

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Bushfield Middle School**

Wolverton

Milton Keynes

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique reference number: 110256

Headteacher: Mrs S Cox

Reporting inspector: Peter Nickoll  
22033

Dates of inspection: 20 – 23 March 2000

Inspection number: 189321  
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Middle deemed primary

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 8 – 12 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Moon Street  
Wolverton  
Milton Keynes  
Buckinghamshire

Postcode: MK12 5JG

Telephone number: 01908-314876

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr R Parkinson

Date of previous inspection: 23/09/1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Peter Nickoll	Registered inspector	Mathematics	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p> <p>Standards: the school's results and achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p>
Suzanne Smith	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
John Burnham	Team inspector	Science, Information Technology, Modern Languages	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to children?
Esther Digby	Team inspector	Equal Opportunities, English, Design & Technology	
Michael Langrish	Team Inspector	Special Educational Needs, Music, Physical Education, Religious Education	
Jocelyn Willmer	Team Inspector	English as Additional Language, Art, Geography, History	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Bushfield Middle School is situated in the town of Wolverton on the north western edge of Milton Keynes. It is a community Middle school with 280 pupils, 143 boys and 137 girls aged from eight to twelve. The school has a significant multi ethnic mix of pupils. One quarter of the pupils who attend the school are from different ethnic backgrounds with the greatest number of these of Pakistani origin. 64 pupils, 23% of pupils in the school, are supported in acquiring English through the ethnic minorities achievement grant. 23 pupils are at an early stage of language acquisition. 34% of pupils are on the school's register of educational special needs. Four pupils have a statement of educational special needs. Just over 21% of pupils are eligible for free school meals.

The school serves the town of Wolverton, the neighbouring Stacey Bushes and the village of Haversham. Children come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, however socio-economic factors indicate that the area is relatively disadvantaged. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school aged eight is below average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Bushfield School is an effective school. It has made many significant improvements since the last inspection, but especially after the appointment of a new headteacher two years ago. The leadership and management provided by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors are strong. The headteacher and governors are aware of the school's strengths and areas for development and have effective plans to bring about the required improvements. Financial matters are handled efficiently taking due regard to cost effectiveness. Overall the quality of the teaching is good; most lessons are at least satisfactory with a half of lessons taught being of good quality. As a result of effective leadership and management and effective teaching, standards, whilst still below national averages for English and mathematics, are improving. Standards for science are in line with national averages. Pupils have positive attitudes to school, they enjoy coming to school and many are keen to learn. The school has a curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils and provides suitable opportunities that benefit all pupils. The arrangements for caring for its pupils are good. The school keeps parents and carers well informed about their child's progress and encourages their support. Bushfield School is a school where staff, pupils and parents feel proud to belong to. Taking into account the effective leadership, good teaching, the positive attitudes of pupils, improving standards and the cost effectiveness of the school, the school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher and governors which results in a strong commitment to whole school improvement.
- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to school are good.
- The provision for pupils' personal development is good.
- Relationships within the school and with the community are good.
- The school respects and values the contribution of every child.
- Half the teaching is good or better.
- The successful implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies which is having a positive impact upon standards.
- The school provides a stimulating, attractive and purposeful environment for learning.

### What could be improved

- Standards in English and mathematics.
- Special educational needs provision is not sufficiently focused on individual need.
- The quality and quantity of the homework that teachers set.
- Attendance is still too low.

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

### HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made many very significant improvements since the last inspection but especially in the last two years since the appointment of a new headteacher. The quality of the leadership and management has significantly improved. The headteacher gives the school clear and incisive leadership, and is ably assisted in this by the recently appointed deputy headteacher. The school has systems that allow it to have a good understanding of what it does well and what it needs to do to improve further. The governing body has reviewed its working practices and now has systems that allow them to support and challenge the school effectively. They work well with the headteacher to keep the school under review. The priorities of the governors and headteacher are sharply focused on raising standards and improving the quality of education, and as a result all financial decisions are linked to the school development plan. Standards whilst still below national averages in English and mathematics have significantly improved year on year since the last inspection. Standards in science are now in line with national averages. The quality of teaching has improved considerably. 95% of teaching is now satisfactory or better, with a half being good or better, compared with 74% of satisfactory teaching and no examples of good teaching observed at the time of the last inspection. The curriculum has been reviewed to ensure that pupils receive their statutory entitlement and that their spiritual, moral and cultural needs are being met. Systems for assessment and record keeping have been introduced, enabling teachers to keep a record of pupils' attainment and progress. All statutory requirements are now met.

### STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	E	E	D	C
Mathematics	E	D	E	E
Science	E	E	C	B

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

Pupils enter the school aged eight with a range of attainment, but overall, pupils attain standards that are below what is usually expected. In the 1999 national tests, pupils aged



11 are achieving standards in English that are broadly in line when compared with schools of a similar intake. In mathematics, standards are below those of similar schools whilst standards in science are above those in similar schools. At age 12, when pupils transfer to secondary school, standards in English and mathematics are below those expected nationally whilst standards in science are broadly average. However, standards in English, mathematics and science are improving. Since 1996 improvements in English, mathematics and science are broadly in line with the national trend, whilst standards in English and science have improved significantly over the last year. In English, pupils' reading is broadly satisfactory whilst standards in writing are below average. The school has set itself some challenging targets and has appropriate plans to bring about the desired improvements.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes to school and respond well in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good throughout the school.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of pupils is good overall. Pupils usually show respect and value each other's opinions. Relationships throughout the school are good.
Attendance	Attendance is improving but is still too low.

The good attitudes that pupils have towards the school and their good behaviour are improvements since the last inspection and are positive features of the school.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>aged 7 - 11 years</b>	<b>aged 11 - 12 years</b>
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

Overall the quality of teaching is good. In Key Stage 2, nearly all lessons were satisfactory with a half of lessons being good or better; one lesson in twelve was very good. Only one lesson in twenty was unsatisfactory. In Key Stage 3, 88% of lessons were satisfactory or better, over half the lessons observed were good with one lesson in five being very good. One lesson in eight was unsatisfactory. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy were generally well taught. Standards of teaching have improved considerably since the last inspection when no good or very good teaching was observed. Teachers plan well, share their learning intentions with pupils and most display good class control. The teachers have positive relationships with their pupils.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum provides an appropriate range of learning experiences for all pupils. In some foundation subjects the range of activities needs to be extended.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There are appropriate procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs. However their individual education plans are not sufficiently detailed to ensure that support programmes are clearly focused on pupil need.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils with English as an additional language are well integrated into the school community. However, their specific learning needs are not always fully met.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' social and moral development are very good. Their cultural development is good. This provision is greatly enhanced by an effective personal, social and health education programme. Spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides good support and guidance for all its pupils within a positive and caring environment.

Parents generally feel welcome in school. They are provided with a good range of information that keeps them informed of their child's progress, as well as informing them of school events.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership. This has resulted in very significant improvements to the school. The headteacher is well supported by the deputy headteacher. The role of the curriculum co-ordinators is not sufficiently developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have a very good understanding of the school and provide effective challenge and support for continued school improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher and governors have a very clear view of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement, and have detailed plans to achieve their goals.
The strategic use of resources	Effective use is made of the staff, building and resources for learning. Considering the socio-economic background of the school, the quality of the education and the unit costs of the school, the school provides good value for money.

The governing body have been very determined in their desire to raise standards and improve the quality of education provided. They work well with the new headteacher in order to fulfil the aims of the school. In all their decision making the governing body and headteacher take the appropriate steps to ensure the principles of best value. The headteacher has established very effective systems that keep the school under review. This has enabled many very significant improvements to be made. The school's arrangements for the induction of new teachers are excellent. The four newly qualified teachers have a very good understanding of the ways of the school and their professional development needs are being met.

The school buildings are well cared for and provide pupils with an attractive and stimulating environment for learning. The school grounds are extensive and well looked after. The school has exciting plans to develop the grounds to enhance pupil learning. Resources for learning are generally adequate to support the curriculum, though there are some shortages in science, design and technology, physical education and information technology. Whilst the school has recently increased the number of computers some are old and nearing the end their usefulness.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• They feel welcome.</li> <li>• Their concerns are dealt with.</li> <li>• The significant improvements in pupils' behaviour, the quality of teaching and the school environment.</li> <li>• Children are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• Staff are increasingly working as a team.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality and regularity of the homework.</li> <li>• Increased extra-curricular activities, especially sport.</li> <li>• Better use of the personal organiser to support home school communication.</li> </ul>

Inspection findings support parents' views. There are overall high levels of satisfaction with what is provided, however homework is not always set regularly, or with sufficient frequency for older pupils. Extra-curricular provision for sport is limited. Good habits for the effective use of pupil planners have not yet been well established. The large majority of pupils enjoy coming to school, they work hard and behaviour has improved considerably. The school is welcoming to parents and deals well and consistently with the concerns they raise. The whole school community has worked hard to achieve the significant improvements made to the environment in which pupils work. Teaching has improved considerably since the time of the last inspection and is good overall. Senior managers of the school have worked hard to ensure the whole school is applying procedures to all aspects of its work and this has resulted in a greater degree of teamwork.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

- 1 Assessment of the children as they enter school in Year 4 indicates that pupils' verbal and non verbal attainment is below the average.
- 2 In the 1999 National Curriculum assessments, at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils attained standards which were below the national average in English. In comparison with similar schools the pupils attainment was broadly in line with the national average in English. Standards in mathematics were well below the national average and below those schools with a similar intake. Standards in science were in line with the national average and when compared to similar schools were above the national average. The comparison with schools of similar intake is based on the proportion of pupils eligible for free schools meals.
- 3 The percentage of pupils who attained level 5 (above average) was below the national average in English, was well below in mathematics and close to the national average in science. When compared with similar schools, those attaining the higher Level 5 were in line with the national average in English, well below in mathematics and well above in science. Overall, teacher assessments were very close to the test results, indicating a good understanding by the teachers of pupil achievement. However in science, the actual test results were significantly improved upon teacher assessment. There was no significant difference between the performance of the boys and girls.
- 4 Over the four year period prior to 1999, standards were lower than the national average, but have been improving in English, mathematics and science. The 1999 assessment reinforces this trend. The school made very significant improvements in English and science and continued to improve in mathematics. The school has set challenging targets for the year 2000 for English, mathematics and science. Evidence provided by the school and confirmed by inspection, suggests that these targets will be achieved and that pupils in Year 6 will continue to raise the standards of attainment.
- 5 Standards in English and mathematics should rise again due to the development of target setting and the successful implementation of national projects for literacy and numeracy. Since the last inspection the school has made very significant improvements in raising standards in English and mathematics.
- 6 By age 12, when pupils move on to secondary school, inspection evidence suggests that pupils are achieving standards in English and mathematics that are below those expected for their age and in science, pupils are achieving standards that are close to those expected nationally. Whilst there are no statutory assessments for pupils aged 12, scrutiny of pupils' work, observations made in class and analysis of pupil records confirm this view.
- 7 Overall, attainment in English is below average at the end of Key Stage 2 though pupils are making good progress in all aspects of English. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils are developing their speaking and listening skills. They generally listen well to the teacher and to each other. They ask pertinent questions in class

discussions, though many do not have the extensive vocabulary required to sustain a long explanation. Standards in reading are broadly in line with national expectations.

- 8 The pupils read from a wide range of fiction and poetry books. Most pupils read their books reasonably well, and can use phonic and other clues to help decode unknown words. Most pupils can talk about their preferences in books and authors and enjoy reading both at home and at school. Pupils are able to use a variety of reference books and can retrieve information using contents, index and glossary pages. Higher order skills of skimming and scanning are not well developed. Standards in writing are below national expectations. Pupils write in a range of styles in response to different starting points. Some are able to re-draft their work, but a significant number are not yet able to do this independently of the teacher. Pupils are beginning to structure their writing well, but many take too long to produce a significant piece of writing. Pupils' spelling is improving and most can write in a joined and legible hand.
- 9 Whilst standards in mathematics are improving, by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils attain standards in mathematics which are below average. Pupils are developing their skills to calculate mentally. The impact of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive effect upon pupils' mental agility. The pupils are developing a sound mathematical vocabulary, many using the correct terminology to describe processes. Most have a sound understanding of the four rules of number that they are beginning to apply to solve real life problems, including money, shape and space and averages. In shape, space, measures and data handling the pupils attain average standards. They use a variety of methods, including information technology, to record data. The pupils apply their numeracy skills well in other subjects. For example, in history they use timelines to aid calculation of periods of time. They also have a good understanding of sequencing events. In science they record data in graphs and charts.
- 10 Standards in science are in line with the national average by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of fair tests and they know how plants and other living things grow. They have an appropriate knowledge of materials and their properties and a basic understanding of physical processes, including electricity and sound.
- 11 Pupils attain satisfactory standards in information technology in both key stages. Pupils are competent in all aspects of the subject. They use data well and present it in a variety of forms. The standards in religious education are as expected in the local agreed syllabus. Pupils show sensitivity and awareness for the beliefs and customs of others. They have a broad understanding of religious festivals and know how important religion is in some people's lives.
- 12 At 12 years of age, attainment in English and mathematics is below average. In science attainment is in line with the expected levels. Pupils are developing their speaking and listening skills, but are given too few opportunities to make formal presentations. Pupils make satisfactory progress in reading and standards are as expected. Most pupils read accurately and recall characters and plots accurately and make comparisons between authors. Pupils write for a range of purposes. Standards in writing, whilst improving, are still below those expected. Their writing is becoming increasingly interesting and is usually well constructed; most pupils punctuate their work satisfactorily. Handwriting standards are satisfactory.

- 13 In mathematics by age 12, pupils achieve standards below those expected. They have a good understanding of the rules of computation, use decimal notation and understand fractions. Their recall of facts and mental strategies, together with their ability to use and apply their mathematics, are developing well. Pupils are beginning to be able to apply their mathematical knowledge and understanding to be able to solve 'real life' problems.
- 14 In science standards are satisfactory. Pupils have a good knowledge of electricity; they understand that when working with materials some changes can be reversed whilst others can not. In conducting experiments they are becoming aware of the factors to be controlled for the test to be valid.
- 15 The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is hindered as a result of the setting of targets for improvement that are not sufficiently detailed to allow the teachers to determine the progress made. This results in some delay in setting new targets for improvement.
- 16 Pupils for whom English is an additional language may take approximately seven years to achieve full competency in English. The standards of attainment therefore for developing multi-lingual pupils may lag behind their peers and in particular they may not achieve the higher levels. Analysis of the standard attainment tests by ethnicity for 1999, shows that fewer Pakistani students achieved Level 4 + compared to mono-lingual students. Further analysis showed that a few Pakistani boys needed particular language support in mathematics. The school has focussed support to this identified need. The school has also set clear targets to increase the numbers of Minority Ethnic pupils achieving Level 4 + in mathematics and English for 2000. Minority Ethnic and pupils for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress throughout the school.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

- 17 The attitudes of pupils to their school and the learning opportunities provided for them are almost always good. Inspection findings confirm the view of most parents that pupils enjoy coming to school. They demonstrate this in their usually enthusiastic response to lessons and by applying themselves conscientiously. They are usually keen to do well, often focusing on the task in hand to the exclusion of all else for lengthy periods. This is particularly so where work set builds on previous learning and provides suitable challenge. Most pupils are confident in the learning environment provided and this results in them asking and answering questions freely. Respect for their teachers is high and prompts suitable responses to instructions given.
- 18 Pupils enjoy the extra-curricular activities provided and attendance at these is good. When required to work independently they usually show good ability, for example in history when asked to do personal research and with homework that requires investigative work. Overall, there are too few opportunities created for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning in lessons or through the setting of regular, suitable homework, and this limits this aspect of their personal development.
- 19 The behaviour of pupils both in and out of the classrooms is usually good. Most parents feel that standards have improved since the time of the last inspection, and evidence available during the week of inspection confirms this view. Expectations

for good behaviour are high, staff set very positive examples and pupils respond well to clear rules and routines. In lessons, pupils are usually polite and well-mannered, interruptions to learning are infrequent and usually occur only on the few occasions where classroom management routines lapse. This results in a positive learning environment where pupils are able to make suitable progress. Movement around the school is invariably conducted in an orderly and safe manner. The high standards of behaviour seen during assemblies held in the week of inspection made a valuable contribution to the effectiveness of these as a shared community experience. At break and lunch times pupils generally organise their own games and co-operate well together. The few squabbles and differences between them are dealt with well by staff on duty. The 'lunch time club' has been effective in significantly reducing those occasions where behaviour is unacceptable. No bullying was seen during the week of inspection. Pupils interviewed confirm the occasional instances that occur are dealt with well by staff. A few cases of racial name-calling have been reported. Whether these have occurred in school or within the community they are taken very seriously. In either case the school implements its disciplinary procedures consistently and promptly asks for parents' support in modifying behaviour. During the last school year there were 10 fixed term exclusions and one permanent; this is high in relation to similar schools.

- 20 There was an initial rise in the number of exclusions following the revision of behaviour and discipline procedures and their consistent implementation. It has fallen during the current school year as pupils are more aware of how they are expected to behave. Pupils are trustworthy and use the school's facilities and equipment with care.
- 21 Relationships and pupils' personal development are good overall. Pupils work well together in the classroom, sharing books and equipment effectively. Most are confident to read out loud or perform in front of their class without fear of ridicule. They listen politely and show interest in what others have to say. There is a growing ability to collaborate, for example when gathering information for group work. Boys and girls work well together in groups of different ethnicity and ability. There is a high level of trust and respect between the pupils and adults at the school ensuring they are confident there is someone with whom they can share their concerns. They show high levels of responsibility when asked to help with every day routines and a responsible attitude when asked their views and opinions, for example on school rules. Their willingness to help each other was noted in lessons during the week of inspection.
- 22 The pupils' attitudes to school are good. Pupils with special educational needs are made to feel valued and they are treated sensitively by staff and their peers. A high priority is placed on valuing each other, the school and the community as a whole. Children with behavioural problems are dealt with firmly but sensitively and this is a major factor in creating a good level of personal development. Children held doors open for each other and showed particular care in allowing extra space and time for those with mobility problems. A good use of school assemblies and personal, social and health education lessons strengthened personal development, and there were opportunities for children to reflect on those people who are less fortunate than themselves.
- 23 Although rising, the attendance rate for the last school year is unsatisfactory at 92.6%. This is below that expected nationally for similar schools. It reflects the high proportion of pupils who take extended holidays to their country of ethnic origin.

The progress of these, together with a small number of pupils who have persistently poor levels of attendance, is adversely affected. The school works effectively with the educational welfare officer and has been successful in raising attendance over the last year. It has made clear to parents the expectations for attendance and routines for reporting absence. At 0.9%, unauthorised absence is high. This is as a result of the school correctly marking as unauthorised, holidays of more than 10 days in the school year. Registration procedures are correct. Most pupils are punctual at the beginning of the school day, although there are a few who are persistently late. Lessons usually begin on time.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

- 24 Overall, throughout the school, the quality of teaching is good. Teaching is very good or better in one in ten lessons, good or better in five out of ten lessons and is nearly always at least satisfactory. Only one lesson in 15 was judged to be unsatisfactory. On one occasion the quality of teaching was judged to be excellent. Good teaching was observed throughout the school, with very little difference between the amount of good teaching observed in the different key stages. The unsatisfactory teaching was observed in both key stages. Standards of teaching have greatly improved since the last inspection. In 1996 more than one in four lessons was deemed to be unsatisfactory, with no good or better teaching observed, now over half of all lessons observed were good or better. This considerable improvement has been brought about by a change in staff, and careful monitoring by the headteacher and other senior staff, together with high priority given to developing teaching skills through focused in-service training.
- 25 Within Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is good. The teaching of information technology and religious education is satisfactory. The teaching of the foundation subjects, history, music and physical education is good. The teaching of design technology and art is satisfactory.
- 26 Within Key Stage 3, the quality of teaching in English and science is good, whilst that of mathematics is satisfactory. The teaching of information technology and the modern foreign language of French is good. The teaching of religious education, history, physical education and music is satisfactory. The teaching of art is unsatisfactory. No teaching of design and technology and geography was observed during the inspection.
- 27 The literacy hour is having a positive effect upon the quality of teaching English throughout the school. Teachers plan well to the recommended framework, and most display good phonological knowledge, enabling them to support the pupils well in developing their reading skills. The recent introduction of the numeracy strategy is also beginning to have a positive impact upon the quality of mathematics teaching within the school. Teachers are giving an appropriate proportion of time to direct teaching and are teaching a range of strategies to develop successfully pupils' calculation skills. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are generally well taught.
- 28 Throughout the school the teachers are conscientious and have very positive relationships with their pupils. In the most effective teaching, teachers' planning is detailed, identifying key learning intentions that are shared with the pupils. At the conclusion of lessons, teachers generally encourage pupils to reflect upon what they have learnt. This ensures that the pupils are aware of the teacher's



expectations and increases their involvement in the lesson. Many pupils are able, as a result of this sharing of intentions, to ascertain how much they have learnt at the end of the lesson. In a good Year 6 mathematics lesson on averages, the teacher, in her plenary, asked pupils not only to reflect upon what they had learnt but encouraged them to consider how this knowledge could be used in 'real life' situations. Making explicit to pupils the purpose of learning has a very positive impact upon how pupils learn. This very positive impact upon pupil progress increases the motivation and willingness to learn of many pupils. Teachers generally use questioning well to encourage pupils to think and use the knowledge they have acquired. In a very good Year 6 English poetry lesson, effective questioning by the teacher enabled pupils to interrogate confidently the quite difficult text of 'Westminster Bridge' by William Wordsworth. Supportive questioning ensured that some pupils were able to develop their awareness and understanding of vocabulary, style and comprehension. Praise is used constructively to support and motivate and teachers intervene at the right moments to sustain pupils' concentration and to develop their thinking. Teachers are sufficiently knowledgeable about most of the subjects they are teaching, especially English, mathematics, science, French, history and physical education.

- 29 Teachers' daily plans are thorough and include clear learning intentions. Teachers have put considerable time and energy into their planning for the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and their plans are effective and support their teaching in all aspects of the frameworks.
- 30 In most cases teachers manage their pupils well. High expectations of pupil behaviour and caring relationships generally result in high levels of co-operation and mutual respect, and as a result pupils feel confident to undertake more challenging work. However, on the few occasions where teaching was unsatisfactory, pupils' behaviour and interest in the lesson was unsatisfactory and as a result gains in pupils' learning were insufficient. Unclear and over long explanations, together with insufficient opportunities for the pupils to be fully engaged in their lessons, had a detrimental effect upon their interest, concentration and ultimately their behaviour. As a result the pupils made limited gains in their learning.
- 31 Pupils' work is generally well marked throughout the school; staff mark pupils' work and pay particular attention to matters of accuracy, presentation and correction. In the best practice, teachers talk to pupils about their work and use feedback to diagnose where errors and misconceptions arise. The most helpful marking indicates to the pupils what they need to do in order to improve their work. However, there are some inconsistencies in practice throughout the school. On occasions some marking is unhelpful and does not allow pupils to have an understanding of what they need to do next in order to improve. The school has recently reviewed its assessment practice and effective systems have been introduced. However, insufficient use is made of the results of assessment by teachers to modify their daily teaching to ensure that it is well matched to what the pupils need to learn next. However, in a good mathematics lesson, the teacher, during the plenary, was able to determine what the pupils had learnt and where they still had some uncertainties. This she noted and made sure that in the next lesson she addressed the area that the pupils were still unsure of.
- 32 Most teaching is in mixed ability classes, with the exception of mathematics where the classes are organised into groups determined by pupils' prior attainment. In the mixed ability classes, especially within the foundation subjects, on occasions

insufficient attention is given to the range of pupil attainment within the class. As a result, some pupils are not given work that is appropriately pitched to their prior attainment and some pupils make limited gains in their learning.

- 33 Teachers show a high level of care for pupils with special educational needs and there is a good level of inclusion within class. This leads to good behaviour and the creation of an orderly environment. However, individual teacher knowledge about how to plan and provide for children with special educational needs is not well developed. There were notable examples of staff trying out monitoring procedures, but these were done on an ad hoc basis and did not relate to the targets set on the individual education plan. Generally the teaching of pupils with special educational needs was not well targeted to their individual needs; this was particularly relevant in the upper school. Differentiation was often determined purely by outcome. This was more noticeable in those subjects that required an understanding of written English.
- 34 Pupils for whom English is an additional language were observed in a variety of teaching situations throughout the school. The best teaching and learning occurred when the teacher gave clear instructions, explanations and examples were used to illustrate key vocabulary and work was provided appropriate to the pupils' attainment and learning needs. Pupils make good progress when teachers provide writing frames, key visuals, key vocabulary lists and scaffolding to support their work.
- 35 The English as an additional language teacher assesses all pupils for whom English is an additional language. Through discussion with mainstream staff appropriate support is agreed. Most pupils are supported within the mainstream classroom, although some work is in the shared areas between classrooms. Most support is directed to pupils during literacy and numeracy lessons in years 4 and 5. The English as an additional language teacher plans work with the mainstream teacher to reflect and support the work of the rest of the class. The language assistant is well briefed to support pupils and particularly focuses on the understanding of key vocabulary. The best support observed during literacy and numeracy lessons occurred during group activity time when the support workers directly supported small groups of pupils. Progress and learning at these times was good. However, for much of the lesson, work was not sufficiently well focused. To enable pupils to make good progress more consideration must be given to the deployment and role of staff to ensure specialised support is used effectively. The particular skills of the bilingual language assistant could be used more effectively to raise the profile of Urdu in the school through the telling of bilingual stories or working alongside the teacher and explaining an activity or new concept in English and Urdu. Pupils were rarely heard during the inspection using their first language. Planned opportunities for this would enhance the status of community languages, support pupils' development of their first language skills and directly support their learning in a second language.
- 36 The setting of homework does not have a marked impact upon pupils' learning. The setting of homework by teachers is inconsistently applied throughout the school. In Key Stage 3 pupils do not receive sufficient homework with any regularity, whilst in Key Stage 2 the homework is again irregular and does not sufficiently enhance the work the pupils do in school. All pupils have a personal organiser that supports the pupils in managing their own learning and aids communication between home and school. However, the use of the personal organiser is not consistent across the

school and therefore its usefulness is diminished.

- 37 Good teaching is a significant contributory factor that enhances the progress of pupils within Key Stage 2, and has helped raised the standards that the pupils are achieving in English, mathematics and science. Most teachers pay appropriate attention to the particular needs of pupils with special educational needs, including the higher attainers. The pupils make satisfactory progress in English. Progress in reading, writing, in speaking and listening is satisfactory. In mathematics, during the oral and mental starter, effective questioning enables the pupils to make good progress in using and applying mathematics and in number. However, teachers do not give pupils sufficient opportunities to describe their thinking and, in so doing, some pupils do not fully understand the concept before moving on to other areas. In science, most pupils make satisfactory progress. They make good gains in their knowledge and use of scientific language and life processes as a result of high teacher expectations.
- 38 Effective teaching enables pupils to make at least satisfactory progress in religious education and information technology in both Key Stages 2 and 3. In both key stages, pupils generally make satisfactory progress in the foundation subjects except for the older pupils in Key Stage 3 who make unsatisfactory progress in art.

#### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

- 39 The curriculum is broad and relevant to the needs of pupils, and the school complies with the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. It is underpinned by good quality provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. The school has made significant progress, since the time of the last inspection, in the preparation and implementation of a curriculum framework which guides teachers' planning and promotes the raising of standards. A further phase of curriculum review is now being undertaken in the light of changes to the National Curriculum. At present, aspects of some subjects, notably speaking, listening, drama, design and technology, monitoring and modelling within information technology, composition within music and dance within physical education, are under-represented.
- 40 The amount of teaching time each week is satisfactory for Key Stage 2 and just under the recommended minimum for Key Stage 3 in Year 7. The teaching time allocated for religious education falls short of that recommended in the Agreed Syllabus.
- 41 The school has implemented effective strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills. There is appropriate development of these skills within other subjects; for example, the interpretation of tables of statistical data within science and research skills in history.
- 42 There are good quality arrangements for personal and social education. The planning for the teaching of health and sex education, including drugs misuse, is also closely linked to the science curriculum. Within each class, there are sufficient timetabled opportunities provided for the discussion of personal and social issues arising from, or associated with, these aspects. Both pupils and teachers value this special time, which has a positive effect upon relationships and fosters a sense of community within the school.

- 43 The curriculum arranged for pupils with special needs broadly meets the requirements of the Code of Practice, but there are shortcomings in the quality of provision for pupils. The process of setting specific targets and monitoring and reviewing progress against these targets lacks rigour. Many of the targets are not sufficiently specific and lack measurable outcomes against which pupils' progress may be measured. Records of pupils' improvement do not show clearly the progress towards specific targets. Reviews are conducted infrequently. Consequently, the support which is provided is not sufficiently well related to the targets set out in pupils' individual education plans.
- 44 All pupils have equal access to, and equality of opportunity within, the curriculum. The Ethnic Minority Achievement Support Service for Milton Keynes provide support for English as an additional language pupils, based on the number of identified pupils in the early stages of English acquisition. Currently this is one teacher for 2 days and an Urdu/Punjabi speaking multilingual language assistant for half a day. Through consultation the school deploys support to its identified priority pupils.
- 45 There are very good links with The Radcliffe School, particularly in respect of science, and with other local schools. These arrangements, both formal and informal, provide very effective support for curriculum continuity and staff development.
- 46 Teachers plan their work in year group meetings. This helps to ensure that there is consistency between classes in the work covered. Teachers plan lessons from the school's schemes of work, on a weekly basis. The plans indicate what is to be taught and the key objectives that guide these activities. These are usually translated effectively into plans for pupils working at different levels of attainment in specific lessons. As a result, most lessons contain an appropriate match of work to pupils' needs. This is, however, not always consistently applied across the school, particularly in the classes with more than one year group. Where there is less consistency, teachers' expectations of the standards of work set for pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and the most able pupils, are less well focused and learning is sometimes less effective.
- 47 Visitors to the school and visits to places of interest provide an appropriate supplement to classroom learning. There are appropriate opportunities for residential visits for pupils in Years 5 and 7. There is an adequate number of extra-curricular activities throughout the year, although the range of sporting activities is relatively narrow. This provision includes chess, books (including a Harry Potter club), choir and band activities. Cross country running, in which pupils from the school achieved success this year, karate and athletics are also offered. Specialist support and the involvement of some parents helps to ensure the success of these activities, which are generally well attended by both boys and girls.
- 48 Since the previous inspection, curriculum planning has improved significantly. There is now greater consistency of coverage within curriculum subjects, although a few elements still remain under-represented. National Curriculum levels of attainment and tighter learning objectives underpin teachers' planning, and the medium-term plans have been further improved. The numeracy curriculum has improved significantly, and the school has responded well to the implementation of the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. Curriculum planning is now informed more consistently by pupils' prior attainment as a result of improvements in

summative assessment and the analysis of pupils' performance.

- 49 The provision for pupils' spiritual development is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. It is promoted particularly well through the daily assemblies, when the school meet together as a whole, or in smaller groups. Many of the assemblies are of high quality. The school fully meets its legal requirements for an act of collective daily worship, providing pupils with very good opportunities for sustained moments of reflection or for personal prayer. Assemblies also include stories and opportunities to listen to music, both of which encourage pupils to reflect upon meaning and mood. Spiritual development is also promoted effectively in some art lessons where pupils are given opportunities to reflect upon the effects created by artists, including their own work.
- 50 Moral development is strongly promoted and provision is very good. Pupils' behaviour and relationships are very good, both in school and in the playground. Good moral values are communicated through assemblies. The school's behaviour policy and classroom rules strongly emphasise moral issues, and their effective implementation helps pupils to gain a good understanding of the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The School Council promotes a strong moral code that further reinforces class rules. In science lessons, pupils have a good appreciation of fairness. Teachers and other adults at the school act as good role models and promote a consistent set of moral values, complemented by positive management of behaviour.
- 51 The provision for pupils' social development is also very good. The school provides a welcoming environment where pupils are valued and respected. In turn, pupils welcome visitors, and both tolerate and respect the opinions and values of others. The school's personal, social and health education programme successfully underpins pupils' social development.
- 52 The quality of relationships in lessons and around the school at break and lunchtimes reflects pupils' clear awareness of what constitutes acceptable social behaviour, and self-discipline is successfully encouraged. Pupils show a keen interest in events in their own locality. There are many opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively during the school day. Pupils enjoy working with a partner and in a small group. Many examples of pupils helping each other were observed during the inspection, as for example when working in the computer suite. There are some suitable opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning within lessons, for example when they conduct scientific investigations. Pupils help with the organisation of assemblies and are entrusted with some other responsible duties during the school day.
- 53 The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The promotion of cultural awareness is given high status within the school. Pupils have good links with the wider community in Wolverton and Milton Keynes. The school's prospectus is available in the minority languages that are most commonly spoken in the local area. The wide diversity of cultures represented by the pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is valued, respected and celebrated. This is achieved through assemblies, and is further promoted through visitors to the school and personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils have opportunities to appreciate art from different cultures, and displays of books and artefacts further enhance their awareness of other cultures. Significant events of the major world religions represented within the school, such as Eid, Divali, Ramadan, Christmas and Easter

are given due recognition within the pupils' work. The school took part in a Ghana on-line project, and is establishing links with the local World Development Centre.

- 54 The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and makes a positive contribution to the educational standards achieved. The provision for social and moral development is a strength of the school. This represents a significant improvement over the position identified in the previous inspection report, and the school successfully meets its stated aims in this respect.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

- 55 The school makes good provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Child protection procedures are fully in place. The school's policy to underpin these is effective, and a new paragraph has recently been redrafted to meet the latest local guidance. It awaits adoption by the governing body. Staff are vigilant and aware of their responsibilities. The school works well with pupils to raise awareness of personal safety issues. There is a suitable health and safety policy that has been recently updated, and governors are fully involved in discussing and prioritising issues identified for action. A report following a recent buildings survey by the local authority has recently reported on work required, for example in-filling the swimming pool and repairing guttering, and this is scheduled to be discussed at the next meeting of the governing body. Within teaching areas, staff are aware of the possible risks and ensure pupils are alert to the need for care. Statutory requirements for the regular testing of fire fighting equipment, physical education apparatus and portable electrical appliances are fully met. Emergency evacuation procedures are practised regularly. Arrangements to deal with first aid emergencies are sound, however, the recording of these is not always adequate to ensure effective monitoring. There are appropriate arrangements for dealing with prescribed medicines. Within an environment of high levels of care, and good awareness of health and safety issues, the requirement for regular risk assessments has been overlooked. There are suitable levels of supervision for pupils at break and lunchtimes, ensuring any problems that occur on the playground are dealt with effectively.

- 56 The personal support and guidance offered to pupils is very good. Effective induction arrangements ensure pupils settle quickly and happily into Year 4. Pupils from all ethnic backgrounds like and respect the adults they meet at school, making them confident to share any problems or concerns they have. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and attendance are clear and consistently applied throughout the school. The quality of behaviour management in lessons has improved and is more consistent since the time of the last inspection, and this has had a positive impact on standards achieved. Pupils are involved in agreeing how they should behave in their classrooms, raising their levels of responsibility for this aspect of school life. They are motivated well by the system of awards that acknowledges all aspects of achievement at school. Where sanctions are necessary the school contacts parents at an early stage and seeks to work with them to achieve suitable changes in behaviour. The lunch time club has made a significant contribution to pupils' awareness of the impact of their behaviour on others and to the improvements in behaviour seen. An anti bullying culture is promoted well through the personal, health and social education programme and well promoted procedures are set out effectively in the schools' anti bullying booklet. This, together with extensive work done in partnership with community police and

local authority support staff to raise racial awareness has done much to contribute to the usually good relationships evident in the school. There are suitable procedures for dealing with exclusions. This is, rightly, used only as a last resort when other means of modifying behaviour have not succeeded. Incidents of poor behaviour are monitored effectively in relation to the ethnic background of pupils.

- 57 Procedures for recording attendance meet statutory requirements. Parents are encouraged to send their children to school regularly and written reasons for absence are always required. Levels of attendance for individual pupils are monitored regularly and parents informed where they fall below nationally expected rates. The support of the educational welfare officer is used effectively where needed. A bilingual language assistant works well with parents for whom English is not a first language to help their understanding of the impact of extended holidays on pupils' progress and attainment. Arrangements for the personal, health and social development of pupils are strong. The programme offered is broad and suitably addresses relationships, including racial issues, social development, citizenship and health matters, amongst others. It is effectively taught during time-tabled periods, is a focus for assemblies and circle times and re-inforced suitably by staff throughout the school day. This results in a progressive growth in social skills, awareness of moral issues and improvements in personal effectiveness as pupils move through the school. Arrangements to support pupils and maintain their progression at the time of transfer to upper school are well planned.
- 58 Procedures for assessing and monitoring academic performance and personal development have been thoroughly addressed through a well thought out policy since the time of the last inspection when this was a key issue for action. Satisfactory standards have been achieved overall. They now meet statutory requirements. There are good procedures in place and the assessment co-ordinator appointed is a member of the senior management team, giving this position the status needed to make the significant progress required. Since the time of the last inspection Cognitive Abilities testing has been introduced, together with formative and summative recording. Records include all test results. There is an effective analysis of both these and practice tests undertaken. This has enabled the school successfully to address issues raised for curriculum planning and standards in core subject are rising as a result of this.
- 59 The parents of children with special educational needs are kept informed of their progress by being invited to review meetings. All statutory requirements are met regarding pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need. There is some evidence that parents are willing to help their children at home and this is noted on the individual education plans. Parents note that there is a big improvement in behaviour and this is supported by the fact that there is little evidence of disaffection during lessons or at break times.
- 60 The English as an additional language teacher keeps comprehensive information about all the pupils she teaches. Records are kept of language levels and of work undertaken with individual pupils. However, to improve the provision for English as an additional language pupils and raise pupil attainment, support work needs to be more shaply focused on the individual need of pupils. Measurable targets need to be set and regularly reviewed in collaboration with mainstream teachers.
- 61 Pupils have started the process of self-assessment, although an evaluative approach to this has not yet been sufficiently well development. Suitable portfolios

of moderated work in core subjects have been produced for the last school year, providing foundations upon which to plan future work, and these are used well. The short-term focus is not so well established. That there are weaknesses in the consistent use of procedures for day-to-day assessment by some staff is highlighted in the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures. This sometimes results in work set for individuals not offering suitable challenge to raise standards. Personal guidance in lessons and marking does not always sufficiently focus on helping pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work. There are clear targets set for lessons and these are shared effectively with pupils, resulting in them having a good understanding of their own learning. Where plenary sessions at the end of lessons are used effectively, they help teachers to assess how well pupils have learnt the targets set, enabling them to plan future work effectively. Targets set in individual education plans for pupils with special education needs are not always sufficiently well focused to provide an effective guide for the support needed. Procedures to assess, monitor and review the progress of pupils with English as an additional language lack sufficient rigour and clarity.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

- 62 There are very good levels of satisfaction amongst parents with what the school provides and achieves. This is particularly evident from the number of who took the trouble to visit and speak with members of the team during the inspection. Evidence confirms the views they express. They feel that their children like coming to school and that they are expected to work hard. Almost all feel welcome in school and that their concerns are dealt with effectively. On the few occasions the school is unable to resolve these, suitable guidance is sought from local support services. Significant improvements in behaviour have been noted since the school reviewed its behaviour and discipline procedures five terms ago. Parents feel there are clear procedures, consistently applied, and that pupils know what will happen if they misbehave. They commend the hard work of staff and their contributions to the great improvements made to the school building and grounds, which now provide a very stimulating and attractive learning environment. They feel that the quality of teaching has significantly improved, in particular that their children have a better understanding of learning objectives and that teamwork amongst teachers has improved across the school.
- 63 A high proportion of parents would like to see an improvement to the quality and regularity of homework set. Inspection evidence confirms that the amount and regularity; particularly for older pupils, is not sufficient to prepare them for the next stage of their education. In some cases it inappropriately involves finishing off work started in class, resulting in a considerable variation in time needed to complete and sometimes none at all. Where the quality of homework set is good and extends what has been learnt in lessons or involves personal investigation it is valued by parents. The school has a well-designed personal organiser for pupils. This is a fairly new innovation. Evidence during the inspection confirms parents' views that good habits have yet to be fully established for its use as a reference for homework set and as a two-way means of communication between school and home. Inspectors agree with parents that there are not sufficient extra-curricular activities, in particular sport and team games.
- 64 The effectiveness of the school's partnership with parents and carers through the information provided for them is good, and has improved since the time of the last inspection. The prospectus and governors' annual report offer a full range of



information and are well written with parents in mind. A newsletter keeps them up to date with school events and diary dates. Open evenings each term ensure parents are able to review regularly what their children have been learning.

- 65 Annual progress reports provide suitable information about how well pupils are doing in English, mathematics and science, and the targets set in these subjects help parents understand what their children must do to improve. In other subjects reporting is less evaluative, providing little information about what pupils know, understand and can do. Reporting on attitudes to learning and individual pupils' personal development is good. Arrangements for the subsequent parents' evening focus principally on parents viewing work and meeting their children's teacher for the following year. They are made aware they may make an appointment to discuss the report if they wish. Some parents would like formal arrangements for this to be made as routine because they are hesitant to request a meeting with staff who they feel are already very busy. Parents are kept fully informed about their children's end of key stage results, together with national comparisons, and this offers them a suitable bench mark for how well they are doing. Where needed to support communication with parents whose first language is not English, suitable translation and interpretation services are arranged. Parents receive good quality information about the school prior to their children enrolling in Year 4. Arrangements to ensure they are kept fully informed at the time of transfer to an upper school are well established. This enables them to make suitable decisions and offer effective support to their children at this time.
- 66 The involvement of parents with the school has a satisfactory impact on pupils' learning overall. Parents show suitable levels of interest in how well their children are doing at school through good levels of support for class assemblies and attendance at other events, such as parents' evenings. There are effective arrangements to inform parents about what their children are learning through information events about, for example literacy, numeracy and end of key stage testing. Consultation about the home school agreement has successfully resulted in a document that promotes a partnership to support learning. The majority of parents have signed this. Changes to school meal arrangements are being implemented from next term as a result of the school seeking and listening to parents' views. Parents generally feel welcome in the school and are encouraged to help in classrooms, however, few do so at present. There is an effective parent and teacher association that supports the work of the school well through social and fund raising events. Parents of ethnic minority pupils usually attend events involving their children, but are presently under-represented on the governing body and the parent and teacher association committee.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

- 67 The head teacher and governors provide the school with very effective leadership. Together, they have a very clear understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas that they need to improve in order to improve the quality of education that the school provides, and to raise standards further.
- 68 The headteacher displays good leadership. She has been in post two years and during this time has established good working relationships within the staff team who show a commitment to whole school improvement. She has already made several appointments, taking great care in the selection process to appoint staff in tune with the ethos of the school, and who share with her a commitment to the

children and a desire for high standards. She leads by example, spending a significant amount of time in the classroom, both teaching and in supporting her colleagues by monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.

- 69 The aims of the school are well reflected in all its work. The governing body reviewed the aims following the last inspection and the aims now express a commitment to high standards. The school places great emphasis on equal opportunities and on the individual succeeding and achieving his/her potential. This is seen to be especially important with the diverse school population. The school successfully strives to meet the needs of all its pupils. The commitment to high standards has resulted in every child within the school being given individual targets for improvement in English and mathematics
- 70 The school development plan is very good and plays a very important part in school development. It underpins all school initiatives for the next three years. The plan is based upon an evaluation of previous plans and an analysis of the standards that the pupils achieved. It is a considerable document, but is well understood by staff and governors who are involved in its conception and also in its review. The plan displays both the head teacher's and governors' knowledge of the needs of the school. The many initiatives are prioritised and have at their root the intention to raise the quality of education and the standards that the pupils achieve. Each initiative identifies the persons responsible for delivering the plan, the success criteria by which the plan is evaluated, is costed and is set within very clear timelines.
- 71 The last inspection in 1996 highlighted the need for the governors to improve the quality and effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school. This they have successfully done. The appointment two years ago of a new headteacher, followed shortly after by the appointment of a new deputy headteacher, has resulted in a highly effective leadership and management team that has been responsible for very significant improvements in many aspects of school life. There has been a very significant improvement in the quality of teaching. At the time of the last inspection 74% of teaching was judged to be satisfactory with no lessons being observed to be good or better. During the recent inspection 95% of all teaching was judged to be satisfactory with half of all teaching judged to be good or better. This improvement in teaching has largely been responsible for the significant raising of standards in the end of key stage tests for English, science and mathematics. The leadership and management team have been responsible for raising the morale of both the staff and pupils, with all being able, once again, to show pride in their school. Under the leadership of the headteacher, the curriculum has been re-organised into one that is broad and meets the spiritual, moral and cultural needs of all pupils. Following the appointment of the new headteacher, the key issues identified within the last report have been fully addressed, with significant improvements being achieved on all key issues.
- 72 The monitoring and evaluation of the standards achieved by pupils, and of the quality of teaching has been undertaken by the English and mathematics co-ordinators, but the role is less well developed in other areas of the curriculum. Many areas of the curriculum do not yet have a permanent curriculum co-ordinator. This is largely due to the significant turn round in staff over the last two years and in the large number of newly qualified teachers in the school at present. With so many teachers new to the school, the role of the curriculum co-ordinators is not yet fully developed. This fact has been recognised within the school development plan and

the headteacher has plans to develop their role in order raise standards and improve the quality of education that the school provides. In the interim, the headteacher and deputy headteacher are undertaking a significant monitoring and evaluation role themselves, and have a very good knowledge of the strengths and areas for development within the school.

- 73 The special educational needs budget is managed effectively and staff are deployed to meet the broader needs of pupils identified as having special educational needs. However, pupils' individual education plans are not sufficiently detailed to support teachers in providing activities that are closely matched to their individual needs. As a result, insufficient attention is given to the specific needs of these children and to the importance of keeping good accurate records of pupils' progress. As a result, support services are not always deployed effectively to assist staff in helping to deliver these plans. There is insufficient monitoring of the individual education plans by the special educational needs co-ordinator.
- 74 The headteacher has established a positive ethos in the school, which welcomes values and celebrates the diversity of the pupils and the community. A co-ordinator for multi-cultural education has been appointed and is reviewing the curriculum and resources for cultural diversity. An outside consultant has undertaken a review of English as an additional language provision in the school. The review outcomes will inform school development. There are clearly identified budgets to support areas of development.
- 75 At the last inspection, the governing body were not fully involved with the work of the school. A key issue in the report noted the need for governors to increase their role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. Several governors have been appointed to the school since the last inspection, and the board have reviewed the workings and established new committee structures that ensure that they play a full part in improving the school. They are fully involved in determining and monitoring the school development plan, they regularly analyse test results, are aware of the standards that the school achieves and with the headteacher have set challenging targets for improvement. The governors both challenge and support the school. Governors make regular visits to school and report back to governor meetings and, by discussions with the headteacher and staff, the governors are very aware of the improvements that the school has made but also of what the school needs to do to improve further.
- 76 The effectiveness of the school's induction arrangements are borne out by the way in which the many new teachers have settled quickly into the life of the school and are making their contribution. Excellent induction arrangements for newly qualified teachers are in place and the teachers are receiving very effective and appropriate support and guidance which has resulted in good quality teaching. All staff and learning assistants undertake effective professional development. Training is determined following appraisal or professional interviews. The headteacher carries out appraisal interviews and in discussions with staff sets targets for improvement. The governing body has set annual targets for both the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- 77 The school's planning cycle links both financial and development planning. The governing body and headteacher carefully determine the budget, taking due consideration of the desired developments and improvements. The governors monitor any specific grants that the school might be given, e.g. for information

technology or for providing support for pupils with educational special needs. The governors apply the principles of best value to all their spending decisions. The governors and headteacher take a keen interest and pride in the way the school is perceived locally. It makes good use of the analysis of assessment results, including comparisons with other schools, to target its spending to bring about improvements in standards. The governing body takes steps to ensure value for money. The school finances and administration are well managed. The recent local authority audit reflected this. Minor recommendations have been carried out.

- 78 For a number of reasons there has been a significant number of staff changes in recent years. New staff have quickly settled in and are playing a full part in the life of the school. At the time of the inspection there were sufficient staff to ensure that the pupils received their entitlement to the national curriculum programmes of study. The learning support assistants support the teachers effectively and play a full part in all aspects of school life. The lunchtime supervisors support the pupils well at lunchtime and share responsibility for the good behaviour of children both within the school and outside.
- 79 The school building and grounds provide a suitable, safe and secure environment for all pupils. The classrooms, many of which are enhanced with quality displays of work, which support pupils' learning, are of an appropriate size. The extensive accommodation is now in very good decorative order and provides ample opportunities for the broad curriculum. There is a large library, a computer room, television and drama room and spare teaching areas that are well used to support pupils' learning. The outside accommodation is good. The attractive grounds are well looked after and used. Wild areas, as well as a large field and playground space, provide opportunities for all the pupils to enjoy. The school has exciting and ambitious plans to enhance the quality of the outdoor environment in order to support pupils' learning and to provide them with stimulating play.
- 80 Resources to support learning are generally adequate. The library has a number of books that are old and are in need of replacing. Some aspects of the curriculum are not well represented within the library, for example history and geography. The school has recently increased the numbers of reading books and equipment for mathematics and has significantly increased the number of computers that are available for the children, though some are old and coming to the end of their usefulness. Resources to support the teaching of design and technology, physical education and science are insufficient.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

81 To improve further the quality of education and the standards of achievement the headteacher' and governors should:

**(1) Continue to improve the standards attained by pupils in English by:**

- (i) providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length;
- (ii) raising standards of spelling and pupils' vocabulary skills to improve their fluency in writing;
- (iii) and providing more effective feedback from marking and commentary in lessons which give pupils clear guidance on ways to improve their writing.  
*(Paragraph reference: 84 - 91)*

**(2) Continue to improve the standards attained by pupils in mathematics by:**

- (i) ensuring that teachers are secure in their ability to determine what pupils, know, understand and can do;
- (ii) and increasing the opportunities for pupils to discuss and consolidate their mathematical understanding.  
*(Paragraph reference: 94 - 102)*

**(3) Improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs by:**

- (i) ensuring that the pupils' individual education plans clearly identify, in sufficient detail, specific targets for learning and measurable criteria by which progress can be judged;
- (ii) monitoring, evaluating and reviewing these targets, at least termly, by all those involved in the pupils' learning;
- (iii) and improving pupil records to provide clear evidence of pupil progress towards their specific targets.  
*(Paragraph reference: 15, 33, 43, 59, 73)*

**(4) Continue to raise levels of attendance.**  
*(Paragraph reference: 23)*

**(5) Improving the quality, and increase the amount and frequency, of homework that teachers set their pupils.**  
*(Paragraph reference: 36, 63, 91, 115)*

## **OTHER ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL**

- 82 To undertake the statutory risk assessment procedures.  
*(Paragraph reference: 55)*
  
- 83 To increase the time given to the teaching of religious education to bring it in to line with the national requirements.  
*(Paragraph reference: 181)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	91
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	51

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	9	42	41	7	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y4 – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	280
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	59

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y4 – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		96

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	64

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	26
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	40	42	82

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	17	28
	Girls	27	25	31
	Total	47	42	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (46)	52 (49)	73 (54)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	19	23
	Girls	26	25	24
	Total	44	44	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	54 (46)	54 (46)	58 (46)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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



### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	53
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	1
White	213
Any other minority ethnic group	1

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	8	1
Other minority ethnic groups	2	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y4 Y7**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.7
Average class size	28

#### **Education support staff: Y4 Y7**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	123

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

Number of pupils per FTE adult	0
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1998
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	£
Total income	492620
Total expenditure	479216
Expenditure per pupil	1546
Balance brought forward from previous year	5625
Balance carried forward to next year	19029

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate – reply percentages

Number of questionnaires sent out	310
Number of questionnaires returned	121

**% return rate 39.0**

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	45	47	3	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	36	57	5	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	24	64	10	2	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	40	25	13	2
The teaching is good.	36	55	2	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	46	12	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	45	2	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	45	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	34	51	8	4	2
The school is well led and managed.	41	43	8	3	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	47	8	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	47	17	2	7

### Other issues raised by parents

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

### **ENGLISH**

- 84 Attainment of pupils in English at the end of Key Stage 2 is below that expected nationally, particularly in writing. Standards for those pupils aged 12, in Key Stage 3, are also below that expected. However, standards have improved over the last few years and attainment is in line with that of similar schools.
- 85 Pupils are making good progress in all aspects of English and are benefiting from the effective implementation of the national literacy strategy framework.
- 86 Pupils enter school with a fairly low level of vocabulary acquisition. This limits their speaking skills and adversely affects the quality and fluency of writing. Pupils generally listen well to the teachers and to each other. They ask pertinent and often quite perceptive questions in class discussions. They offer opinions on the texts studied and are able to give reasons for their views. Many pupils do not have a sufficient range of vocabulary to sustain a long explanation or answer. Through their work in literacy lessons, pupils are developing knowledge of appropriate technical vocabulary to describe and differentiate between parts of speech and also between different genres of text. Pupils have good opportunities to use their speaking and listening skills in lessons dealing with personal and social development. Most pupils make significant progress in their speaking skills from year to year, although there are few planned occasions for older pupils to make presentations in more formal situations. Insufficient use is made of drama activities.
- 87 Pupils' standards in reading are broadly in line with national expectations. At eleven years of age, pupils read a wide range of fiction and poetry books, which they can access independently from the school library in their weekly timetabled session. A few pupils choose non-fiction books, but are less secure in accessing this type of book as teachers often choose the non-fiction books required in class. However, pupils can retrieve information from non-fiction books well using the contents, index and glossary pages. Higher attaining pupils read fluently and with expression. They can talk about their preferences in books and authors and enjoy reading at home and at school. These pupils can retell the main points of a story with appropriate understanding of plot and characters. Higher order skills of skimming and scanning are not well developed. Most pupils read their chosen books reasonably well and can use phonic and other clues to help decode unknown words. Pupils often read well together in class when sharing a text in the literacy lesson. By the time the pupils are 12, they are developing satisfactory knowledge of the work and style of famous authors and poets and are able to make comparisons with other writers from the past and present times.
- 88 Pupils are improving the quality of their writing, but few pupils write with sufficient confidence to produce enough extended writing. By the age of eleven, pupils are beginning to structure their writing well, to choose interesting vocabulary and to write in a range of styles in response to different starting points. Some pupils are developing appropriate skills in re-drafting to improve their work, but a significant proportion are not yet able to do this well independently. Many show interest and enjoyment in writing. Within Key Stage 3, some good work was observed with the older pupils writing in the style of Dickens, using dialect and appropriate vocabulary

for Victorian times. However, the rate of writing was too slow to enable many of the pupils to achieve appropriately in the time allocated in the lesson.

- 89 By the end of the Key Stage 2, pupils understand the importance of descriptive words and phrases in imaginative story writing. Many can use adjectives and some can identify similes and metaphors in their work. The youngest pupils showed good understanding of the conventions of a playscript when they re-wrote a narrative as a play. Pupils' presentation is usually satisfactory and has improved over time. Most can write in a joined, legible hand. There are too many inaccuracies in spelling. Some are as a result of carelessness, but many are due to a lack of knowledge. Pupils can often make a good attempt at spelling phonetically when encouraged and supported, but few have the confidence or spend the time to word build independently. Pupils use dictionaries and thesaurus to support their spelling and word choices, but a number of them find difficulty in using alphabetical order accurately to find words quickly. Within Key Stage 3, pupils are using a wider range of punctuation in their writing than was apparent in their earlier work. They can identify appropriate punctuation, but do not yet apply this knowledge sufficiently consistently in their own work.
- 90 Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are not sufficiently specific in their targets or success criteria to enable pupils to make as much progress as they should. This also applies to programmes for pupils for whom English is a second language.
- 91 Nearly all the teaching is satisfactory or better and over half of English lessons are good. Teachers have implemented the literacy strategy well and plan effectively to meet the requirements of the framework. Most teachers identify clear learning objectives for each lesson which are shared well with pupils. The most effective teachers relate these objectives to previous lessons and learning outcomes, which make them more meaningful to pupils. The whole class shared text session at the beginning of lessons is often used well to develop pupils' reading skills, extend vocabulary and introduce a variety of text styles and genres. Teachers usually have positive relationships with pupils in their class. They question well to encourage and develop pupils' contributions to discussions. The best teachers ensure that independent and group work is well matched to the needs of pupils of different attainment levels. This is least effective in the classes with mixed year groups, where teachers' expectations for the older average and higher attaining pupils are often not clearly identified in their planning. Most teachers in the upper part of the school provide challenge for pupils in the choice of texts, such as the comparison of a Wordsworth and a Shakespeare sonnet. However, the quality of the teacher's questioning is a critical factor in determining how much the pupils benefit from the challenge. Effective teachers use the plenary well to reinforce a particular point of learning which is exemplified by pupils' work, rather than making the session too general. Less effective teaching is often characterised by gaps in subject knowledge, particularly teachers' understanding of grammar. This results in a lack of clear teaching points and misunderstandings by pupils. Teachers who are less secure in what they are teaching often become more hesitant in managing behaviour in class, which affects the pace of learning. The extra booster teaching to raise the attainment of pupils working towards the level expected at the end of Key Stage 2 is well focused and is contributing to improvements in standards. Teachers' marking and feedback in class often gives praise and encouragement, but lacks specific detail on what pupils need to do to improve their writing. Similarly, on-going reading records are not sufficiently detailed to track pupils' progress in

reading and identify specific areas for improvement, limiting the support provided for less confident readers. There is a lack of consistency in teachers' use of homework. Homework is often used to enable some pupils to finish off work started in class, but specific homework tasks, particularly for the older pupils, are not set frequently enough by teachers.

- 92 The school has tried to extend learning through developing effective cross-curricular links, such as the recent units of work on Ghana. Links with other local schools are leading to curricular developments, such as a programme for improving speaking and listening skills but this has not yet been implemented. Those pupils who have inadequate writing skills often are constrained in their work in other subjects across the curriculum.
- 93 Standards in English have increased significantly since the last inspection, based on relevant statutory assessment data. Results of end of Key Stage 2 statutory assessment have been getting better each year. The co-ordinator, together with other members of the senior management team, undertakes detailed analysis of standards in English and has identified groups of pupils needing extra support. This analysis has informed many of the effective programmes of action that have been established. Pupils' library skills have improved. Standards of handwriting and the presentation of work are better. The quantity and range of reading resources has been extended as a result of the expectations of the national literacy strategy, but non-fiction stock in the library requires further improvement.

## **MATHEMATICS**

- 94 Results in the 1999 National Curriculum Key Stage 2 tests in mathematics indicate that pupils were attaining well below the national average at aged eleven and below the average of similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 5 was well below the national average and below that of similar schools. However, analysis of the trends of the Key Stage 2 tests, for the last four years, shows that standards in mathematics have risen year on year. The school is acutely aware of the need to continue to raise standards in mathematics in both key stages, has set challenging targets for future improvement and is expecting improvements in the 2000 national tests. The pupils, including those with special needs, make satisfactory progress through Key Stage 2. Standards have improved since the last inspection in both key stages where the inspection found standards to be unsatisfactory. The school has responded well to the last report and has raised standards as recommended.
- 95 Standards in mathematics for those pupils in Key Stage 3, aged twelve, are still below national expectations. However, standards are steadily improving.
- 96 By the age of 11, pupils are working with increasing confidence with mental calculation. They are supported in this by the importance given to learning addition, subtraction and multiplication facts. They are able to apply a range of strategies to perform these calculations accurately. Pupils try different approaches when solving problems and are beginning to organise their working and check their results. Pupils' progress in this is hampered by the fact that they are given too few opportunities to talk about number patterns and relationships and explain their thinking. In number, pupils have an understanding of place value, understand the four rules of computation, can put numbers, including decimals, in order and can add and subtract numbers, including decimals, using pencil and paper. Most pupils are able to apply their knowledge of number to real life situations, including the use

of money and measures. They have a sound understanding of shape and can find the area of regular shapes using formulae and can apply this to find the area of irregular shapes. Many pupils have a knowledge of averages, including an understanding of the terms mean, median and range, and are beginning to be able to use this knowledge to solve problems involving real life situations.

- 97 Older pupils within Key Stage 3 are consolidating their knowledge of computation and can apply this to others areas of mathematics, including shape, space, area and averages. Their mental calculations are generally accurate and most can select the appropriate strategy to add three two-digit numbers accurately depending on the nature of the numbers. Many are able to increase the size of shapes accurately, by applying formulae, and can find the mean, median and range when working out averages. Few can give reasons for choosing the appropriate form of average when applying their knowledge to real life situations.
- 98 Pupils are generally very well behaved in their lessons, most work hard and can sustain concentration and effort throughout the lesson. They are willing, co-operative, and usually very enthusiastic; many displaying obvious delight when applying their knowledge. Pupils work well with each other and show positive attitudes towards the subject and consideration to each other. However whenever when the pace of the lesson is too slow or the teacher's expectations are too low a small minority can lose interest and their attention wanes.
- 99 Overall the teaching of mathematics within Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 is good. Teachers plan their lessons well, taking into account the demands of the numeracy strategy. Generally the teachers use a mix of questions and provide opportunities for all pupils to participate within the mental start to the lessons. Most lessons are conducted with pace. Teachers share with the pupils their learning intentions at the beginning of each session, but do not give sufficient consideration as to how successful the pupils have been in achieving their intentions. Too often teachers concentrate upon completing the activities they have planned, rather than on developing the pupils' mathematical understanding. Teachers need to consider extending their range of questions to include how and why and give pupils greater opportunities to discuss and share their thinking rather than just completing the task. Generally, teachers have good knowledge of the subject, which enables them to teach the pupils strategies for calculations and enables the teachers to ask challenging and appropriate questions to move the pupils forward. The teachers have high expectations of what they want the pupils to achieve and of their behaviour. This results in many pupils achieving the good standards seen in many lesson observations. The teaching of mathematics in similar ability sets allows teachers generally to match the work appropriately for the pupils, but teachers need to take more account of the range of abilities within the sets and provide a range of activities that closely match the pupils' prior attainment. In some lessons, teachers need to allow pupils greater opportunities to explain their reasoning and discuss their mathematics for by doing so the teachers will have a clearer understanding of what the pupils know, can do or understand. This will enable the teachers to have a better understanding of the concepts learnt before moving them on to the next stage in their learning. This would enable the pupils to make better progress.
- 100 In a very good lesson, where Year 5 pupils were being taught the formula to find the area of regular and irregular shapes, the teacher was very well planned and prepared, allowing her to share the learning intentions and her high expectations with the pupils. The teacher's very effective questioning successfully enabled pupils

to increase their understanding and extend their knowledge of area. Her high expectations, both of behaviour and standards, together with a very supportive manner, gave pupils confidence to successfully tackle the unknown. She used praise very well to motivate the pupils and together with her very good class control and management, ensured that nearly all pupils remained on task throughout the lesson.

- 101 The teacher successfully used the conclusion of the lesson to revisit the main points of the lesson and to determine what the pupils had learnt. The teacher was able to identify an area of the lesson that pupils were unsure of, and made note to return to that matter at the start of the next lesson. This very good practice ensured that pupils were certain in their understanding of concepts before moving on the next stage of their learning. Raising standards in mathematics has been a major focus of school improvement over the last two years. The school, with local authority support, both in the provision of funds and expertise, has this year been targeting Year 6 pupils in order to improve standards of attainment. This work is having a positive impact upon standards that should be reflected in the end of key stage tests later this year. The school has good records for recording pupil progress, and is beginning to set individual pupils targets for improvement. This practice is not yet consistently applied throughout the school, but when fully established will be effective in helping to raise standards of attainment.
- 102 The co-ordinator provides effective leadership for mathematics. She has a keen interest in maths and a desire for high standards. She has reviewed and rewritten the policy for mathematics and has reviewed and modified the school's scheme of work to ensure match with the National Numeracy Strategy Framework. She has undertaken lesson observations, seen samples of pupils' work and has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development within mathematics. She has a very good knowledge and understanding of the standards achieved by pupils across the school. Careful analysis of test data is undertaken, the results of which are fed back to senior management and to the key stage co-ordinators to enable them to modify the curriculum and set targets for improvement. All staff have been trained in preparation for the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy's daily mathematics lesson. An audit of mathematics in the school has been undertaken to inform an action plan for the implementation of the strategy. This has been very successfully implemented and is having a positive impact both on the quality of teaching and of the standards being achieved by pupils.
- 103 Resources for the teaching of maths have recently been enhanced and are good. Each class has a mathematics trolley with sufficient equipment and apparatus to teach the National Numeracy Strategy.

## **SCIENCE**

- 104 The results of statutory teacher assessment in 1999 showed that attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 was just above the national average and was above average in comparison with pupils from similar backgrounds. The proportion of pupils attaining Level 4, the level expected at age eleven, was below the national average, but the proportion achieving the higher Level 5 was above average. The trend over the past three years has been upwards, with a significant improvement in 1999. Standards of attainment in science by the age of eleven are above those in English and mathematics, and have improved more rapidly.

- 105 The current performance of pupils in Year 6 indicates that they will achieve close to average standards by the end of the Key Stage. The rate of progress in learning is satisfactory, with some of the more able pupils making slightly faster progress than is the case for the majority. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds make satisfactory progress, and a significant proportion of them are making good progress in investigative work. Good emphasis is placed on the development of investigative skills and standards in experimental work.
- 106 For instance, in one lesson pupils observed the changes which occurred in food which had been exposed to bacteria. Pupils noted the changes in the two samples, and made good predictions about what might have happened if the food had been stored at a lower temperature. The teacher consolidated their knowledge and understanding effectively by referring to some common heating processes which destroy bacteria, and to the beneficial effects of some bacteria
- 107 In a lesson involving Year 5 pupils, emphasis on prediction, observation and analysis reinforced the satisfactory development of these skills from Year 4. Pupils correctly predicted what would happen if a metal plate were placed above the water vapour rising from a pan of hot water. They identified the process of evaporation and condensation, and described these effects using appropriate terminology such as 'water droplets', 'liquid' and 'gas' in response to the teacher's questions.
- 108 In Year 7, the achievement of pupils is close to the standard expected at this age. Pupils are making steady progress within an appropriate range of work agreed with the local secondary school to which the great majority of pupils transfer at the age of twelve. The work in pupils' books and that seen in lessons covers materials, forces and the earth in space. The school has recognised the need for increased emphasis on the further development of practical and investigative skills, and pupils' skills are significantly extended through the well-focused learning experiences provided by a teacher from the local secondary school. In a lesson on acids and alkalis, pupils demonstrated appropriate knowledge and increasing skills in the use of indicators to classify solutions as acidic, neutral or alkaline. They knew how the process of neutralisation might be applied in the treatment, for example, of indigestion, although not all pupils made this connection successfully. They tested solutions, made observations and measurements and recorded what they had found with appropriate precision. In this lesson, too, a significant proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds made good progress in the development of their investigative skills. Throughout the school, pupils show a satisfactory understanding of the principle of fair testing and most of them can recognise when an experiment is not fair.
- 109 Pupils with special educational needs are usually given work which is appropriately matched to their needs. When this is achieved successfully, they make sound progress with respect to their prior learning.
- 110 Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their work in science. They listen carefully to instructions, value each other's answers and concentrate well on the tasks set for them. Behaviour is usually good. When pupils work in pairs or small groups, they share tasks effectively and take good care of the resources provided for the activity. When given suitable challenges and opportunities, pupils in Years 6 and 7 work well in groups, independently of the teacher.
- 111 The quality of teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to very good, but is usually at



least satisfactory and occasionally very good. Just under half of the lessons observed were judged to be good. Most lessons are planned well and time is used effectively. Teachers provide clear explanations of what is to be done and share the objectives for lessons with pupils. Teachers prepare resources carefully and health and safety matters are usually taken fully into account. In the better lessons the pace is suitably brisk, and teachers' expectations of pupils' achievements and their behaviour are high. Teachers' knowledge of science is usually satisfactory, although their use of scientific terminology occasionally lacks precision.

- 112 Pupils' behaviour is managed well in most lessons, and teachers use a suitably broad range of teaching strategies, including some good examples of well-focused, direct teaching, to motivate pupils and develop their learning. Very occasionally, when the pace of the lesson is too slow, some pupils lose interest and distract others.
- 113 Pupils' work is marked regularly, but too few teachers, especially in Years 6 and 7, consistently provide clear written guidance, setting targets for pupils to make progress in their learning. There are, however, a few examples of helpful feedback, with questions posed to challenge pupils' thinking. Information from teachers' assessments is not used sufficiently well for the benefit of all pupils, and some planned work does not always closely match the specific needs of individuals or groups. Too few planned opportunities are provided for pupils to use their increasing skills in information and communications technology to enhance their understanding. There is too little evidence of regular homework in the subject.
- 114 There is a suitable policy for science and an appropriate scheme of work that identifies key objectives for learning, and helps teachers with long- and medium-term planning. The school is reviewing its provision in the light of nationally recommended schemes. The current scheme, based on a two year rolling programme, has already been appropriately modified to strengthen the provision for Year 6 pupils. Monitoring of pupils' written work and their performance in tests has helped inform overall provision. There has been too little monitoring of teaching and learning to support a clear overview of standards or to inform decisions about further improvements.
- 115 Procedures for assessment are satisfactory and statutory requirements are fully met. Formative assessment procedures are satisfactory, including the regular use of tests. However, information from tests and teachers' other, short-term assessments, is not always used effectively to plan pupils' work according to their ability and prior attainment.
- 116 Resources are mainly satisfactory, but there is a shortage of good-quality microscopes, and some of the apparatus for constructing electric circuits is neither easy to assemble nor readily accessible. A good start has been made on clearing the pond and wildlife area, which had become overgrown and difficult to manage. The school grounds represent a potentially valuable area for scientific studies and the school has plans to develop these as a learning resource.
- 117 Since the previous inspection standards have improved at Key Stages 2 and 3 in respect of experimental and investigative science, and National Curriculum test results have improved significantly. Teaching has improved; the quality of teachers' planning has improved, objectives for lessons are clearly identified and pupils' behaviour is usually managed successfully. There have been improvements in

assessment procedures, although there is still some inconsistency in the use of short term assessment to guide teachers' planning for pupils of different abilities

## ART

- 118 Standards in art are broadly in line with those expected at the end of Key Stage 2, but are below those expected at Key Stage 3. In the previous report standards were low in years 4 and 5 but broadly in line at Key Stage 3.
- 119 Lessons were only observed in years 6 and 7 and judgements are drawn from an analysis of pupils' sketchbooks, portfolios of work, displays and photographic records, as well as lesson observations.
- 120 Most pupils make satisfactory progress through Key Stage 2, and by eleven have acquired good skills in working with a range of media including paints, pencils, printing inks, charcoal, pastels, collage and modelling materials. In Key stage 3, most pupils' progress is less than satisfactory. They experience working in a wide range of media, but the work lacks challenge technically and artistically and is mainly of poor quality. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2, but progress is less than satisfactory in Key Stage 3.
- 121 A wide range of work is present in sketchbooks at Key Stage 2, which is well presented and contains evaluative and constructive comments by teachers and pupils to support learning. At Key Stage 3 much sketch book work is unfinished and poorly executed, with little evidence of teacher or pupil evaluation. The marking and constructive evaluations of pupils' work is not applied consistently throughout the school and does not direct pupils to develop their repertoire of skills sufficiently.
- 122 Four lessons were observed and teaching ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. In the best lessons pupils were given clear explanations of the activities and the eventual outcomes, support in developing their skills with particular tools and techniques, responsibility for organising their resources and guidance on the expectations of a good piece of work. In one lesson, in particular the plenary evaluations and comments by the teacher offered all the pupils insight into particular features which made work notable, or could improve it further. Pupils also had the opportunity to evaluate each other's work, which they did with sensitivity and awareness. In the unsatisfactory lesson, pupils were given less responsibility, were not challenged technically or had high expectations for behaviour or quality of work made clear to them. Lacking challenge and a clear goal they appeared disinterested and produced work of a poor standard.
- 123 Displays around the school provide a colourful and stimulating environment for the pupils. Their own work is displayed effectively and they are pleased to talk about how they printed a fabric or made and decorated a model teapot. Culturally diverse source materials are used as stimuli, including artefacts and textiles, to provide a starting point for pupils' work. The work of well-known artists is displayed around the school and pupils talk knowledgeably about artists they have studied.
- 124 The co-ordinator sees teachers' planning and pupils' work and offers informal feedback and support to staff. There is a temporary scheme of work, which meets National Curriculum Programmes of Study, but does not identify assessment opportunities or the use of information technology, either as a research tool, or in

computer aided design. The school is planning a review of the scheme as the Qualifications and Assessment Authority materials become available, and in the light of the new National Curriculum.

- 125 Resources for art are adequate. However, books reflecting artists and craftspeople worldwide and teacher reference and source books to support the teaching of a variety of art skills are limited in number and many are outdated. There are a number of culturally diverse artefacts, but the quality and range of artefacts and other stimulus materials overall is limited. A review of resources is needed and appropriate purchases made to fully support the new scheme of work.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

- 126 Standards in design and technology are broadly satisfactory based on the limited evidence available at the time of the inspection. Lessons were only observed in the lower part of the school, as the teaching of design and technology alternates with art each half term. The work of upper school pupils from the previous half term was evident from classroom displays.
- 127 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to design, make and evaluate products. Older pupils recently designed and made sandals to fit their own feet. The outcomes demonstrated that they are able to use a variety of appropriate materials, to cut and join them, providing reinforcement and strength as required. Pupils show that they can apply their knowledge from other subjects. They had to measure accurately and finish off their design with attractive decoration. This work was part of a very successful cross-curricular project on Ghana. Younger pupils are able to systematically evaluate different bread products using a range of criteria and linking price and nutritional value. They demonstrate satisfactory awareness of the health and safety issues of cleanliness and handling of food products. This activity also made a good contribution to pupils' progress in English. They had to discuss features of the bread products and use a range of appropriate words to describe the attributes and record outcomes.
- 128 The progress of pupils is limited by the two-year cycle of activities for the upper and lower school. Teachers' planning does not clearly identify the progress pupils are expected to make between Year 4 and Year 5, or between Year 6 and Year 7. There is no apparent difference in expectation and challenge between year groups who are working on the same unit of work.
- 129 The learning in lessons observed in the lower school depends very significantly on the class teacher's planning, organisation and classroom management. The pupils need a clear, structured learning environment to be able to carry out and record the evaluations appropriately. Where the teacher is disorganised, the pace of the lesson deteriorates and pupils cannot follow through the task independently. This results in some silly behaviour. Where teachers' planning and organisation of the lesson is good, pupils approach the task a step at a time. They are given time to make their evaluations, record the outcome and to feed back information to reinforce and extend the learning in class. The quality of teachers' questioning also makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning.
- 130 Much of the teaching of design and technology focuses on work with textiles. The resources for working with heavier materials such as wood are not easily accessible, and the current accommodation does not support the use of more complex tools

and materials. The recently appointed co-ordinator has led some interesting school projects involving textiles, but lacks expertise in using other materials and electrical and mechanical components. Links with the local secondary school provide much needed support for some aspects of the subject.

- 131 There are some issues that are still outstanding from the last inspection. Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding do not progress sufficiently from year to year.
- 132 The full range of resources is not well used. However, opportunities for investigation and evaluation have improved significantly.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

- 133 No lessons of geography were observed. Consequently, judgements have been made on the basis of an analysis of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and teachers and the examination of planning documents. There was insufficient evidence to indicate the quality of teaching.
- 134 Standards of attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 and in Key Stage 3 are in line with those expected for pupils at these ages. The previous report also identified standards as sound in both Key Stages. Geography is now taught in half termly blocks alternating with history. This provides for continuity of learning, an issue raised in the previous report when geography was taught in termly blocks.
- 135 Pupils have a clear understanding of map making and there is clear progression in their work from simple plans, to understanding scale and the symbols used on Ordnance Survey maps. Younger pupils are able to describe in simple terms the landscape factors in the establishment of a village settlement, whilst older pupils consider a variety of geographical factors which may contribute to the growth of some villages to towns and cities. Pupils have the opportunity for residential experiences in Years 5 and 7, to undertake field studies and outdoor pursuits and experience different landscapes. Through discussion, the recent Year 5 field trip was well enjoyed and pupils were able to recall many of the experiences, including the use of questionnaires and studies of habitats. A whole school project, "Ghana on Line" explored the life of a family in Ghana and one in Milton Keynes, from an environmental perspective, which compared and contrasted recycling and other global resource issues, for two places on the Greenwich Meridian. Evidence of the work produced and discussion with pupils, shows the wide-ranging and positive learning which ensued from the work.
- 136 There is a satisfactory policy for geography and a scheme of work is being developed from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines. The working document forms a good basis for the development of a specific scheme of work for the school, which will take into account the suitable resources already available and areas requiring new purchases. There are no formal assessment procedures in place, but the temporary co-ordinator sees the work of pupils in displays and their books. She has identified the need to ensure teachers' marking is consistent throughout the school for geography. The use of information technology is not identified in the school's current planning, but the co-ordinator is keen to enhance provision in this area. Planning follows a two-year cycle to allow for split year classes. However, the need for clear objectives for years 5 and 7 has been recognised and will be built into the scheme of work.

- 137 Resources are just adequate to meet the current planning, however there are shortcomings. The co-ordinator has identified the need for updating atlases, globes and maps and equipping each classroom. There are a number of country based geographical books in the library which are outdated and inappropriate. These need replacing as a matter of urgency, with texts and support materials that do not portray stereotypically negative views, particularly of developing countries.

## HISTORY

- 138 Standards of attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are above those expected for pupils of this age. In Key Stage 3 they are in line with the standards expected for the age. The previous report noted standards overall were sound, but varied from very good to unsatisfactory. History is now studied in half termly blocks alternating with geography. This provides for continuity of learning, an issue identified in the previous report.
- 139 Pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress and are developing an understanding of chronology and that an understanding of history is dependent on the quality of evidence we have. In Years 4 and 5 they use their skills of enquiry to extract information from a variety of sources, both written and pictorial. Pupils were very enthusiastic about their studies of Ancient Egyptians and were able to discuss the daily life of poor farmers and compare this to the rich people and the pharaohs. Pupils in Years 6 and 7 are able to consider and compare the life of women in medieval Britain with women's lives now in Britain. They are developing an understanding of primary and secondary source materials and are able to discuss and consider different interpretations of source material. Pupils in Year 7 make satisfactory progress.
- 140 Teaching is good overall in Key Stage 2 and satisfactory in Key Stage 3. In the best lessons, teachers clearly defined the activities and objectives for the lesson, provided stimulating well prepared resources, set high expectations for behaviour and quality of work, including presentation, and differentiated the activities to meet the needs of all the pupils. Pupils were engaged and motivated by the stimulating resources and enthusiasm of the teachers, enabled to succeed with appropriate activities, and their learning was enhanced. Many were keen to research and discuss the work during their lunch break. Higher attaining pupils were challenged to extract information from difficult texts and were responsible for developing their own recording formats. Pupils with special educational needs were given appropriate support and made good progress. Pupils for whom English is an additional language were supported particularly to understand subject specific vocabulary. In the less successful lessons, differentiated activities were less well defined, teachers did not set high goals or offer pupils constructive support to improve and the pace was slower. Pupils' were less enthusiastic about their work and their learning was restricted. Teaching has improved from the last inspection. However, the development of greater independence in their learning, although evident in years 4 and 5 has still to be implemented, particularly in year 7.
- 141 There is a satisfactory policy for history and a scheme of work is being developed. The school is developing a scheme based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority document. The temporary co-ordinator has an overview of teachers' planning and pupils' work, and is aware of the need to ensure consistency in marking in all classes and to develop assessment opportunities in the planning. Resources for history are adequate. There are a number of artefacts, posters and

maps, however these are not accessible to the pupils in their current storage area and are also in need of organising to make them more accessible to adults. There are some historical texts in the library, but a number are outdated. Although there are a number of books with the life stories of well-known people, only a few reflect the contributions to world history of black peoples. The co-ordinator is aware of the lack of software to support historical enquiry and is keen to use CDs to enhance learning. Homework set for Years 4 and 5 required personal research. Pupils were given clear guidelines in using a variety of sources of information, including CDs and the Internet.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

- 142 By the end of Key Stage 2, and by the end of Year 7, attainment is broadly satisfactory. By the age of eleven, pupils are secure in using word processing programs and desktop publishing software to develop and present their work. Most of them successfully import graphics to enhance their work. They understand simple decision-making procedures and are confident in using software to construct databases, entering, modifying and retrieving data as necessary. They are also confident in creating sets of instructions which control a cursor on a screen. They are making good progress in the construction and use of a spreadsheet. They can program 'turtle' within specified parameters to draw a simple shape, and adapt these instructions to create more complex movements. There is too little evidence of pupils using information and communications technology systems to sense physical data and record it. In Year 7, pupils work successfully on more complex spreadsheet applications and use CD-ROM data more regularly in their research work.
- 143 The majority of the lessons observed in the computer suite were linked with spreadsheet and database applications, and pupils developed specific information technology skills. There were some limited and indirect links with topics studied in other subjects. In Key Stage 2, some work in English is enhanced through the use of a word processing program, and the pupils' understanding of how minibeasts may be classified in science in Year 4 was enhanced through the use of a database. In Year 7, some pupils' research work on whales was enhanced by the introduction of images taken from a compact disk. Most pupils make steady progress in acquiring knowledge and developing understanding and skills in their information technology capability. Some pupils in Years 6 and 7, including both higher and lower ability pupils, make particularly good progress in their use of spreadsheets and databases.
- 144 Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Over half of the teaching in Key Stage 2 and in Year 7 was good, and was further enhanced by a specialist support teacher at the time of inspection. Teachers' knowledge of the programs is often good. Pupils are given clear instructions that enable them to carry out their work confidently. Lesson planning is thorough. Targets for the lessons are communicated to pupils at the start of the lesson and referred to again in short plenary sessions at the end. The direct teaching of skills is usually good. Some direct teaching of information technology also takes place away from the computer suite, for example, where children use 'Turtle' and simple word processing programs. Teachers make regular use of information and communications technology in the preparation of good quality teaching materials, labels and notices, all of which enhance the learning environment. To date, little use has been made of the internet in support of teaching and pupils' learning. An outline programme of staff training as part of a national scheme has been prepared, but there is no clear

indication of the steps the school will be taking in the intervening period to promote further the use of existing equipment to develop teachers' skills.

- 145 Specific lessons are allocated for information technology in the timetable for all classes, so that all pupils receive appropriate amounts of direct teaching. Lessons take place in the school's computer suite, with pupils working well individually or in pairs, depending on group sizes and staffing levels. This enables both teachers and pupils to develop their capability and reinforce it through planned, regular use of computers. Occasionally, classes are split between classroom and computer suite.
- 146 Classroom-based elements are sometimes insufficiently matched to pupils' learning needs, being too challenging for some and lacking in challenge for the more able; however, pupils rapidly adapt to working in the computer suite where they work independently at their own pace, or in pairs, and display positive attitudes to their work.
- 147 Pupils' attitudes to their work in the computer suite are mainly good. They enjoy working in this area and work with sustained concentration. For example, a group of lower ability pupils in Year 6 concentrated very well when experimenting with different formulae to generate multiplication tables. Pupils collaborate well with each other in entering data. For example, when using a formula to control data in a spreadsheet, more confident pupils readily helped others who were finding the task difficult, and many demonstrated great patience in the support they gave in this way to their fellow pupils. They persevere when entering data using a database program and discuss alternatives, try them out and successfully modify their actions.
- 148 The policy and scheme of work are barely adequate in ensuring that all strands are covered sufficiently, and in providing guidance about the available hardware and software. There is too little detail about how information technology is to be used to support pupils' learning in other subjects; in addition, individual subject schemes often lack specific details about the part which information technology will play within areas of study. Joint planning helps to ensure consistency of purpose in year groups, but progression through the school is uneven in respect of monitoring and remote sensing because of shortages of resources. The use of computers is monitored through regular examination of files, although this is not consistent throughout the school, partly because of the constraints of the different systems in use. Assessment is weak, and there is insufficient guidance in terms of examples of pupils' levelled work to guide teachers' planning.
- 149 Taking into account only those computers purchased with the last five years, the school currently has a 1:18 ratio of computers to pupils, which is broadly average. Eleven new computers are sited in the computer suite, with the rest located in shared areas in the school.
- 150 Older computers and computer software are also available for use in shared areas, with a small amount of equipment and software provided, especially for pupils with special educational needs. However, much of the equipment sited around the shared areas is of a lower specification and is not directly compatible with that used in the school's computer suite. This causes difficulties for both pupils and teachers alike in the transfer of data, and the skills necessary to use it, from the main teaching room to the shared areas.
- 151 There is insufficient formal monitoring of the teaching and use of information and

communications technology in other areas. In the six months since taking on responsibility for the subject, the co-ordinator has not had enough opportunities to contribute to the curriculum planning for both Key Stage 2 and Year 7, or to monitor the teaching and learning in the subject at first hand. The range and quantity of new resources is providing a sound foundation for the future development of the subject, and access to computers has improved, but the potential of the school's new hardware and software to support learning across the curriculum has not yet been fully realised.

- 152 Since the last inspection, the school has continued to develop information technology expertise and obtain appropriate hardware and software resources. Pupils' attitudes to the use of information technology have improved, and are mainly good when working in the new computer suite. Teachers have a greater understanding of the potential of information and communication technology, but the enthusiasm and skills of many of the teachers has not yet been fully used to enhance provision or to promote higher standards.

### **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

- 153 Pupils are introduced to French as a first modern foreign language at the beginning of Year 7. By the time they leave the school at the age of twelve, standards in French are broadly in line with those expected nationally for pupils of this age. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls at this stage of their language learning. Many of the pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress; they show a facility and enthusiasm for language learning which they convey successfully to other pupils. They listen well, respond accurately to French spoken at normal speed and develop good speaking skills. They make a positive contribution to lessons, encouraging others to try hard, and thus contribute effectively to overall standards. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress in relation to their prior learning; they enjoy role play activities, and usually make a determined effort to reproduce the expressions they hear.
- 154 Pupils' listening skills are satisfactory overall. There is some variation between classes in the extent to which pupils have developed good listening habits, which range from good to unsatisfactory within the year group. Where these skills have not been so well developed, pupils make slower progress in the development of oral skills. This has been recognised, and teaching approaches have been modified to bring about improvements. As a result, some variations are evident in pupils' use of key phrases and new vocabulary in class-work, including role-play situations. Pronunciation varies from good to unsatisfactory, but is mainly satisfactory, and some pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds demonstrate very good skills in this aspect of language work. Pupils' written language skills are generally sound; they copy accurately, but there are too few examples of pupils trying out their own early writing skills. Pupils read simple examples of printed texts and respond well to the challenge of simple scripts for role play situations. Their reading skills are usually appropriate for their age, but there are too few opportunities for pupils, particularly the more able, to tackle more challenging texts.
- 155 Pupils' attitudes to French are good. They work enthusiastically and co-operate well in role play activities, which they enjoy. Behaviour is usually good; pupils show respect for others and value their responses.



- 156 The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and is often very good. The best lessons are characterised by high levels of challenge and an enthusiasm for languages on the part of the teacher. In these lessons, the teaching methods, style of questioning and the focus of learning are skilfully adapted to meet the needs of the pupils; the target language, French, is used for a high proportion of the lesson. Lessons have clear objectives which are shared with the pupils and are usually conducted at a brisk pace. This helps to encourage most of the pupils to maintain good levels of concentration throughout the lesson. The quality of marking varies between teachers, but there are some good examples of the use of formative comments to help pupils improve their written work.
- 157 In the best teaching, there is a systematic approach to the introduction of new words and phrases, and there are opportunities for pupils to practise these in pairs through role play activities. In one lesson, for example, pupils devised short conversations on the theme of shopping for souvenirs, the expression 'je voudrais..' was reinforced in the first part of the lesson. Pupils then used this with good levels of accuracy in their role play, combined successfully with previously learned vocabulary and their knowledge of simple phrases for greetings, French money and other elements of French culture. More able pupils employed an extended range of vocabulary, including colours, with very good levels of accuracy. This activity provided a high level of challenge for pupils to draw on and consolidate their speaking and listening skills, and resulted in some good dialogues.
- 158 The subject co-ordinator provides very good leadership and sets a very good example through her own teaching. There is a good quality scheme of work, recently completed, which promotes a balanced programme of speaking, listening, reading and writing. At present, the range of reading material available to support this programme, including games, authentic French texts and artefacts, is small. In addition, there is only a narrow range of authentic taped material to promote pupils' listening skills. The school is aware of the need to improve these aspects of resources for the subject, and there are plans to do so when funds permit. Teaching is monitored informally by the co-ordinator, but this is also informed by an analysis of pupils' written work. Some good assessments are carried out, and the school is beginning to use a self-assessment procedure which merits further development.
- 159 Since the last inspection, the good quality of teaching has been maintained. Standards of attainment are broadly similar to those identified at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning a foreign language and the good standards in their speaking skills have also been maintained.

## **MUSIC**

- 160 At the end of Key Stage 2 attainment in music is satisfactory. The pupils know about the elements of pitch, rhythm, dynamics and tempo. This is apparent in their singing and in their use of tuned and untuned instruments. The quality of singing is good and there is evidence that the children are becoming more secure at singing higher notes. This is a particular feature in the lower school where children approach music with a very positive attitude. The children are able to sing simple two-part melodies. The ability to comment on, and then vary, tempo and dynamics within a song is very good. There is growing awareness of technical features such as how chords are made and how melody is constructed. The children are able to identify and select from a range of instruments.

- 161 Attainment by pupils at Key Stage 3 is broadly satisfactory. Knowledge of the key elements is less well developed and the children's performing skills are less secure. Singing, whilst it is tuneful, lacks the enthusiasm that was a feature of Key Stage 2. No evidence of work using conventional (or unconventional) notation was observed during the inspection. Children are becoming more familiar with terms such as blues and jazz and can identify the characteristics of this genre.
- 162 Progress at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory and sometimes good. Children are encouraged to comment critically about their work and to modify their performance. Children are able to improve their work as a result of careful teacher intervention. This is evident in singing and in composing using tuned instruments.
- 163 Progress at Key Stage 3 is less evident. Some pupils find it difficult to follow instructions due to insufficient musical knowledge. There could be better use of examples, particularly for children whose cultural background does not encompass much of the music being taught.
- 164 Teaching at Key Stage 2 ranges from satisfactory to good and music support staff from the local authority are effectively deployed. Their expert knowledge and liaison with the school staff is a strength. Teaching resources are well used and lessons carefully planned. The work presented to the children is appropriate and varied, although few opportunities were observed for listening to, and appraising music. The scheme of work clearly identifies all the areas to be covered in the National Curriculum and is well presented. However, the two-year cycle that children follow does not identify areas for progression in the second year and this is a potential weakness, particularly for more able pupils.
- 165 Resources for music are good, although there are gaps in the provision of ethnic musical instruments. The provision of a purpose built music room is a strength. This is well used and contributes to the standard of work achieved.
- 166 Children's attitude to music is positive. They enjoy music and are particularly enthusiastic about singing. There is good provision for extra-curricular music and peripatetic teachers give individual lessons to a number of pupils. The school organises a band on Friday evenings and over 25 pupils regularly attend this.
- 167 The co-ordinator and the head teacher make a strong contribution to the musical life of the school and their enthusiasm and expertise are important factors in the development of this subject.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

- 168 Standards of attainment at Key Stage 2 in physical education (PE) are in line with those expected nationally, with some examples of above average attainment. Gymnastics, the use of small apparatus and games skills are taught well and children are making good progress. They improve performance individually and with partners by using the teacher's feedback and practise.
- 169 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have improved their catching and throwing skills through a range of games, for example, hockey and rugby. In gymnastics there is good use of the limited apparatus available, although some of this work lacks pace and challenge. Pupils are encouraged to raise their fitness levels, and discuss the

benefit of exercise and its effect on their bodies.

- 170 Pupils make at least satisfactory progress at Key Stage 2 and sometimes this is good. Throughout the key stage pupils take increasing notice of feedback from their teachers to improve on their performance.
- 171 Attainment at Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory, due in part to lower teacher expectation and some lack of enthusiasm from the pupils. Behaviour is not always good and the issue of non-participation by a significant number of pupils, and who supervises them, should be addressed. However, the positive inclusion of pupils with special educational needs, and good assistance from learning support staff, was a feature to be noted.
- 172 The range of PE activities offered is good and includes swimming for one year group each week. This broadly meets with National Curriculum requirements, although there is no place for dance within the existing curriculum. The time allocated to PE is satisfactory.
- 173 The PE curriculum is generally well taught and teacher subject knowledge is good. There is enthusiasm for the subject from both teachers and pupils. There is a commitment from most pupils to improve their skills and they listen carefully to advice and instruction. Where lesson planning is good, the sequence of activities builds in a way that helps pupils develop specific skills and these skills are taught carefully enough to enable pupils to improve. Lessons contain a good balance between direct teaching to explain ideas or tasks, questioning the pupils and practical work. Pupils' listening skills are good.
- 174 The extensive school grounds is a good resource. However, the material resources are weak. Equipment is either old or in a poor state of repair, which limits the range of activities the children can pursue, and it is to the school's credit that the subject can be taught so effectively.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

- 175 At Key Stage 2, pupils reach satisfactory standards in their knowledge of religious education (RE). The school follows the county's agreed syllabus for RE but places a particular focus on teaching about Christianity and Islam. The rich ethnic diversity of the school's catchment area is acknowledged in its teaching of the subject and looked upon as a valuable resource. That is a strength of the school.
- 176 Only two lessons were observed at Key Stage 3, and whilst the standard of work is satisfactory, there was no written work. RE books indicated that little if any written work takes place and that a heavy emphasis is placed on discussion. Pupils are able to talk in an informative way about issues connected with the Moslem festival of Eid and draw parallels with Christian festivals. Their subject knowledge is good.
- 177 There is evidence in discussion work throughout the school that the children are encouraged to reflect on a range of spiritual and moral issues. There is a clear link between RE and the ethos of the school.
- 178 Teacher subject knowledge is secure and a new co-ordinator has taken on her role with great enthusiasm. The subject is well managed and the co-ordinator has a good understanding of the way forward for the subject. Resources are adequate,

although both the co-ordinator and the HeadTeacher are aware that additional items must be purchased. Good links are made between the high quality of assemblies and RE, and this is contributing positively to improvements in the pupils' knowledge.

- 179 At Key Stage 2 teachers employ a range of strategies to teach RE and make good use of resources. However, there is again heavy reliance on discussion and limited evidence of written work. Differentiation is reliant on outcome and assessment opportunities are limited.
- 180 Discussion with pupils, and scrutiny of the limited amount of written work, indicates that satisfactory progress is being made. Children were able to talk sensitively and confidently about a range of issues. This is a particular feature at Key Stage 3.
- 181 Further attention should be given to the time allocated to the subject if the requirements of the agreed syllabus are to be met.