Marie Curie Cancer Centre and collecting food parcels for the Salvation Army. The school maintains a variety of other community contacts, which enhance the quality of learning of children throughout the school.

## THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

### Leadership and management

- 58 The overall standard of leadership and management is good and there is clear direction for the work of the school. The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership and has been instrumental in raising standards, especially in mathematics. Although there are vacancies on the governing body, the governors provide good support and are effectively involved in the daily life of the school. They are well informed and aware of all the relevant issues. The chairman is effective in his role as critical friend and has provided dedicated service to the school. Curriculum co-ordinators have a clear direction for the development of their areas of responsibility and provides good support for their colleagues, for example in mathematics and the '4+ Unit'. Some co-ordinators are relatively new to their posts, however, they are already making a satisfactory impact upon the management of their subject and providing effective support and guidance for their colleagues, especially the newly qualified teachers. The special needs co-ordinator is new to the post but is also providing effective management of her responsibilities.
- 59 The monitoring of teaching and curriculum development is effective, especially the support provided for newly qualified teachers. This is a strength of the school, together with its involvement in national initiatives, such as the National Numeracy Strategy. The senior members of staff and governors are involved in the monitoring procedures and, although some co-ordinators are relatively inexperienced, the overall procedures are good, with considerable potential for future development. The school has made a good response to the issues identified in the previous report and there is a positive attitude towards school improvement. Despite the national trend for more focus on literacy and numeracy, the school has developed its approach to promote creativity. A very good example is seen in the provision for the children in the '4+ Unit'.
- 60 The planning of the curriculum is more coherent and easier to use than when reported in the last inspection. Monitoring of classroom practice is developing, especially for newly qualified staff, but strategies for promoting better pupil behaviour are not sufficiently rigorous. Governors have increased their involvement in the strategic management of the school, for example in financial planning. Reviews of managing the school's finances have taken place and improvements have been made in this department.
- 61 The development plan is relevant to the school's needs and is a good strategic document, with a clear focus for improvement. It underpins the whole planning process and is proving to be successful in providing purposeful learning and raising standards. The school's aims include the provision of quality education for all children. This is clearly reflected by the school's results in national tests, but also in the outstanding provision made for the children under five. The school is dedicated to lifetime learning and this too is reflected in the support and opportunities which it provides for everyone in the school environment. The school's policies are implemented satisfactorily, although there is scope for improvement in the application of the behaviour policy and the impact of the draft homework policy. Team spirit is a value, which the school seeks to provide within a caring environment. Children and adults are valued and there is a positive atmosphere in the school.
- 62 The school's ethos is well promoted by the positive relationships which exist in the school and the expectations for high academic performance. Pupils' attitudes towards learning are usually sound and equal opportunities are provided for all pupils. There is some variation in the quality of the learning environment. For example, it is excellent for children under five, but in other classes a restless atmosphere sometimes exists. Overall, the school's ethos is good and makes a significant impact upon the quality of teaching.
- 63 The overall leadership and management of the school is very secure and has considerable potential for further improving the development of the school.



## Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

- 64 The match of number, qualifications and experience of teachers to the demands of the curriculum for all ages, including the under fives, is good. The teaching, a significant proportion of which is good, has a positive impact on pupils' progress. There have been several staff changes since the last inspection. There is a very good policy for the induction of teachers and newly qualified teachers feel very well supported. The policy follows government guidance. Newly qualified teachers receive their full entitlement, for example to see experienced colleagues teaching and to attend courses given by the local education authority. Their mentor is very well organised and aware of their needs. Teacher appraisal is in place and there are good procedures for the professional development of teachers. These contribute well to their effectiveness. The training teachers received during the numeracy pilot project has had a particularly good impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Professional development is well linked to the curricular priorities identified in the school development plan. Support staff also receive appropriate training. Recent training has not taken place in a number of subjects because of the current national emphasis on literacy and numeracy.
- 65 All members of the teaching and support staff have a clear understanding of their own roles and of the roles and responsibilities of others. The school has made a satisfactory attempt to match teachers' subject expertise and interests to curriculum responsibilities. Teachers develop well the skills and expertise they need to carry out the management responsibilities they have been allocated.
- 66 There are sufficient well qualified office staff. They make an important contribution to the smooth running of the school. The match of number, experience and qualifications of support staff to the demands of the curriculum is good and they have a positive effect on pupils' progress. Support staff have good knowledge and expertise and they are skilled and experienced. They work closely with teachers, effectively supporting them with activities and supporting pupils in their learning. On many occasions, support staff were observed redirecting pupils' attention back to the purpose of the lesson or reminding pupils to listen to their teachers. Their positive contributions, such as revising what groups have learned, enhance the opportunities and experience pupils have across the curriculum. Support staff with special responsibilities, such as for 'Additional Literacy,' make a very positive contribution to pupils' education. Nursery nurses also have a very positive impact on children's education. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and receive their full entitlement to individual attention and small group work.
- 67 The very good accommodation allows the curriculum to be taught well. There is sufficient, suitable accommodation for the number of pupils on roll. Classrooms are large and they allow teachers to provide a good range of practical activities. Surplus accommodation is used in many ways. There is a separate room for information technology and the library. This is a very good facility. There are rooms for television viewing and design and technology lessons. The school benefits from a good playing field and hard playing area, and the hall provides a good flat space for indoor work. However, the hall at this time of year is cold and the surface of the playground is slowly disintegrating, which is a safety hazard because it is easy to slide on the loose surface. This weakness featured in the previous report. Resources are easily accessible to teachers and pupils when they need them.
- 68 The accommodation for children under five is good. The double classroom is adequate, although a little cramped in places, and children have access to a large safe fenced outdoor play area. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous report. The accommodation overall is well maintained and the standards of cleaning are high. The building is a stimulating learning environment. Displays of pupils' work enhance pupils' interest in schooling.

- 69 Overall, learning resources are good. The library is well resourced and there are sufficient books to support work in all areas of the curriculum. Resources for information technology, including the number and quality of computers, are very good. Teachers are resourceful and they sometimes make the things they need to supplement the school's resources. Resources for multi-cultural work are limited. Visitors to the school and educational visits are used effectively to enrich the curriculum. Periodically, a 'Life Bus' visits the school. Its purpose is to educate pupils about the human body and to encourage them to look after themselves well by seeking alternatives, for example to drug abuse as a response to problems in later life. It is a very good initiative. The teacher is lively, well informed and pupils respond very well.

### **The efficiency of the school**

- 70 Since the last inspection the school has become more efficient and it is now good. The governing body now takes a more active role in planning and monitoring the budget. Long-term financial plans are better than they were but the school still does not plan sufficiently far ahead. The school undertakes some evaluation of the effects of spending, for example, for literacy. The school analyses its results and sets targets, such as for spelling standards. Financial management systems have been reviewed and a member of staff has been allocated to look after the day to day running in this area. A proper inventory of stock is now in place. The office continues to run efficiently. The school has fully met the previous key issue of continuing to review systems for managing finances and to increase governors' involvement in the strategic management of the school.
- 71 Financial forward planning within each year is good. The school development plan contains well costed plans for each subject and for other aspects of the school. The under-spend last financial year was high; it is lower this year. The school prudently keeps a larger than average contingency fund to minimise the effects on school organisation of declining numbers of pupils. Although the school plans for up to eighteen months ahead using accurate information, it is not yet in a position to foresee its likely costs more than one year ahead at any time in the current financial year.
- 72 The school's day-to-day finances are well managed. Purchasing arrangements are secure and the school administrators carry out their duties efficiently. The school's computer records of spending are up-to-date. The governors are involved in the longer-term strategic management of the school. For example, the finance committee meets regularly to discuss different aspects of the school prior to making decisions for the year. The finance committee uses the yearly budget for the benefit of present and future pupils and it wisely keeps a contingency fund to meet any unexpected difficulties in the shorter-term. This financial year, the under-spend is nearly six per cent of the budget. Last year's under-spend was seven and a half per cent of the budget. Almost all matters raised in the most recent audit report have been carried out successfully.
- 73 The daily running of the school is smooth, allowing teachers to concentrate on teaching. Clear daily routines and procedures are understood and carried out effectively by staff and pupils. Teaching and support staff are well deployed and managed, which has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Educational developments within the school are well supported financially. For example, much money has been spent on resources to support the National Literacy Strategy. Sufficient funds are spent on subjects that are not a focus for attention for the year. Funding for pupils with special educational needs is managed well and is directed appropriately towards meeting the needs of these pupils. Funds for staff training are effectively spent, mostly on new initiatives.
- 74 Good use is made of the accommodation to promote learning. The field is used for games and all parts of the school are put to good use. The school has several specialist areas set aside for single subjects or activities. Effective use is made of co-ordinators and the team works closely together. Co-ordinators audit resources and ensure that teachers have the things they need. Teachers' planning and pupils' work are monitored effectively. There are also some opportunities for co-ordinators to work alongside colleagues, sharing expertise and monitoring the quality of teaching. The programme for newly qualified teachers is very efficiently administered.

- 75 The efficiency of the school has improved since the last inspection. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below average. Pupils have achieved broadly average standards by the end of Year 4 and they make good progress. The quality of teaching is good and pupils respond to lessons with mostly positive attitudes to work. There is good provision for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and there is a good ethos in the school. The cost to educate pupils is broadly average. The school provides good value for money.

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

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

- 76 Provision for children under five is provided in a '4+ Unit'. Children enter the unit the term after their fourth birthday. Many have previously attended nursery, which is on the same site as the school but is under a separate management. The '4+ Unit' is organised into two teaching areas. Younger children begin initially on a part-time basis, either mornings or afternoons.
- 77 Older children are full-time and, at the time of the inspection, 16 had reached the age of five. Children are allocated into classes according to their age, but practical activities are often shared, especially during the afternoon sessions. In the Spring term, a reception class for the five year olds is to be created.
- 78 The school has good links with the nearby nursery and children make a number of visits to the '4+ Unit' before starting school. Entry into the '4+Unit' is managed well, through an effective induction programme for parents and children. The assessment procedures are detailed and the staff make very good use of the information to plan individual learning programmes for the children. The regular, on-going monitoring of children's progress is an outstanding feature of the organisation. The management of the '4+Unit' is of a high standard. Planning and communications are extremely efficient. The co-ordination of learning activities and deployment of staff is excellent. Most children are making very good progress and are clearly on line to reach the Desirable Outcomes for their learning by the time they are five.
- 79 The quality of teaching is very good, with some excellent features. It is a strength of the school and provision for the children under five is outstanding. The staff have a clear understanding and detailed knowledge of the needs of young children. The objectives for lessons are specific and are securely based upon the National Desirable Outcomes for children's learning. The activities are planned efficiently and there is a high level of consistency in the way in which all staff teach and support children. This enables children to quickly feel secure and confident in the school environment and to make good progress. The aim of the '4+ Unit' provision is clearly set out in an attractive brochure and the school seeks to provide 'for each child an excellent introduction to school life'. The staff work together successfully to achieve this aim. The planning for literacy and numeracy is particularly effective. Throughout the day, activities provide a rich source for children to develop skills and understanding in these areas. Examples of such activities include the learning of numbers through out-door activities, such as hop-scotch, the printing of sets of shapes, the positive approach to promoting an interest and love of books, and the sensitivity displayed at 'circle time' which enables children to develop skills in speaking and listening. The wide range of activities and the guidance provided for children ensures that they are purposefully involved in their learning throughout the sessions. This highly efficient organisation promotes children's enthusiasm and extends their levels of concentration. Children are provided with clear explanations of what is expected of them and how they are to tackle the activities, as seen, for example in an excellent lesson using the computer and library facilities. Teachers are effective in helping children to express themselves and, through the good use of questions, enable the children to clarify their thinking and develop ideas.

80 The children's progress is carefully monitored and recorded through a range of techniques, ranging from daily observations to more formal methods of assessment. The information is used to plan the next step in children's learning and is an effective strategy in promoting children's progress. All adults are encouraged to be involved in this process and numerous notes of observations made throughout the day are made in record books and on teachers' planning boards. Although the teaching spaces are relatively small for the number of children, the staff use all available areas for a wide range of activities. Examples of this good use of space include a 'baby clinic', places for children to use computers and 'listening' centres and musical instruments, and a cushioned space for sharing books. Throughout the '4+ Unit', the staff provide a high standard of attractively displayed work, which enhances the learning environment and helps to promote children's interest and self-esteem.

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85 Personal and social development

81 Children develop good relationships with each other and the staff. They work and play happily together, talk about what they are doing and share imaginative play and resources well. For example, in the post office activity and in taking turns on the use of a computer, where they each had 'five turns'. In outdoor activities, the children played well together in a variety of activities, including the use of a play house, balancing equipment and games. In 'circle time', the children were sensitive and valued the contribution of others. The children showed respect for adults and the beliefs of others. At the end of sessions, the children are co-operative and helpful in tidying away their work and equipment. In this area, the children make very good progress and are likely to achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes.

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86 Language and literacy

82 Children listen attentively to instructions and most can talk about what they are doing and answer questions. However, a significant number of children experience difficulty in speaking and their vocabulary is at an early stage of development. Children enjoy books and have a positive attitude towards reading. They handle books properly, talk about pictures and understand events in the story. During story time, children listen attentively and enjoy the development of a tale. There is a good collection of books, including ones from other cultures. They realise that print carries meaning. Some can write their own names and can show a sense of knowing the purposes for writing, for example in greetings and labels. Most children make good progress and are likely to reach the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the age of five.

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87 Mathematics

83 Children practice counting by using everyday classroom activities. For example, they count their number of turns using a computer program and squares on a playground game. They understand mathematical language such as biggest and smallest when comparing the size of pencils. Most older children are reasonably confident in counting to 10 and beyond. Some are able to construct a pictorial number line up to twenty. Most pupils can recognise and name basic colours and shapes. Through the use of a computer program, children are able to design repeating patterns. Older children can understand how the collection of numbers can be shown in a picture form, for example, to show the number of favourite items for breakfast. Some of the higher attaining children, who recently reached the age of five, were able to recall that '5+5=10'. The children make very good progress and are likely to reach the Desirable Outcomes for their learning.

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88      Knowledge and understanding of the World

84      In circle time, most children are developing confidence in talking about their experiences. They are able to draw and paint pictures of their families and pets and also show an understanding of important events in other people's lives, for example the celebration of Diwali. Children become increasingly aware of the names of objects through the collection of natural objects displayed in the classrooms, for example feathers, shells and conkers. In an activity relating to the sense of smell, children can identify a range of food successfully. They also have a good awareness of the other senses of the body, as well as a knowledge of what keeps a body healthy. This aspect of the children's learning was well supported by a visit to the 'Life Bus'. The children develop an understanding of some of the services and facilities in their surroundings through opportunities to play in a 'post office' or 'baby clinic'. In other activities, children explore the properties of dough, paint and sand and learn how simple tools can be used to create shapes and patterns. A good example was seen in the class of older children, where they were making invitations for a birthday party. Younger children had also learnt about the skeleton when working with straws and paint. An outstanding example of the children's development was seen in their understanding and knowledge of computers. The youngest children were able to switch on equipment by themselves, load a program from visual prompts, switch between text and draw modes, control a mouse in order to draw a picture for themselves. The children are making very good progress and are highly likely to reach the Desirable Outcomes for their learning and beyond.

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89      Physical Development

85      Children can use scissors and small tools safely and accurately, and make good progress gaining increasing control with pencils, crayons and paintbrushes. This was seen in their work with play dough and in the making of 'pop-up' birthday cards and party hats. In their outdoor play, children can throw bean-bags with some accuracy onto numbered squares, then jump and hop to the position with well co-ordinated movements. Children can play safely and run and climb, jump and land with good control and without bumping into others. They follow a simple 'obstacle' course and show a sense of dexterity and balance when walking slowly along a beam. Some of the resources for outdoor play are limited, but the school has made provision for the upgrading of the quality, for example of large mobile toys. Most children are able to use eating utensils properly at lunchtime.

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90      Creative Development

86      Children are provided with a good range of experiences and the outcomes of their work are displayed attractively in the classrooms. The children make good progress and are confident in the use of materials as seen, for example in the huge grin of enjoyment of one boy using large felt tip pens to draw a picture on a big piece of paper. The children can print using a range of objects, for examples, leaves when creating an autumn colour pattern, and cotton reels when creating attractive sea-weed shapes. Opportunities are provided for children to learn how to mix colours and create bold, lively paintings, which are then included in the Unit's 'art gallery'. Three-dimensional work is well represented and children are encouraged to explore the different textures of natural and manmade objects. In their role-play, children are developing confidence and skills in organising as well as skills in numeracy and literacy. Through the use of art programs, the children develop computer skills for creating excellent designs and patterns. Through stories and dance the children are developing an imaginative approach, expressing ideas, including those of other cultures. The children are on line to reach the Desirable Outcomes for their learning.

87      Since the last inspection, the outdoor provision has been improved, together with an increase in the number of adults available to supervise the activities. The quality of teaching has improved from being sound to becoming very good.

## ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

### English

- 88 At the end of Key Stage 1, the overall standard is in line with national expectations. From 1996 to 1998 results in the National Curriculum tests have been below the national average for reading but 1999 results show an improvement and are broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching average levels of attainment was above the national norm. The proportion of pupils achieving higher levels in reading was slightly below the national average but represented an improvement in the school's previous performance. The percentage of boys achieving Level 2 and above is similar to girls (nationally a lower percentage of boys achieve this level compared to girls). Compared with similar schools, the standard in reading is above average.
- 89 In writing in 1998, 85 per cent reached Level 2 or above and in 1999 this increased to 94 per cent and was well above the national average. The percentage achieving Level 3 was close to the national average. Both boys and girls are significantly ahead of the national average in writing. Compared with similar schools, the results are also well above average. In both reading and writing significant improvements have been made in recent years.
- 90 By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, attainment is in line with national expectations. At Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4, pupils make good progress in developing the skills of literacy. In Year 1, pupils benefit from the positive attitudes to books which they have developed in their 4 plus class. They are eager and enthusiastic to talk about books and show their favourites from a free choice selection. By Year 2, their skills in phonics to help them read words improves. In writing pupils in Year 1 express ideas in sentences. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to understand the correct use of full stops and capital letters. Some pupils in Year 2 begin to use cursive handwriting and all have regular practice to improve the presentation of their work. At both key stages, the arrangements for the teaching of literacy are effective developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. These arrangements are having a positive impact, particularly at the end of lessons when pupils share with classmates the work they have been doing. Literacy skills are used well in other areas of the curriculum. In Year 4, pupils put themselves in the place of wartime evacuees and wrote letters home in their history lesson.
- 91 Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening in Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4 is in line with national expectations. In both key stages, most pupils listen carefully to the teacher. They are keen to respond to questions and listen well to each other's contributions. In a minority of lessons across the key stages there is some inattention and restlessness among a few pupils. This is not always dealt with effectively. Pupils are confident and can relate well to adults. They express their ideas clearly about stories they are reading and can describe the role of authors, poets and illustrators. They make sound progress.
- 92 By the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in reading is in line with national expectations. 'Big Books' used for class study in the literacy sessions are effective in helping pupils to develop a knowledge and understanding of how books are organised. They learn about the effects and use of different types of punctuation and how this can affect meaning and help in expressive reading. Higher attaining pupils read with expression, particularly poetry. They read accurately and observe punctuation. They can use more than one strategy when they encounter a difficult word. Average attaining pupils read with confidence, though their strategy for reading unknown words is generally limited to the use of phonics. All can talk with enjoyment about their books and the lower attaining pupils show enthusiasm to move on, clearly motivated by the reward system which exists. Pupils regularly take their books home to practise their skills. Parental help and involvement is having a positive effect on their children's achievements. Progress is sound.
- 93 In Key Stage 2, reading is in line with national expectations. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 like reading and in Year 4 are beginning to express a preference for favourite authors. Their comprehension skills are developing and they can select the main points in retelling a passage. Research and study skills are beginning to emerge. Pupils of all abilities have positive attitudes towards books and progress continues to be sound.

- 94 In writing, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is above the national average. The shared texts of the Literacy Strategy are having a noticeable and significant effect on pupils' knowledge and understanding of sentences, punctuation, and rhymes. This is having a positive influence on writing and spelling. Higher attaining pupils use full stops and capital letters correctly and spelling is usually accurate. Some average attainers still need reminders of these points but are responsive to the comments made by the teachers in their marking. There is evidence that in subsequent work, pupils try hard to improve their accuracy. They make sound progress.
- 95 Attainment in writing continues to be above the national average in Key Stage 2. By Year 4, pupils edit and re-draft parts of their work as they develop an understanding of how it can be improved. They pay attention to developing ideas from planning to finished writing. Higher attaining pupils can sustain their ideas in interesting ways. They respond to the teachers' encouragement in marking to use adjectives and adverbs more vividly. These pupils and average attaining pupils present their work more neatly, write at greater length and try hard to punctuate correctly. Lower attaining pupils have some difficulties in developing their ideas from the story planner. In relation to their learning needs, pupils make sound progress through Years 3 and 4.
- 96 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress at both key stages towards the targets set in their individual education plans. These are well-planned and include long term goals and strategies. The short term plan puts the aims into practice and, with the help of the learning support assistants, these are implemented well. Well-focused activities from the Additional Literacy Strategy relate closely and specifically to the pupils' literacy targets and are having a significant impact on the good progress these pupils make.
- 97 Pupils' attitude to their work in English is satisfactory overall. Most can show good concentration which is well-sustained during 'Big Book' sessions. However, there are occasions across the key stages in a minority of lessons when pupils become restless. This is not always dealt with effectively. The majority of pupils do have a positive attitude to their learning. They understand and follow the routines of the Literacy Strategy conscientiously. They respond well to questions and listen to the contributions of other children. Most can work independently. In group work most can collaborate and stay on task. They relate well to adults and pupils with special educational needs benefit from interactions with learning support assistants.
- 98 The overall quality of teaching is good. In the lessons observed, 55 per cent were good and 45 per cent were satisfactory. At Key Stage 1, most lessons observed were of good quality and this has a strong impact on pupils' progress. In Key Stage 2, teaching observed was at least satisfactory and some was good. Teachers' planning across the key stages shows clear links between the National Curriculum and the National Literacy Strategy both of which are being taught successfully and are enabling pupils to make sound progress. Lessons are thoroughly planned and firmly based on regular assessment of pupils' progress. Individual levels of attainment are addressed well in the planning, particularly for those pupils with special educational needs. Teachers use opportunities to intervene with groups, identify weaknesses and offer appropriate individual guidance. Learning support assistants are effectively deployed by the teachers to support lower attaining pupils. Most teachers manage behaviour well in English and the pace of lessons is good. Occasionally, the restlessness of a few pupils causes interruption and the pace slows. All teachers offer praise and encouragement effectively. Good assessment of pupils' capabilities influences lesson structure and content well. Teaching points are effectively re-visited to give pupils time to reflect on what they have learned. Texts and tasks are closely matched to pupils' needs. Clear questioning and the occasional use of intriguing strategies encourages and provides opportunities to promote pupils' language development. One such occasion can be illustrated in a Year 2 class. The pupils sharing the 'Big Book' called 'The Mango Tree' were enthralled by handling and tasting a fresh mango, which resulted in a list of appropriate adjectives being compiled. Homework in reading at both key stages is successful in developing pupils' enjoyment of reading.

- 99 The English curriculum is broad and balanced. It has been strengthened by the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy particularly in widening the range of reading and providing opportunities for pupils to talk in front of their classmates. The English policy statement is appropriate to the school aims, consistent with national advice and provides coverage of all aspects of English. Additional time is given each week for extended writing, drama and speaking and listening. Day-to-day assessment is good and focuses on raising attainment; teachers and support staff monitor pupils' progress very carefully. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained and resources improved in order to promote pupils' interest in reading.
- 100 The library incorporates a computer suite and has been re-located since the last inspection. The library is spacious and inviting offering pupils the opportunity to develop their skills and an understanding of libraries as a source of information. Floor cushions alongside appropriately low shelves invite pupils to browse. The library is well-stocked with many attractive new books, both fiction and non-fiction. A considerable amount of money has been wisely spent recently to provide adequate resources to support literacy.
- 101 English is making a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In group activities, pupils work collaboratively, respecting what each other has to say. Cultural knowledge is presented through pupils' growing awareness of authors and poets.
- 102 The management of the subject is good. The subject co-ordinator has a high level of professional competence and ability to initiate, direct and communicate effectively with other teachers. She is enthusiastic about English and provides clear direction for the subject. She has undertaken monitoring of lessons, encouraged the sharing of ideas and sees teachers' weekly planning sheets on which she provides useful feedback to class teachers. This has enabled her to have a good overview of teaching across the school and the rate at which pupils are acquiring skills and knowledge.

## **Mathematics**

- 103 In the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 was above the national average. The results were well above those of similar schools. The school's performance has been consistent in the last two years. However, almost a third of pupils reached an above average level of attainment and this was well above the national norm and represents a significant improvement upon the 1998 result.
- 104 The findings of the inspection confirm the National Curriculum tests. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and also in Year 4 are above national expectations. This is particularly commendable as the inspection took place in the first term of the academic year. For example in Year 2, most higher attaining pupils know multiplication facts for the 2, 5 and 10 times tables. Higher attaining pupils can read and write numbers up to 1000, count on and back in tens, draw and recognise two- and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils of average attainment know numbers 'more or less' up to 100, can add and subtract pairs of numbers up to 20, calculate missing numbers and understand inverse processes. Lower attaining pupils are well supported, and count in 5's and 2's, and can add and subtract numbers up to 10.
- 105 The oldest pupils in Key Stage 2 (Year 4) can divide numbers successfully. For example, higher attaining pupils can divide hundreds, tens and units. They divide tens and units, giving their answers in whole numbers and fractions. Pupils of average attainment can divide numbers by five. In solving money problems, higher attaining pupils can work with amounts up to £50 using notes and coins.



- 106 The rate of progress seen in the lessons during the inspection, varied from very good to unsatisfactory. However, taking into account the work seen in the scrutiny and the performance of pupils in the National Curriculum tests over a period of time, the overall progress which they make in both key stages is good. For example in Year 1, higher attaining pupils were completing successfully algebraic, numerical expressions up to 30. Average attaining pupils were completing number boards up to 10 and lower attaining pupils, including some with special educational needs, were completing sums such as  $4+3$ . Support for these pupils was sometimes required.
- 107 In Year 2, higher attaining pupils successfully add numbers up to and beyond 100. They tell the time in both analogue and digital times, including half and quarter hours and read dials for other units of measure. Pupils tackle problems involving up to 20, and lower attaining pupils attempt these with support from adults. Pupils in Year 3 continue to make good progress in their number work, including working with quarters and thirds. During a good lesson on investigations, pupils of all abilities demonstrated competence in dealing with money. Higher attaining pupils were quick to calculate mental problems involving units of 25.
- 108 In Year 4, higher attaining pupils read scales accurately and record their answers in decimals, solve problems, make estimations and work with numbers up to 9999. Average attaining pupils understand tens and units and some work confidently with hundreds. There is some variation in the progress which pupils make in Year 4 but overall they make good progress in the subject, including those with special educational needs.
- 109 Pupils' response varies from excellent to unsatisfactory. Overall, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. Most pupils listen attentively and are eager to answer questions. This positive attitude was seen in an excellent Year 2 lesson. However, in other lessons, for example in Years 1 and 3, pupils were restless and inattentive. A minority spoil the plenary parts of the session by calling out and being noisy. Most pupils work co-operatively and concentrate when set tasks to complete, including working together. They enjoy the subject and the challenge. Pupils generally set out their work in a satisfactory manner, but there are some examples of untidy presentation in exercise books and work sheets.
- 110 The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, but the standards vary between excellent and unsatisfactory. Fifty six per cent of lessons were satisfactory and 22 per cent were good. One excellent lesson and one unsatisfactory lesson were also observed. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject and have worked hard to implement the National Numeracy Strategy successfully. Teachers generally have high expectations for their pupils' academic performance and this has led to the school reaching above national standards in the subject. A good example was seen in a Year 3 practical lesson dealing with money problems. The quality of planning is a strength of the teaching. Lesson objectives are clear and specific and work is closely matched to the pupils' level of attainment. There is some inconsistency in the level of challenge set for pupils, especially higher attaining pupils. Overall, the teachers are successful in promoting all pupils' progress. For example, the strategy of placing some Year 3 pupils with Year 4 pupils provides a good model for ensuring higher attaining pupils are working at an appropriate level. Most lessons are well organised, move at a suitable pace, activities are interesting and include the use of information technology. In the unsatisfactory lesson, the whole class introductory activity was not managed well and the tasks not clearly explained. This led to pupils making slow progress. The tolerance of teachers allowing a small number of pupils to become noisy and interrupt the progress of teaching, is an unsatisfactory feature in some other lessons. This restless atmosphere impacts upon the learning environment and the progress which pupils make in these lessons. In the best lessons, pupils are firmly controlled and relationships between the class and the teacher are positive. This was seen, for example in a Year 2 lesson.
- 111 Teachers use the school's resources well. Classroom assistants are deployed and organised well to promote pupils' learning. When it is necessary for pupils to be withdrawn because of their behaviour, the support which these pupils received is positive and enables them to make progress. This was seen, for example, where the headteacher made an effective intervention during a lesson. The time in most lessons is used well,

but occasionally plenary sessions are too short and does not allow for the consolidation of pupils' learning.

- 112 The school has been implementing a numeracy strategy as part of the pilot study. This has clearly made a positive impact upon raising standards and enabled the school to be in a good position for the national framework. The current subject co-ordinator was appointed recently, but is supporting the three newly qualified teachers effectively. The school's planning documents are detailed and provide good direction for the subject. However, there is no scheme providing overall guidance in the schools' strategy for the presentation of pupils' work. This has led to variation, both in standard and style of pupils' work.
- 113 Since the last inspection attainment has been improved and objectives in lessons are more clearly defined. Monitoring of planning is taking place and opportunities for teachers to observe each others lessons have been provided.

## Science

- 114 The results of teachers' assessments in 1998 indicated that the performance of pupils' performance was broadly average. In 1999, there was a small improvement in the proportion of pupils achieving the benchmark Level 2, or above of the National Curriculum and a significant increase in the proportion achieving Level 3. Inspection findings indicate that most pupils currently in Year 2 and in Year 4 are on course to attain what is expected of them nationally and that standards have been maintained over the last two years. Lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' records indicates that, over time, boys and girls, including those with special educational needs and those from different ethnic backgrounds, make satisfactory progress. They are given a very good scientific grounding in the unit for young children. Standards have been sustained since the last report.
- 115 Pupils in Year 1 learn about their senses. For example, they understand, that the tongue is used for tasting things. Most pupils know twelve parts of the human body. They can successfully link pictures of young animals to the appropriate adult. Average and higher attaining pupils classify small creatures, using features such as the number of legs and wings. All pupils classify objects into living and non-living things.
- 116 Pupils in Year 2 study electricity. They all know that a circuit needs to be complete to work. Higher attaining pupils give reasons why a circuit may be incomplete. For example, the battery might be flat or a wire may have separated from its host connection. Average pupils know that their doorbells at home require a complete circuit to work. All pupils have studied changes in states of matter. Higher and average attaining pupils draw the changes that happen to water clearly. Lower attaining pupils find this task difficult to record but understand the principle at an appropriate level.
- 117 In Year 3, all pupils know that some foods are better for you than others and that people must eat a healthy diet to stay fit and well. In the recent past, pupils have made simple scientific drawings of plants in the wildlife area. Pupils study magnetism this term, which is part of a unit of work about forces. All pupils predict with an appropriate degree of accuracy which materials might be attracted by magnets. Higher attaining pupils explain why they are occasionally wrong. Average attaining pupils were observed discovering for the first time that magnetic force can transfer through paper clips to join several together. This caused much interest and some amazement. Pupils make genuine new discoveries in these lessons. Below average attaining pupils know that some magnets are stronger than others and prove this to the teachers. All pupils successfully record their results in a table provided by teachers.
- 118 In Year 4, pupils investigate whether boys are bigger than girls. Higher attaining pupils predict that girls are smaller and are not surprised by their findings. Average attaining pupils understand that using the measurements of two girls and two boys makes the test fair. With some help, below average pupils measure in centimetres successfully. All pupils study animal habitats. They have a satisfactory knowledge of where insects are found and why they live there. Higher and average attaining pupils successfully frame questions such as, 'What do snails eat?' They hypothesise that ants prefer to live in warm places and then go on to find out if this is true.

- 119 Pupils make satisfactory progress with learning to investigate some of the capacities of their bodies. They progress from simple observations and naming parts of the body to the use of accurate measurement of lengths of arms and legs for example. Pupils learn to record findings effectively and to interpret what they mean. Most older pupils have learned that some tests are more fair than others and explain what they mean by this. Pupils learn many facts, such as about the characteristics of living creatures. They learn that living things need certain conditions to grow and that some materials are attracted by magnets. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their ability to classify items. In Year 1, pupils draw simple distinctions between living creatures and, by the time they leave the school, pupils use a classification key successfully. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in acquiring scientific knowledge and understanding.
- 120 Pupils' response is satisfactory at both key stages. Most are interested in the tasks and activities they are set and are keen to take part in practical activities. Most pupils listen attentively to teachers and generally follow instructions appropriately. Girls at both key stages concentrate on tasks particularly well, complete them as required and demonstrate that they can persevere when they find work difficult. Most pupils work well in pairs; they support each other during group work and work independently when required. In certain classes a significant minority of boys do not respond appropriately to class rules and conventions. They tend to call out during lessons and are slow to settle to work. This has a negative effect on their progress and at times, the rest of the class. Most pupils listen to the views and ideas expressed by others. Lower attaining pupils take ideas shared during discussions and use them well in their work. Pupils use resources appropriately. Presentation of work is untidy on occasions but new ideas have been clearly understood.
- 121 The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. All lessons observed were satisfactory. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. They plan a good range of practical activities to support learning, which enable pupils to build effectively on past learning and to practise and refine their investigative skills. This is a strength of the teaching and an important improvement since the last inspection. Expectations of learning are satisfactory. Lesson organisation takes best account of the needs of average and lower attaining pupils. The management of pupils has some unsatisfactory features. At both key stages, a significant minority of mainly boys cause some disruption in lessons by calling out and not settling quickly to work. This slows their progress and on occasions the progress of other pupils. The school's behaviour policy is not always fully implemented by teachers. The use of time and resources, particularly the use of non-teaching assistants is good. Assessment activities are well planned, consistently implemented and the results are used effectively to plan work. The subject effectively promotes literacy and numeracy.
- 122 Science is well co-ordinated. The school, justifiably, uses the latest national guidance from the government to assist in teaching the National Curriculum. This ensures that pupils' learning is continuous and is an improvement upon the findings of the previous report. Learning targets are identified clearly in the scheme of work and these are effectively translated into tasks and activities in teachers' lesson planning. The school has developed good assessment procedures and has compiled sets of marked work to help teachers to make accurate judgements about attainment.
- 123 Teachers' planning is monitored effectively by the headteacher. Periodically, a 'Life Bus' visits the school. Its purpose is to educate pupils about the human body and to encourage them to look after themselves well by seeking alternatives, for example, to drug abuse as a response to problems in later life. It is a very good initiative; the teacher is lively, well informed and pupils respond very well. There are sufficient, suitable learning resources.

## OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

### Information technology

- 124 As found at the last inspection, pupils attain standards in information technology in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 and in line with national expectations by the time they leave school. Progress in both key stages is satisfactory and, in the class for children under five, progress is very good. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. The computer suite has only become operational this term, and is already having a marked effect on the progress of the youngest pupils in the school.
- 125 Pupils in all classes, including the 4+ Unit, can switch on the computers and load the required program from the Windows operating system.
- 126 In Key Stage 1, pupils use the word processor to print a piece of prose, and can alter the size of the print. They control a mouse to create line drawings and instruct the computer to print out their designs. Keyboard skills develop appropriately and pupils can retrieve and store work with help.
- 127 In Key Stage 2, pupils use the word processor to save, retrieve, edit and print their work. They enter, save and retrieve, and modify data in a database. They design and use a questionnaire to gather data and use the program to present their data in a range of graphical forms. They use information technology to organise and recognise sounds, and use icons to arrange musical phrases, varying the tempo of the performance. At present, pupils have a limited experience of information technology simulations, such as when they investigated life in an Anglo-Saxon village in history.
- 128 Pupils enjoy using the information technology equipment. They collaborate effectively in joint assignments, are keen to share their work and show pride in their achievements. All pupils handle the equipment carefully, and most become totally absorbed in their tasks. A small minority of pupils do not behave well when it is not their turn to use the equipment, and these can interfere with the learning of those pupils who are working on the computers.
- 129 The majority of the teaching of information technology is good, with some examples of excellent teaching. On the one when teaching was unsatisfactory, the teacher did not have sufficient influence over pupils' behaviour to achieve all the objectives planned for a lesson. Teachers' knowledge is at least satisfactory and many have good information technology skills themselves. They know how to develop the appropriate skills in pupils. Teachers' expectations of pupils are best when staff are realistic about pupils' previous experience with information technology, but have an urgency to move them forward. However, some tasks lack sufficient challenge to move pupils' learning forward, such as when using a graphics program to explore both the use of dots and the use of spirals simultaneously. Teachers' planning is clear and staff make good use of the published scheme to address areas which are new to pupils. Many staff judge well the extent of their involvement and intervention, leading pupils to work out their problems for themselves through effective questioning. Supporting adults are briefed well and have good knowledge of what the class teacher wishes the pupils to learn in each session.
- 130 Staff make good use of the computer suite to teach specific skills to the whole class. These skills are then used independently on the computers in the classrooms.
- 131 The school has adopted the scheme of work published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Agency, which provides an appropriate balance across the elements of the information technology curriculum. Each class has an allocated time weekly in the computer suite, as well as opportunities to use information technology regularly in other lessons. Assessment of pupils' progress is based on observation and discussion with pupils. Examples of pupils' work is saved on disk, and pupils make their own evaluations of their work.

- 132 Information technology contributes well to pupils' social development in that it promotes good collaborative work. Few pupils have access to computers at home and so the school provides well for access to this element of modern culture.
- 133 There is strong leadership for information technology and the co-ordinator has a vision for the development of the subject. She monitors pupils' progress informally at present, and the effectiveness of this is a function of the close teamwork of the staff. The co-ordinator plans to monitor the teaching of information technology next term by undertaking lesson observations.
- 134 Resources for information technology are very good. The school has a ratio of one computer to eight pupils, as well as a satisfactory range of software for word processing, data handling and research. The software for simulations is limited, and the programmable robots required for the programme of study next term in several year groups, are to be ordered before the end of this term.
- 135 The equipment is managed effectively to promote pupils' learning. It is used very well during timetabled sessions, but less effective use is made to support learning in other areas of the curriculum.

### **Religious education**

- 136 During the inspection, it was possible to observe only two complete lessons. However, from talking to pupils, looking at their work and examining the school's planning, the inspection concluded that the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus are met, and pupils' standards of attainment are in line with those expected at the end of both key stages. The pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment
- 137 Pupils make sound progress in both key stages. In Key Stage 1, pupils appreciate the importance of food in celebrations and are able to describe in simple terms, the artefacts of the Jewish faith. For example, they can name the holy book, and describe the lighting of candles and a game which Jewish children play. In Year 3, pupils have an adequate knowledge of the story of Moses and can retell the various events in the captivity of the Israelites. Some can relate this to the present day celebration of the Passover. Pupils also have an understanding of the religious significance of saying 'sorry' and can relate this to their own lives, for example, by writing letters of apology to members of their family or friends. In Year 4, pupils recall the significance of foods used in festivals and say which foods are not permitted in Judaism. Their knowledge of Christian celebrations and traditions is less well developed. In a lesson where all Year 4 pupils were together, the response to the teacher's questions was limited, for example in describing the significance of bread and wine.
- 138 Pupils show a satisfactory interest in the subject and usually listen with appropriate empathy and respect towards the traditions of other cultures and faiths. In Year 3, some pupils were restless and behaved in an inappropriate manner, which spoilt the ethos of the lesson. Year 4 pupils behaved well and listened attentively during an enactment of the Anglican Eucharist. They asked appropriate questions and sat silently during the breaking of bread, so that the snap of the wafer could be heard.
- 139 In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching varied, but was good overall. The teachers' understanding and knowledge of the subject is a strength of the teaching. This was particularly evident in Year 4, where the teacher demonstrated and explained the Christian communion service with outstanding clarity and sincerity of expression. This promoted pupils' empathy and developed their awareness of the Christian act of worship. Lessons are well planned and clearly related to the locally agreed syllabus. The focus of one activity was not effective when clearly pupils were being briefed on a visit to a local church. This was partly due to the timing of the briefing which was at the end of a long morning session.

140 Teachers use religious artefacts successfully and create interesting displays to promote pupils' interest in the classroom. In Year 3, pupils were provided with samples of apple and honey to taste and in Year 4, they were able to see and wear the celebrants' vestments as well as experience the procedures and language of the communion service. The teachers use the school's modest resources efficiently and supplement these by making good use of external sources, such as the local church. These resources are effective in promoting pupils' interest and understanding of the subject which helps to develop the pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness.

145 **Art**

141 Standards attained in art are in line with those commonly seen for pupils their age. There is evidence of satisfactory progress over time by all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Art is skilfully incorporated into project work to support other areas of the curriculum. The school has been successful in addressing the aspects for development identified at the last inspection. Observational drawing is now of a good standard and pupils are given appropriate opportunities for sculpture.

142 Pupils in Key Stage 1 can mix secondary colours from primary coloured powder paint. They print with a selection of items such as sponges, and use chalks on black paper to create pictures, for example of a recent visit to the Planetarium. They use collage to explore the textures in a beach scene, and make still-life studies of shells, wood, stone and flowers in the style of Beatrix Potter using a variety of media, such as pencil, collage and clay. Pupils have used clay to make tiles as part of their project on Roman Britain and have created a mural in paints that tells the story of St Alban.

143 All pupils have sketchbooks, and they use these to experiment with a range of media, such as wax crayons, pastels, pencil and paint. Younger pupils paint faces and older pupils use colour and shape to represent a range of emotions, such as anger, peace and happiness.

144 Pupils also have good opportunities to use information technology to draw and create patterns. They experiment with the use of flowing black lines and colour-filling techniques to make patterns in the style of Jackson Pollock, and use other facilities of a graphics program to try out aspects of pointillism (the technique of making pictures using dots of colour) for making pictures.

145 Pupils in Key Stage 2 extend their experience of a wide range of techniques. They mix colours carefully to create tones such as the blues used in the designs for willow pattern plates. They use collage to make detailed studies of textures such as of skin tones, and use clay for example, to investigate the use of spirals. They make careful observational drawing such as sketches of buildings in a local village, Ashridge and some attractive studies in pastels of chrysanthemums. They consider the work of famous artists and apply their techniques to their own work, such as pictures in the style of Monet, watercolours in the style of Hockney and the use of repeating images as in Warhol's 'Marilyn'.

146 Pupils are enthusiastic about their artwork, and are pleased to talk about techniques they have experienced. Staff provide appropriate challenges for pupils within their art curriculum, and relate discussions in other subjects to the appreciation of art, for example the work of Seurat to the use of dots in computer-generated pictures. Teachers show a secure understanding of the subject and have appropriate expectations for the outcome of pupils' work especially in Key Stage 1. Resources are used efficiently and teachers have worked hard to effectively display pupils' work throughout the school. This provides a bright and cheerful atmosphere and promotes a positive effect on pupils' self-esteem.

147 The scheme of work for art provides an appropriate balance across a range of techniques and gives pupils experience of the work of famous artists. However, it is not sufficiently well structured to ensure planning builds upon what pupils know, understand and can do at all levels. The scheme of work implies that pupils experience the art of other cultures, such as Aboriginal paintings and African pottery but the only evidence of this on display during the inspection was of ancient Roman mosaics and of Hindu Mendhi patterns. There

is no portfolio containing examples of work at a range of levels.



148 The resources for art are good, with a wide range of good quality papers, resources for textile work, art tools and three-dimensional materials. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' cultural development.

153 **Design and technology**

149 Pupils in both key stages attain standards in line with those commonly seen for pupils of this age. The school has been successful in addressing the aspects for development identified at the last inspection. The work on display shows satisfactory progress over time in the development of skills and of design.

150 Pupils in Key Stage 1 use the computers to design and then make Joseph's coats, and experiment with the most effective stitching for small cushions. They consider fruit and vegetables, and the things that can be made with fruit such as marmalade, ice cream and drinks. Pupils make pictures with moving parts, such as those with flap hinges, and those with tongues that stick out! They consider sequences for how to make such things as a cup of tea. They make puppets from recycled materials using a range of hinges to make limbs move, such as split pins, and paper springs. Sketchbooks show plans for making models of playground equipment and include instructions and materials to be used. Displays show the use of weaving techniques as well as designs for 3-dimensional animals. An attractive display on the theme 'Hickory Dickory Dock' by the youngest members of the school shows the use of a range of joins for making moving parts to clocks.

151 Pupils in Key Stage 2 investigate food technology, and design and make such products as money containers in fabric. In the process they investigate strong stitching and a range of fabrics before selecting the most suitable. They design and make models with moving parts, considering different types of joints and the use of axles. Designs for vehicles show views from above and the front as well as side views, and detail materials as well as dimensions. They disassemble and investigate the construction of photograph frames, and design and make their own. Whilst much of the programme is practical, pupils also have sufficient experience of designing, and discover for themselves the need for accurate measuring.

152 The school has adopted the scheme of work for design and technology from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, and there is an overall plan for the subject showing which elements of this scheme will be taught in which class.

153 Resources for design and technology are good, with a good range of tools, materials and construction kits that are used well. Informative displays celebrate pupils' work and explain the conclusions they reached during for example their project on Joseph's coat and that on designs for money containers.

158 **Geography**

154 Very few lessons were observed, therefore judgements are largely based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with the co-ordinator and pupils, and a scrutiny of curriculum planning. By the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4 pupils make satisfactory progress but there was insufficient evidence upon which to make a secure judgement on the standard of attainment

155 In Year 1, pupils know where the places they have visited are on a world map. Pupils in Year 2 classify how land is used by colouring similar features the same, such as hotels. Year 3 pupils locate buildings on a simple map and use the four points of the compass to help them. Pupils have studied basic features of the coast and identify cliffs and beaches. Pupils choose holiday destinations from brochures and work out destinations within the constraints such as cost and location. They study how average temperatures vary across the world and know the key features of polar, desert and rainforest climates.

- 156 In Year 4, pupils make valid comparisons between a rural village they have visited and towns. For example, they comment on differences between school buildings and roads. Pupils study the village's location on an Ordnance Survey map. They know the five main rivers of the United Kingdom and the names of the five continents. They study oblique photographs of places, the corresponding maps and identify the same features on both. During their study of India, pupils make interesting observations about life in another country as they see it. They understand that India's economy is very different from our own.
- 157 Pupils make satisfactory progress with understanding maps. They progress from drawing pictorial maps of journeys from home to using detailed road maps when older. Pupils study weather during a school week and relate this to the study of world climatic zones. Pupils study human activity in their local area and progress to studying developing countries far away. Links to other subjects are clear. Pupils use co-ordinates to find places and maps are often used to identify places in history. They make a satisfactory response to geography in their work over the recent terms and in the one lesson observed, pupils' presentation of work was satisfactory.
- 158 Teachers make good use of aerial photographs and visits to places to make the subject exciting. At this early stage of the year, there is significantly more work available to scrutinise from Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 2, there is good evidence that teachers develop pupils' skills appropriately, for example pupils learn to use atlases. All pupils in each class study the same curriculum.
- 159 The co-ordination of geography is satisfactory. The school, justifiably, uses the latest national guidance from the government to assist in planning their lessons. The school has developed good assessment procedures in common with other subjects. Teachers' planning is monitored effectively by the headteacher. There are sufficient, suitable learning resources.
- 164 **History**
- 160 Little direct teaching of history could be observed during the inspection because of the constraints of the timetable. Judgements are based on those lessons seen, talking to pupils, scrutiny of work and discussions with teachers and the co-ordinator. It is clear from these that attainment is broadly in line with what might be expected of pupils this age and progress is satisfactory in both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs in both key stages make good progress and achieve standards appropriate to their abilities.
- 161 By the time they leave school in Year 4, pupils have gained a suitable sense of chronology. Pupils of all abilities have a satisfactory range of historical knowledge about the Anglo-Saxons, the invasion of the Romans and the Second World War. Work on the war helps pupils to understand how it affected the lives of children, know about the need for rationing, the evacuation of children from London during the blitz and the need to build air raid shelters. A visit to St. Albans reinforced Year 3 pupils' knowledge of the Romans and gave them an opportunity to experience making mosaics and clay tiles and the chance to participate in a dramatic representation of the martyrdom of St. Alban at the hands of the Romans. Pupils in Key Stage 1 explore changes in their own lives and those of people close to them. They sequence objects and events to help to develop a sense of chronology. In both key stages pupils are making satisfactory progress.
- 162 The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory with some good features. There is a policy and a sound scheme of work providing a secure planning framework. The scheme provides opportunities for much discussion and teachers question pupils well, broadening their understanding and interpretation skills. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils had the opportunity to handle a range of toys of various ages. They made evaluative comments, and the lesson contributed to the pupils' speaking and listening skills. History is enhancing the development of specific subject vocabulary such as 'settlers,' 'invaders,' and 'evacuees'. Letters written by Year 4 pupils in the role of evacuees contributes effectively to writing across the curriculum. Teaching is promoting well the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Effective use is made of resources outside school.

- 163 Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory in both key stages. Pupils are eager to respond and show what they know. They readily talk about their previous learning, recalling for example the visit to St. Albans. They use vocabulary specific to the subject.
- 164 The school is well-resourced with books and artefacts which contribute to the standards the pupils achieve. The co-ordinator and the teachers use a commercial scheme to construct long term plans. The teachers in the year groups translate this into medium and short term plans. There is effective liaison with the middle school to ensure that coverage is not duplicated when pupils move onto the next stage of their education. Pupils are assessed against national curriculum levels of attainment and their assessments form part of their individual assessment record which follows them through school. Emphasis on monitoring has recently been given to the core subjects but in the Spring term the co-ordinator will have the opportunity to monitor the subject more closely. Much use is made of the local area. Dunstable is a town rich in history and good cross-curricular links are made with religious education and geography.
- 169 **Music**
- 165 Progress in Key Stage 1, including the progress of pupils with special educational needs, is good overall. Pupils are responsive to teachers' suggestions and guidance. They learn to explore rhythms successfully and make good progress in achieving the intended outcomes for their work. A Year 2 class looked carefully at a picture by Kandinsky and suggested the sort of sounds which could represent parts of the picture. They focused on long and short sounds and then experimented with a variety of percussion instruments to determine which instruments could play these sounds. A Year 2 class experimented with chime bars to enhance a story connected with Diwali. They listened well and produced the required sounds.
- 166 Progress in music in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. Standards are broadly in line with those expected for pupils this age, with some good features. Pupils in Year 3 can identify from the music 'Peter and the Wolf' the type of sounds being made by the instruments. Using percussion instruments they show a sound understanding of how to control sounds on a range of instruments.
- 167 Pupils' attitudes to music are generally positive. Most respond well to lessons and show good self-control when handling instruments. A minority of pupils in Key Stage 2 lack the self discipline to play instruments appropriately and their progress is less good. Groups are confident to perform with attention to tempo and timbre. They listen to each other's performances and in response to skilful questioning from the teacher have the confidence to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. In assembly, they join in singing showing that they know the words to a range of songs and tunes. Some pupils are members of the school choir. Hymn practice takes place weekly and is accompanied on the piano. Pupils sing with enthusiasm and can clap the rhythm of refrains. They are keen to learn new hymns and quickly join in due to the teacher's effective indication of turn-taking and modelling of the line to be learned.
- 168 Teaching seen at both key stages is good overall. Pupils' efforts are praised well. Lessons are well-planned with clear aims which promote pupils' progress. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to select instruments, create sounds for themselves or perform together. Where teaching is best, subsequent discussion and evaluation of their performances helps pupils to improve their work. Good use is made of a teacher's expertise in playing the guitar to enable pupils to sing to a live accompaniment in assemblies.

169 The co-ordinator has been responsible for music for a year and during that time has revised the policy. Arrangements are in place to record coverage of music in each year group in the individual pupil's record of progress. The school follows a commercial scheme of work which ensures coverage of the requirements for music in the National Curriculum as well as continuity of learning. There are sufficient musical instruments for a class lesson. They are easily accessible to both key stages. These make a sound contribution to pupils' learning. The school belongs to the Dunstable and District Music Association. Pupils in Year 4 have the opportunity to take part in the service of lessons and carols in the church at Christmas. In the Spring term, Year 2 and Year 4 pupils sing in Music Festivals held in a local middle school. This makes a significant contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development. The musical talent of some pupils is further enhanced by cello and violin lessons given by peripatetic music teachers.

174 **Physical education**

170 Judgements are based on four lesson observations, an interview with the co-ordinator, a scrutiny of teachers' planning and discussions with several pupils. Boys and girls, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Pupils make good progress with swimming and standards are above average. Standards of work in all areas of physical education are similar to the last inspection.

171 The school provides the full range of activities expected at Key Stage 1. In Year 2, pupils are required to follow instructions, balance and move in various ways. Average attaining pupils in dance lessons move forwards and backwards, sideways and along curved pathways at high, low and medium heights. Higher attaining pupils work with a partner and some of their movements are mirror images of each other. Lower attaining pupils work with less variety in the heights of their work. In Year 4, average attaining pupils jump from a one metre high table and usually make a balanced landing. Pupils consciously travel in different directions, one after another and repeat sequences well. Higher attaining pupils develop their sequences further by climbing in and out of apparatus, still making turns. Lower attaining pupils climb over apparatus and maintain continuous movement.

172 Pupils learn to move safely and to control their sequences of actions in gymnastics and dance. They learn to refine their skills and mostly work with partners successfully. Pupils learn to perform short sequences of linked movements by the end of Key Stage 1. They learn to simulate parts of stories well. For example, pupils in Year 2 found interesting ways to represent the movements of a crab moving into an imaginary cave and crossing objects on a beach. In Year 4, pupils learn to move backwards and forwards and to change direction in precise ways. Pupils also learn to forward roll from low apparatus on to a mat.

173 Pupils respond well to lessons. In the lessons observed, pupils mostly had good attitudes to work and enjoyed the lessons. Pupils persevere with tasks and show that they think, for example about the quality of their sequences of movements. Most pupils show interest in their work, exercise quietly and are keen to demonstrate their skills. A small minority of boys in one class lack sufficient self-control and tend to interrupt the teacher when instructions are given.

174 The teaching is good at both key stages. An equal balance of satisfactory and good teaching was observed at both key stages. Lessons are well prepared and teachers' assessments and records of what pupils can do are good. These are used to guide planning effectively. Teachers at both key stages have a secure knowledge of the physical education curriculum. Good links are made to well chosen stories, such as 'Bears in the Night.' Such stories provide good ideas for pupils to develop in dance. Lessons are orderly and attention to safety matters is good. Teachers mostly deal firmly and fairly with any misbehaviour or interruptions. During one lesson, the headteacher successfully demonstrated how to put out the climbing apparatus and how to conduct a lesson to the newly qualified class teacher. Both lessons at Key Stage 2 were short and pupils hardly had time to develop their ideas about what they had learned. Gymnastics lessons are vigorous and pupils are correctly encouraged never to queue for apparatus. In all lessons, pupils have appropriate opportunities to evaluate each others' work.

175 The comprehensive scheme of work ensures that pupils are properly challenged with activities suitable for their ages. There are three extra-curricular clubs presently, which a large number of pupils attend. Pupils at both key stages have opportunities to dance and play games during lunchtimes, and at weekends three football teams successfully represent the school. During the summer, pupils have very regular swimming lessons in their own pool. This provision has a positive impact on pupils' progress. All teachers renew their life-saving qualifications yearly. The school benefits from a good field and hard playing area and the hall provides a good flat space for indoor work. However, the hall at this time of year is cold and the surface of the playground is slowly disintegrating, which is a safety hazard because it is easy to slide on the loose surface. This weakness featured in the previous report. Resources, such as bats and balls are good. The subject is well co-ordinated and this is reflected in the quality of planning and in the consistent use of the comprehensive scheme of work.

## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

- 176 The team consisted of five inspectors, including a lay inspector, who spent a combined total of 16 days gathering first-hand evidence. Approximately 67 hours were spent observing classes, in discussions with pupils and in evaluating their work. A further 18 hours were spent interviewing staff, governors and parents. Parents' letters, questionnaires, displays of work, documents and resources were also examined.
- 177 Inspectors visited registration sessions and assemblies, and observed the pupils' behaviour at break and lunch times. Discussions were held with members of the teaching and support staff, representatives of the governing body and others, both during the inspection and the initial inspection visit. Pupils were observed during extra-curricular activities. All the available work of a representative sample of three pupils from each class and the work and records of a sample of pupils with special educational needs were scrutinised. Approximately 10 per cent of pupils were also heard to read, either individually or during group reading in literacy lessons. A large amount of documentation provided by the school was analysed, both before and during the inspection. A meeting with parents was held before the inspection.

## DATA AND INDICATORS

### Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR - Y4	236.5	4	50	42

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers (YR - Y4)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23

#### Education support staff (YR - Y4)

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked each week	199

Average class size:	26
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## Financial data

Financial year:

1998/99
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	£
Total Income	432,117.00
Total Expenditure	446,417.00
Expenditure per pupil	1,647.20
Balance brought forward from previous year	46,543.00
Balance carried forward to next year	32,243.00



**PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:	224
Number of questionnaires returned:	59

**Responses (percentage of answers in each category):**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	43	52	3	0	2
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	50	38	5	5	2
The school handles complaints from parents well	25	38	24	13	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	28	53	10	9	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	41	40	14	3	2
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	46	46	4	5	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	39	40	14	4	4
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	37	46	11	7	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	47	35	9	9	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	34	41	16	7	2
My child(ren) like(s) school	47	40	7	7	0

Percentages of responses are rounded to nearest integer, the sum may not = 100%  
 Percentages given are in relation to total number of returns, excluding nil replies