

INSPECTION REPORT

Newton Longville CofE (VC)

Primary School

Newton Longville,

Milton Keynes

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110440

Headteacher: Mr Michael Peck

Reporting inspector: Mrs Patricia Davies
22460

Dates of inspection: 12th – 16th June, 2000

Inspection number: 189264

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	mixed
School address:	School Drive Newton Longville Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Tessa Haddon
Date of previous inspection:	11 th June, 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs Patricia Davies	Registered inspector	Science; Art; Design and technology; Areas of learning for children aged under five years.	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well does the school care for its pupils?
Mrs Caroline Marden	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr Robin Coultard	Team inspector	English; History; Music; Religious education.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mr David Major	Team inspector	Mathematics; Information technology; Geography; Physical education; Provision for pupils with special educational needs; Equality of opportunity.	How well is the school led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

There are 211 pupils, which is about average for similar primary schools, with more girls than boys particularly in Years 1 and 6. Since the last inspection, the school has lost Year 7 pupils due to recent changes to the age of transfer. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is very low. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is also lower than the national average at 11 per cent, with most pupils needing the least amount of support. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is similar to the national average. A small proportion of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, and all are fluent with the English language. The pupil population is stable, but about half the teaching staff have changed since the last inspection. When children enter compulsory education at the age of five, attainment overall is above national expectations.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Newton Longville is a good and effective school, and its Christian values and beliefs are closely embedded in its work. Standards in English, mathematics are well above national expectations by the time pupils leave the school at eleven years, and are above national expectations in science. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are very good. The overall quality of teaching is good. Leadership and management are satisfactory, with some strong features. The unit cost of expenditure for each pupil is about average, and the school has coped well with budgetary difficulties over recent years. Taking all these factors together, the school is currently giving good value for money.

What the school does well

- Eleven year old pupils achieve standards which are well above national expectations in English and mathematics, and above national expectations in science;
- The quality of teaching is good, the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been effectively implemented, and so pupils achieve well;
- The development of pupils' moral and social understanding is very good;
- Pupils have very good attitudes and behaviour, and the quality of relationships is excellent.

What could be improved

- Standards in information technology at both key stages, so that all aspects of the subject are taught and pupils regularly use computers to improve their skills;
- Knowledge of Child Protection procedures by all staff.

The school has already started to address the issues relating to information technology. The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement overall since it was last inspected in June, 1996. Standards in English and mathematics are now substantially higher, particularly by the time pupils reach the age of eleven, and good standards in science have been maintained. Those strengths identified in the last report relating to pupils' attitudes to their work and good behaviour have been improved, and these factors make a significant contribution to pupils' achievement. Teaching quality has also improved. Key issues relating to health and safety have been well attended to. Whilst the school has worked hard to successfully introduce the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, there has not been enough improvement to information technology. The school is aware of this deficiency, and already has plans for its future development.

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	A	C	A	C
Mathematics	A	A	A	B
Science	A	B	A	B

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

These results show that in the national tests in 1999, pupils achieved standards well above national averages in English, mathematics and science. However, in comparison with schools having similar low percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals, they were above the national average in mathematics and science, and similar to the national average in English. Whilst standards have remained consistently high in mathematics, there has been some variations over time in English and science. As the numbers of pupils in each year group are not large, fluctuations in the results of individual pupils have a significant effect on the overall percentage scores each year. Inspection evidence shows that pupils achieve well as they move through the school. By Year 6, standards in English and mathematics are well above national expectations. Standards are above national expectations in science, as ongoing improvements to the science curriculum have yet to be introduced at Years 5 and 6. The use of test and assessment information to target areas needing development have had a positive impact, particularly in mathematics, and inspection evidence shows that pupils in the current Year 2 are achieving standards that are above national expectations in English, mathematics and science. Both seven and eleven year olds are satisfactorily meeting the learning objectives of the local Agreed Syllabus for religious education. However, standards are below national expectations in information technology. Achievement is satisfactory in all the foundation subjects, except in history and geography where it is above the expected level by the time pupils are aged eleven. However, although achievement is satisfactory in art by the time pupils are eleven years old, it is unsatisfactory for seven year olds. There was not enough evidence to make an overall judgement in music. The school's targets are realistic, with an appropriate level of challenge.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen to learn, and apply themselves to their work with diligence and interest.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good, and sometimes exemplary. Pupils are unfailingly polite and helpful, and there is no evidence of bullying. There have been no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are excellent, characterised by respect and trust. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities.
Attendance	Very good. There is no unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The overall quality of teaching is good, and the school meets the needs of all its pupils well. All lessons were satisfactory or better, with 47.5 per cent good and 12.5 per cent very good. The amount of good and very good teaching is higher for those pupils aged between seven and eleven years, and teaching is strong in Year 2, and particularly in Year 6 where this makes a substantial impact on the progress of these pupils. The management of behaviour is very effective because of the very high quality of rapport between pupils and staff. Expectations are high, particularly at Year 6. Effective and lively strategies gain pupils' interest and enthusiasm, and questions are well used to develop their knowledge and understanding. Detailed planning gives lessons a good structure, and resources and support staff are effectively used. Sometimes, in otherwise satisfactory lessons, pupils are not given enough opportunity to join in discussion, or time is not used well. English, mathematics and science are well taught, as are literacy and numeracy skills. There is not enough teaching of information technology.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Broad, balanced and relevant, with the valuable addition of French at Year 6. There is a good programme for personal, social and health education. Extra-curricular opportunities are satisfactory. Statutory requirements to teach all aspects of information technology are not being fulfilled.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. There is an effective mix of in-class support and teaching in special groups, especially at Key Stage 2. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school, particularly in literacy skills.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision for moral and social development. Opportunities for spiritual and cultural development are satisfactory, but limited through the teaching of all subjects.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Safe and caring environment, in which staff know pupils very well. Support and guidance for raising achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' progress is well tracked in English and mathematics, but systems are not fully developed for other subjects. There is insufficient knowledge of Child Protection procedures amongst staff.

The school works well with parents, and provides them with satisfactory quality information.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher gives experienced and thoughtful leadership, and as a result standards have risen considerably in English and mathematics. Senior staff work closely together, and co-ordinate their subjects and age groups well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very supportive, with a strong committee structure which enables them to fulfil their responsibilities well. There have been a number of changes in governors, and key governors are undertaking many important roles. Their involvement in the school's work is developing well, but they have yet to fully develop their role as critical friend.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher takes a strong lead in the analysis and effective use of test and assessment information to evaluate and improve achievement. Standards of teaching and learning in English and mathematics are well monitored, but other subjects less so.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory use of resources overall in order to raise standards, and the school has responded well to recent financial constraints. The school has started to use the principles of best value effectively, but is making insufficient use of new technology, particularly in teaching.

Staffing levels are satisfactory, but there are not enough supervisory staff at lunchtimes. Systems for monitoring teaching and for professional development are not yet fully formalised. Accommodation is good. Learning resources are adequate, and valuable contributions have been made as a result of fund raising by the parents' association.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like coming to school; • The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best so that they make good progress; • The school works closely with parents and they are kept well informed; • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems; • The teaching is good; • Children are helped to become mature and responsible, and behaviour is good; • The leadership and management are good; • There is the right amount of homework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside of lessons.

Parental satisfaction with the school has increased since the previous inspection. Inspection findings largely endorse the very positive views expressed by parents. Although the activities provided for pupils outside of lessons are generally satisfactory, the range is narrow.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. By the time children enter compulsory education at the age of five, they are achieving standards which are above the nationally desired expectation in all areas of their learning, except in their creative skills, which are in line with expectations. Whilst making satisfactory progress overall, these children benefit from strong and sensitive adult relationships which encourage good independent skills, and consequently they make good progress in the development of their social and personal skills.

2. In the national tests, pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 have consistently achieved standards in writing which are well above the national average, with a large proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 in the tests in 1999. Reading standards have also remained steady, and were above the national average in the 1999 tests. However, national test standards in mathematics have dropped over recent years, and in the tests in 1999, pupils achieved standards that were in line with national averages, with only a small proportion of pupils achieving the higher level. In comparison with those schools with a similar low percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards in the 1999 national tests were above the national average in writing, broadly in line in reading and below in mathematics. Teacher assessments for these pupils in science, showed achievement to be above the national average.

3. In contrast to Key Stage 1, national test results in mathematics have been consistently well above the national average over recent years at Key Stage 2, with a large proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in the tests in 1999. These pupils also achieved standards that were well above the national average in English and science in 1999, again with a well above proportion of pupils achieving the higher level. In comparison with similar schools, these test results were above national averages in mathematics and science, and in line in English. There have been some fluctuations in test results over time in English and science, but generally the groups of pupils taking the tests are not large in size, and the results of individual pupils have a strong impact on relative percentages. The school looks closely at test and assessment data to identify trends in pupils' performance, both over time and in the terms of gender differences, in order to focus attention on areas needing improvement. As a result, early indications suggest that test standards have risen this year at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics, and particularly in relation to the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3. The school's targets are realistically set on the basis of this information, to which an appropriate level of challenge is attached.

4. Pupils make good progress overall as they move through the school. Consequently, by the time they leave school at eleven, they are achieving standards that are well above national expectations in English and mathematics, and above expectations in science. These achievements are boosted by the good quality teaching at the end of both key stages, and particularly at the end of Key Stage 2. In addition, both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been well implemented throughout the school. In science, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have yet to benefit from the ongoing introduction of improvements to the science curriculum. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are achieving standards above national expectations in English, mathematics and science. However, standards in information technology are below national expectations at both key stages because pupils are not taught all aspects of the subject, and do not have enough opportunities to practise and develop their skills in other subjects. Pupils are satisfactorily meeting the learning objectives of the local Agreed Syllabus in religious education at both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress by the end of Key Stage 2.

5. Throughout the school, pupils listen very well. Consequently, they absorb information effectively and make valuable contributions to discussion. Many pupils read regularly for pleasure, so that by the end of Key Stage 2, they have well-developed tastes in literature. Higher-attaining pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, read confidently and fluently, and most pupils have good phonetic knowledge to help them read unfamiliar words. At Key Stage 2, even the younger pupils are developing the use of inference and deduction in their analysis of text and, by the end of this Key Stage, pupils use research skills confidently. Handwriting and presentation skills are well developed, and pupils write for a good range of purposes, particularly at Key Stage 2. Formal skills, such as punctuation and spelling are well developed by the end of Key Stage 1, and some pupils are already using paragraphs. All pupils plan their work well and write confidently, although the work of middle- and lower-attaining pupils has less substantial content. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are completing an extensive range of writing to a high quality. Literacy skills are generally well developed and supported in other subjects, but not in information technology.

6. In mathematics, pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are confident with number and the four operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Higher attainers work competently with two digit numbers. All pupils are also developing good mental strategies for solving problems and finding patterns. They use standard measures, and graphs to present and interpret information. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are confident in their use of fractions, decimals and percentages, and in using and applying their knowledge and skills within a good range of mathematical contexts. Higher-attaining pupils consistently perform extended and more challenging tasks with competence. There are generally satisfactory opportunities for pupils to use numeracy skills in science and geography. Opportunities, however, are limited in information technology.

7. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils in science both predict what might occur in their investigations, and explain what happens. Higher attainers make these explanations clearly and give reasons for what they observe. Many are developing a confident scientific vocabulary, use equipment appropriately and record their results on planning sheets. By the end of Key Stage 2, higher and middle attainers complete good observational notes and record conclusions. They competently learn a good range of scientific information, for example in relation to forces and friction, the major organs of the human body and their functions, and the reproductive parts of flowering plants and their purpose. Independent work is good, and so too is their knowledge of scientific terms and vocabulary. Higher-attaining pupils present their work to a high standard.

8. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall in all foundation subjects, except in art at Key Stage 1, where pupils do not complete enough work. There was not enough evidence to make an overall judgement about achievement in music. However, at Key Stage 2, pupils make good achievements in history and geography where their independent research skills are effectively used to further develop their knowledge and understanding.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. The school's commitment to its Christian foundation and the high value it places on its pupils has both maintained and strengthened the pupils' good attitudes and behaviour seen in the last inspection, and they are now very good. Pupils are happy and keen to learn when they arrive in the morning, and quickly settle to work. In lessons, pupils apply themselves diligently to their tasks and show interest in their activities. Pupils in all lessons are keen to answer questions, and listen respectfully to contributions made by other pupils. These very good attitudes to their learning are especially apparent in Year 6, where they are particularly linked to the high quality of the teaching for this year group. Pupils in this class show great maturity and commitment to their work.

10. Overall the behaviour of pupils in school is also very good, and at times exemplary. Particularly praiseworthy is the way in which pupils organise and play football at playtimes. During these sessions, four or five games can be taking place at the same time in a relatively small area. However, there is no animosity and no need for any intervention by staff. Pupils are unfailingly courteous and helpful to visitors. In lessons, behaviour is frequently good and often very good. There were only a very few occasions when pupils were not fully engaged in their work. There was no evidence of any bullying during the inspection and there have been no exclusions in the last year.

11. The quality of relationships between pupils, and with their teachers, is excellent. Pupils respect and trust their teachers and this gives them the confidence to express their opinions in class discussions. For example, in the reception class during circle time, all the pupils made a contribution to what they had done to make someone else happy, and listened carefully and quietly to each other. During lessons pupils co-operate well with each other and come to sensible decisions. For example in a physical education lesson at Year 1, groups of pupils creating simple dances were able to discuss their ideas and agree on a sequence of movements with only the minimum support of adults.

12. When pupils are given opportunities to take on responsibilities, they do so willingly. For example, last year pupils in Year 6 carried out a survey on the problems caused by parking at the beginning and end of the school day. As part of this exercise, they lobbied the local council and were successful in persuading them to put up school warning signs. Pupils throughout the school perform small tasks, such as returning registers. The garden and pond areas are both regularly maintained by older pupils. The very youngest pupils in the reception class quickly learn independent habits and by the end of Year 6, pupils have developed strong independent study skills, which they use effectively. Examples of this are the topic files they make in connection with their residential visit to France.

13. Attendance is very good and unauthorised absence is very low. However, the school is concerned about the increasing trend in taking holidays during term time. A particular concern is that pupils cannot repeat numeracy lessons they have missed.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The overall quality of teaching is good, and has improved since the previous inspection. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning. All the lessons seen during this inspection were satisfactory or better, of which 47.5 per cent were good and 12.5 per cent very good. The highest proportions of good and very good teaching were found at Key Stage 2, and particularly at the end of the Key Stage where expectations are particularly high. This contributes significantly both to these pupils' progress, and to the mature and committed attitudes they show towards their work. Teaching was also stronger at the end of Key Stage 1, with similar effect. The strengths outlined in the previous report have been maintained, particularly those relating to the encouraging manner in which pupils are treated, and to effective questioning, particularly in English and mathematics. Since the previous inspection, and in response to the key issue, a teaching and learning policy has been drawn up, with the contribution of all staff. The core subjects of English, mathematics and science are well taught, as are the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and pupils benefit from opportunities in science to take part in practical investigations. Pupils in Year 6 additionally benefit from high quality teaching of French. However, there is insufficient teaching of information technology, and limited opportunities in lessons for pupils to practise and apply their skills. Pupils' achievements both in information technology, and in music, are inhibited by teachers' limited subject confidence and specialist expertise. There was insufficient evidence to make overall judgements about the quality of teaching in other subjects.

15. In the most successful lessons, teachers quickly and effectively focus or refocus pupils' attention on their work, and capture their interest and commitment. For example, in an art lesson at Year 6, the

teacher had to make a rapid switch between a sex education discussion which pupils were thoughtfully pursuing, into an art activity. This was very successfully achieved by getting the pupils to close their eyes and remember the patterns they had been drawing the previous week from natural objects in the school grounds. As a result, subsequent questioning drew an almost instant remembrance of the variety and beauty of these patterns. In a science lesson, these same pupils were making rapid gains in their knowledge and understanding of reproduction in flowering plants, spurred on by the examination of a variety of different flowers, and by the teacher's own enthusiasm for discovery. The quality of relationships, and the value placed on pupils and their contributions ensure that behaviour is very well managed. In the reception class, for example, a pupil was sensitively and respectfully spoken with about an incident, and given an opportunity to explain. In a very good English lesson at Year 5, pupils views were clearly valued by the teacher, and there was a good rapport. These pupils were stimulated by the teacher's praise and encouraged by her patience, to respond with great enthusiasm and fierce concentration.

16. In many lessons, questioning is used effectively to probe and develop understanding. In a mathematics lesson at Year 5, for example, clear exposition combined with a progression of questions which grew in challenge, enabled pupils to make good progress in their understanding of decimals to two places. Many lessons are marked by a brisk pace and efficient style. At Year 2, for example, a vigorous delivery in an English lesson kept the pupils' attention well, and helped to effectively reinforce their phonic knowledge. Detailed planning gives lessons a good structure, and learning objectives are often shared with pupils so that they know the purpose of their work. Pupils also benefit from well-prepared, plentiful resources, which allow them to make a quick start on their activities. In a geography lesson at Year 2, good quality aerial photographs were effectively used to promote discussion, and pupils were enabled to identify a range of features at ground level. Visitors with particular knowledge and expertise make valuable contributions. This was particularly successful at Year 6 in a religious education lesson, where a Muslim visitor spoke lucidly of his faith, and gave pupils much detailed information and a clear idea of his commitment.

17. However, even in otherwise satisfactory lessons, whole-group sessions are sometimes too teacher dominated, and pupils have less opportunity to make contributions. In other lessons, time taken for discussion or explanation is sometimes lengthy, and allows pupils only limited time to complete subsequent tasks.

18. Those children aged under five are generally well taught. Activities are appropriate, and are often interesting, even entertaining. As a result, children take part enthusiastically. The teaching of independent learning skills is particularly good. For example, in a mathematics lesson, there was a good balance of support from adults, whose interventions helped children to stay on task, but also allowed them to be complete the work themselves. The session was introduced in a lively manner, with an entertaining game reinforcing numbers bigger and smaller than others. This effectively captured the children's attention and enjoyment. Kindly, encouraging relationships and very sensitive handling of any difficulties, successfully encourages the children's confidence, and ensures they make good progress in developing personal and social skills. This early input is reflected in the very good work habits of pupils throughout the school.

19. Those pupils with special educational needs are well supported both in lessons, and when they are withdrawn from classes, either as individuals or in small groups, to work alongside learning support assistants. In most lessons, teachers meet the needs of these pupils well, providing appropriate activities and good support. Classroom assistants play an effective role in ensuring that these pupils benefit from their tasks with close support and a good level of intervention. In individual sessions, support focuses well on specific needs identified in individual education plans. Particularly in English, these sessions make sufficient links with work in recent literacy lessons. Additional literacy sessions in Key Stage 2 are well taught, resulting in good gains in pupils' skills.

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

20. The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, and in addition, pupils in Year 6 also learn French. In keeping with its aims, the curriculum is appropriately accessible and sufficiently challenging for pupils of all levels of attainment. Appropriate policies and schemes of work ensure full coverage of statutory requirements in all subjects, except for information technology, which is not meeting statutory requirements at Key Stage 2. Here, all aspects of the subject are not fully represented, and there is too little use of computers to practise skills and support learning in other subjects. As a consequence, there has not been enough progress made to the development of information technology since the previous inspection, when it was a key area for development. The school has highlighted the need to review its subject documentation and plan for the forthcoming national requirements for foundation subjects in its development planning, and has begun to do so. National guidance has been used to support the development of some subjects, such as geography, and commercial schemes adopted in others to support the progressive development of skills and knowledge, for example in science and mathematics. However, the art curriculum still lacks a scheme of work to ensure that pupils have a wide range of art experiences.

21. There is an appropriately planned curriculum for those children aged under five, which is already being updated to meet new national requirements. The school has responded well to the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, and they have been implemented effectively. As a result, these strategies have already made a considerable impact on pupils' attainment in English and mathematics. A substantial amount of time is appropriately devoted to the teaching of literacy and numeracy, but the school's teaching time is shorter at both key stages than is nationally recommended.

22. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs, particularly at Key Stage 2. The school identifies these pupils carefully, with good support from the learning support service. There is then an effective mix of in-class and withdrawn assistance. Attached support assistants give effective help in lessons to those pupils with statements of need. They are also well involved in whole class activities, for example in group science investigations about air at Year 1. A small group of pupils at Key Stage 2 also receive good Additional Literacy Support, which the school has continued to fund from its own budget. Individual education plans have specific targets in literacy matched well to the needs of the individual pupil, but there are few targets to address numeracy.

23. There is good enrichment of the curriculum in sport and dancing, for both girls and boys. Groups also meet regularly to develop gymnastics, skipping, netball and football, and local sports associations and sporting events are used to extend the sporting experiences of pupils. However, there is no regular extra-curricular provision in the Arts, except for a small amount of specialist woodwind and violin teaching. Pupils take reading books home and older children complete work projects and other forms of homework.

24. In keeping with its aims, the school provides an education designed to enable pupils to develop their potential physically and mentally, and there is good programme for personal, health and social education. Some topics are taught in assemblies or circle time, whilst others in-form individual lessons or are woven into other areas of the curriculum. Appropriate provision is made for sex education and for teaching pupils about the misuse of drugs. The school acknowledges the need to formalise some aspects of provision, particularly with regard to citizenship.

25. There are good links with the community to further pupils' learning. They study their own village and Old Bletchley in history and geography. Clergy and other visitors attend to contribute to assemblies. The police, a doctor and nurse contribute to aspects of personal, social and health education. Visitors in connection with the curriculum have recently included a Muslim, who talked to

Year 6 about the Qur'an, and a local senior citizen, who answered questions from Year 4 about changes in Old Bletchley.

26. As a result of recent changes to the age of transfer, pupils now transfer to secondary school after Year 6 to a small number of secondary schools. This has caused previous links with some secondary schools to lapse, although the school has conscientiously sought to re-establish liaison. The reception teacher has good links with local nurseries and playgroups, and the school regularly plays host to child-care students from a local college.

27. The school makes satisfactory provision for spiritual development. Its mission statement affirms its religious affiliation, but there is no mention of spiritual development in the school's aims. However, there are good opportunities in religious education for discussing spiritual beliefs and issues in various world religions. The daily act of collective worship generally allows an adequate time for prayer, and pupils also have opportunities to reflect during circle time. There are good opportunities for reflecting on human achievements, for example, in studying authors' successes in literature. Pupils were able to marvel at aspects of the natural world, for example in Year 6, when looking at patterns on bark, leaves and shells, and when they dissected pansies during their work in science, but such opportunities across the curriculum are limited, and sometimes missed.

28. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good, and well supported by the school's Christian foundation. As a result, pupils have a highly developed sense of right and wrong. This strong moral ethos permeates the whole school, and opportunities for increasing their moral understanding occur widely in all areas of their learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and their commitment and energy provide very good role models for pupils. Rigorous procedures for imposing discipline are unnecessary in the school, and the head reminds pupils in assembly as appropriate when lapses occasionally occur in the agreed conventions of behaviour. There are very good opportunities for moral development in assemblies, in circle time and in lessons. In religious education at Year 2, pupils discussed the need for rules in football in order to understand the idea of morality and responsibility when learning about the Ten Commandments. In Year 4, pupils thoughtfully considered the moral issues involved in choosing a site for building a theme park.

29. There is also very good provision for pupils' social development. There are good opportunities for collaborative work in pairs or larger groupings in almost every lesson. Pupils learn something about citizenship and the community in personal, social and health education. Children have responsibility for organisational tasks and act as monitors in all classes. In Year 6, they work the overhead projector and the CD player in assembly, and organise the chairs in the dining hall. Some pupils help in the school garden. Some in Year 6, help supervise younger pupils at lunch times, and pupils in Years 5 and 6 have written stories to read to pupils in Key Stage 1. Pupils are able to develop an awareness of others in the community, for example, by organising a sale of plants. They annually distribute harvest gifts to the elderly and invite them to school productions. Pupils carry out fund-raising regularly and were able recently to give a generous donation to the NSPCC. Other recent recipients have included The Earl Haig and the Marie Curie Cancer Funds.

30. The provision for cultural development is satisfactory. In addition to sport and dancing, pupils have opportunities to take part in school productions. However, despite having to rely on taped accompaniments in the absence of any specialist musical expertise, the recent staging of 'Resurrection Rock' is recalled as a significant school achievement. All pupils make educational visits regularly in connection with work in lessons. Recent destinations have included Whipsnade Zoo, The British and Ashmolean Museums and Bradwell Abbey. Older pupils take part in a very well planned study visit to Normandy, and they entertain French pupils on a return visit. However, pupils have only a few opportunities, beyond religious education and geography, for studying multicultural aspects of different societies.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. Whilst there are limited formal procedures for monitoring and recording pupils' personal development, informal practices are very strong, based on the very good knowledge and understanding teachers have of their pupils. This is fundamental to the very high levels of progress pupils make in this area. The school has good policies for ensuring that pupils are safe, and staff are successful in promoting very good behaviour. They use an appropriate range of positive reinforcements, such as certificates and the awarding of privilege time, and there are good procedures to deal with any cases of bullying should they occur. There are, however, concerns about arrangements for child protection.

32. A child protection policy is in place, and is satisfactory. The headteacher, who is the designated teacher for child protection, understands the procedures, and his training in this area has been updated recently. However, the knowledge of other staff is unsatisfactory. Teachers have not had any training for child protection in the last two years, and support staff have not received any training in this area. As a result, they are unaware of procedures or how they should deal with any issues should they occur.

33. Medical procedures and arrangements for first aid are satisfactory. The school provides a safe environment for pupils. Governors, together with the teacher representative for health and safety, make good termly checks of the premises for any hazards. The school has conscientiously sought to establish provision for checking electrical appliances. The supervision of pupils at lunchtime is well organised, but there is insufficient supervision to monitor all play areas effectively. This difficulty is exacerbated in the summer when the field is in use.

34. In response to the key issue in the previous report, systems for assessing pupils' work and monitoring progress have been improved, particularly in English and mathematics where assessment is good. In these subjects teachers keep detailed ongoing notes about pupils' progress in addition to tracking development regularly against National Curriculum levels. This improvement is also effective with regard to the analysis and use of test and assessment data. This has had a direct impact on identifying areas or individual pupils needing further focus, particularly at Key Stage 1, and on planning ways to improve standards. There are good systems for children aged under five and other pupils in the reception class. Assessments completed when children first start school are well used to set individual targets in all the areas of learning, and the teacher maintains detailed and informative ongoing notes on each individual, which are effectively used to plan work.

35. The school also has effective systems for the identification of pupils with special educational needs, and for determining strategies to support them. Individual education plans are satisfactory, with suitably specific targets, although these focus predominantly on literacy skills. Pupils' progress is monitored well, with termly reviews that appropriately include parents and all involved staff. Some pupils make sufficient progress so that they no longer need additional support by the time they leave the school at eleven.

36. The school has recently introduced a system to plot the progress of individual pupils in English, mathematics and science, and to help to set individual targets in mathematics and English. Assessments in English and mathematics are comprehensive and helpful in guiding planning, but assessment systems are not so well developed in other subjects. They are improving satisfactorily in science, particularly with the introduction of commercial schemes of work, and pieces of science work are regularly retained and annotated. However, formal systems for monitoring attainment and progress effectively in information technology, religious education and in foundation subjects have not been established. The headteacher and assessment co-ordinator have given a lot of attention to developing assessment practices, but have yet to monitor sufficiently to ensure that agreed whole-school practices are implemented by all staff, for example, in the use of daily planning books to record ongoing notes about achievement.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37. Evidence from the parents' questionnaires and from their meeting held before the inspection, indicates that parental satisfaction with the school has increased since the previous inspection, so that parents now have very positive views of the school. They have great confidence in both the quality of teaching and the management of the school. Parents feel that the school expects their children to work hard and helps them to achieve their potential academically and socially. Their only area of concern relates to the limited range of extra curricular activities, and the findings of this inspection support these views.

38. The school provides parents with good information about their children's progress through termly consultation meetings and the annual report. The annual reports are satisfactory and provide parents with general examples of what pupils understand and can do. In some cases teachers indicate how pupils can improve their work, although this is not consistent. Newsletters sent out by the headteacher give parents satisfactory information about school life.

39. The school has maintained an effective partnership with parents. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the education of their children, and termly letters are sent home by the class teacher outlining what will be studied that term. This gives parents the opportunity to support the topics at home. Pupils are expected to read at home and the home contact books provide a good means of communication between parents and teachers. In school, parents are encouraged to help with activities such as art and hearing pupils read.

40. The Friends are very active and raise considerable amounts of money that the school has used to improve its resources and accommodation. Recent purchases include new curtains for the hall and the Abacus maths scheme. At present, the Friends have an ample sum put aside to help provide computers for the planned information technology suite.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41. The headteacher provides experienced and thoughtful leadership, and has successfully worked hard to create an effective team of teachers, and raise standards. These efforts are well illustrated in the considerable rise in pupils' achievement in English and mathematics since the previous inspection, and in the maintenance of high standards in science. The headteacher is prepared to play an active role in managing the curriculum, for example in the co-ordination of science and special educational needs. He has also taken a strong lead in making effective use of test and assessment information to analyse trends and target the school's attention to areas needing improvement. Within a caring community, pupils and their contributions are valued and, as a result they respond with high levels of enthusiasm and commitment to their work, and relationships are excellent. Overall the governing body fulfils its roles and responsibilities well, although changes to its membership have limited the extent to which all governors are actively involved in shaping the strategic direction of the school and acting as a critical friend. Most of the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection have been addressed. However, whilst the school values its broad and balanced curriculum, there has not been enough development to some curriculum areas, most notably to information technology. The school is well aware of the need to develop and monitor these areas further and plans for improvement are already in place.

42. The headteacher receives good support from an energetic deputy headteacher, who provides a good role model, both as a teacher and as a subject co-ordinator. In response to the findings of the previous inspection report, the school appropriately reviewed the management structure when the previous deputy headteacher left. The two senior staff members are both responsible for a key stage. The senior team works closely together, and they provide good informal support for their teams. They have also

led training for the introduction of the National Strategies in Literacy and Numeracy, and monitored their implementation successfully. All staff have agreed job descriptions and subject responsibilities. Some co-ordinators have been given time to observe colleagues in order to monitor standards, and whilst effective monitoring programmes have helped to raise standards in English and mathematics, these have not yet been implemented in all subjects.

43. Staff work well together, and there is a good commitment to improvement. Over recent years, the governors have approached the appointment of new staff with much care and thought, effectively taking into account both the needs of the school and financial constraints. Teaching staff are valued. They receive very good informal support, and their professional development is enhanced by annual interviews with the headteacher. The school recognises the need for these arrangements to be established and formalised further. However, although teachers liaise well with learning support staff, there are no formal mechanisms for support staff to meet to share their views and further develop their role. There are sound systems in place for the induction of new teachers, and the school works effectively with a partner institution to provide initial teacher training opportunities for students.

44. The governing body has responded well to the findings of the previous report, and conscientiously sought to improve their monitoring role. They are very supportive of the school, and thoroughly involved in discussing all aspects of the school's work. There have been a number of changes recently to its membership, and as a result some key governors carry many important responsibilities. These responsibilities are very ably fulfilled, and with a more stable membership, governors intend to share these roles more widely. Governors bring a valuable variety of expertise, and have established good relationships with the school management and the staff. These links have developed well through each governor taking a specific interest in one class and a subject area. Governors visit lessons, hold discussions with co-ordinators, and try to gain some overview of standards in each subject. Key governors give much time to helping in classrooms, or regularly visiting the school as a pastoral support for staff. The governing body has established a strong committee structure, which deal effectively with issues relating to finance, personnel and premises. They have been able to manage a difficult financial position successfully during the past few years, and given good support to the headteacher. However, the role of the governing body in holding the school to account for its work and the standards it achieves is still developing.

45. Development planning is generally satisfactory, with a plan that is written to cover a three-year period. However, this is currently under review for the forthcoming three year period, and shorter term planning for the current school year is in outline form indicating targets. The views of teaching staff, governors, parents, and other community groups are helpfully taken into account before targets are agreed. Annual priorities are appropriate, but are not all given specific time and cost allocations. The progress towards targets is reviewed regularly by the management team, and progress reports are given to the governing body at meetings. The school's aims are well met, particularly regarding high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes, within a Christian context.

46. The educational priorities for the school are well supported through its financial planning. Appropriate attention is given to implementing national initiatives, and making good use of associated funding. For example, quality training and effective monitoring programmes have enabled the school to implement the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy effectively. There are efficient and well-organised administrative systems. The new administrative assistant has been well supported by the local authority, and has introduced good procedures for ordering and checking purchases. Expenditure is appropriately monitored by senior staff and governors. There has been no recent auditors' report. The principles of best value are satisfactorily used in the school's use of resources, but the school does not make enough use of new technology, particularly as a learning tool.

47. The school makes satisfactory use of its resources overall. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory, and the headteacher has deployed the teaching staff well to make good use of their skills. However, there is insufficient staff at lunchtimes to ensure adequate supervision, particularly when the field is in use. The school buildings and grounds provide good quality accommodation, which support the teaching of a broad curriculum, for example in science. Good improvements have been made to the site since the last inspection. However, there is no designated outside play area for children aged under five to support their physical development. Learning resources are adequate for all subjects, with the exception of information technology.

48. The school is effective in securing very high standards in English, mathematics and science by the time pupils leave the school at eleven, as well as in standards of behaviour and attitudes to school, whilst the unit cost of expenditure for each pupil is about average. Taking all factors into consideration, the school currently provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

To improve the standards of work and pupils' achievement, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- Raise standards in information technology, by:
 - teaching all aspects of the subject, so that the school meets statutory requirements in the subject;
 - increasing the amount of time pupils spend using information technology;
 - planning opportunities for pupils to use and develop their skills in information technology in other subjects;
 - reviewing the current scheme of work to take account of national guidelines;
 - improving the quality and range of resources, as funding permits;
 - strengthening teachers' subject knowledge and expertise;
 - developing assessment systems to track pupils' achievements and plan future work;
 - monitoring teaching and learning, and new facilities to ensure that they provide value for money.

(paragraphs: 4; 14; 20; 41; 46; 47; 63; 91; 96-99)

To fully provide for the care and welfare of the pupils, the headteacher and governors should:

- Ensure that all staff are fully aware of procedures for Child Protection, by giving up-to-date training for all teaching and non-teaching staff.

(paragraphs: 31; 32)

Other minor weaknesses which the governors should consider for inclusion in the school's action plan are:

- improving pupils' achievement in art at Key Stage 1, and increasing the range of the art curriculum for all pupils by drawing up a scheme of work in line with new national requirements;
(paragraphs: 8; 20; 23; 80-83)
- exploring further ways in which the school could improve provision for music in the absence of staff with specialist knowledge and expertise;
(paragraphs: 14; 23; 100-104)
- developing further assessment systems for science, religious education and the foundation subjects, and monitoring whole-school agreed practices to ensure that all staff consistently follow them;
(paragraphs: 36; 65; 73; 79; 83; 95; 104; 112)
- extending the good monitoring practices in English and mathematics to include all subjects;
(paragraphs: 42; 65; 73; 79; 87; 112)

- reviewing the length of teaching time at both key stages so that it meets recommended guidelines;
(paragraph: 21)
- planning more opportunities for pupils to encounter the spiritual aspects of their development in lessons, and the richness and diversity of other cultures;
(paragraphs: 27; 30)
- acting on the school's identified need to sharpen and further formalise systems for professional development;
(paragraph: 43)
- continuing to develop the governing body's monitoring responsibilities amongst all its members, so that it acts more effectively in its role as critical friend;
(paragraphs: 41; 44)
- developing formal systems of communication with learning support staff to enable them to discuss issues and further extend their role;
(paragraph:43)
- reviewing arrangements for lunch time supervision and the present number of lunch time staff, to provide sufficient supervision of all play areas;
(paragraphs: 33; 47)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

40

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

38

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	12.5	47.5	40	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	211
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	30

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	12	17	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	12	12
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	26	29	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (94)	100 (91)	100 (94)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	12	11
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	27	29	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (88)	100 (94)	97 (94)
	National	82 (80)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest 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	12	14	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	11	11
	Girls	13	12	14
	Total	22	23	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (77)	88 (81)	96 (85)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	10	9
	Girls	13	11	14
	Total	21	21	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (77)	81 (81)	90 (92)
	National	68 (66)	69 (66)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	4
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	4
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	184
Any other minority ethnic group	15

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26:4
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	81

Financial information

Financial year	2000
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	£
Total income	371317
Total expenditure	344770
Expenditure per pupil	1657.5
Balance brought forward from previous year	-6654
Balance carried forward to next year	19893

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	210
Number of questionnaires returned	85

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	34	0	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	45	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	44	5	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	51	9	0	0
The teaching is good.	69	27	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	60	39	1	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	28	1	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	33	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	47	44	9	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	46	49	5	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	45	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	9	45	25	7	13

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Parents' responses were positive in all areas, except on relation to the range of activities outside of pupils' lessons.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

49. All children aged under five enter the reception class at the beginning of the school year in September, and all attend part time. Those children with their fifth birthday during the Autumn term attend full-time from January, and all other children attend full time after Easter. They are well prepared for school through good links with local pre-school providers, and the school's induction programme. During the inspection, 12 children in the reception class were aged under five, and these children are fully integrated with the other pupils in the class. Although cohorts vary, results of the most recent assessments undertaken within their first few weeks in school, shows these children's achievement to be generally above nationally desired expectations. Almost without exception, these children have benefited from pre-school experience. A strong feature of the reception class is the quality of relationships adults have with the children. Within this humorous, patient and caring environment, personal and social skills are particularly well targeted and developed. The children also gain from the effective use of support staff, and from activities which are often interesting and fun. There are careful ongoing assessments of children's progress. This information is well used to set individual targets in all the areas of learning, and ensure that appropriate work is planned to meet their needs. As a result, these children make satisfactory progress overall, and good progress in developing personal and social skills. By the time they enter compulsory education at the age of five, they are reaching standards that are above the nationally desired expectations in all areas of their learning, except in their creative development where their attainment is in line with expectations.

Personal and social development

50. Personal and social skills are taught well. Routines are established early, and as a result these children show good independence in their activities. They put on aprons for painting and wash their hands afterwards as a matter of course. Good attention has been paid to helping them change and dress for physical education, and many do this with little help. Staff skilfully balance the right amount of help with allowing children to learn for themselves, for example during sorting activities in mathematics, where the support assistant reminded children of the rule, but did not complete the task for them. The children work well together in play and work activities, sharing toys and equipment. Although there are lively members of the class, and a minority find sustained concentration difficult, children work industriously, and are well-behaved, attentive and polite. During circle time, they do not have to be reminded about the conventions for talking and listening, and they pass the cuddly toy without prompting and speak with growing confidence to give examples of how they have made others happy.

Language and literacy

51. Language and literacy skills are satisfactorily developed. The National Literacy Strategy has been fully adopted within the class. Children particularly enjoy the texts shared with them during whole-group sessions, for example 'Each Peach, Pear, Plum', and are familiar with the fairy story characters. Higher- and middle-attaining children are already reading familiar words in simple scheme texts and talk about the illustrations. They clearly enjoy reading, and read often at home. With adult support, they match pictures of words that rhyme. Speaking and listening skills are developing well. Children listen attentively, and speak clearly with growing confidence. Most write their name with the appropriate use of lower case and capital letters, and some show awareness of correct use of other letters to start to write words independently. However sometimes, poor letter formation remains uncorrected. The class has writing and role-play areas, but their potential is not fully used throughout the year to encourage writing skills.

Mathematics

52. The National Numeracy Strategy has also been implemented in the reception class, and the quality of teaching in these lessons is generally good. Activities are pitched at a suitable level, and entertaining games ensure that children are attentive and interested. For example, when reinforcing the concepts of bigger and smaller than, and the use of mathematical language in a whole class session. Number recognition up to 10 is confidently established by the time these children reach five years of age, and even the very youngest children are comfortable with counting and using numbers to five. They write the digits correctly, although they are sometimes formed back to front. They sort groups of animals into sets and count small groups of objects accurately.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

53. The overall quality of teaching in this area is satisfactory. Where activities and experiments are interesting, children are tirelessly enthusiastic. For example in a science lesson, the children were captivated by the bubble blowing experiment and by folding fans to create a breeze. They were keen to demonstrate and explain what they were doing, and were making good progress in their understanding and knowledge of how air can be moved and enclosed. They experimented with different sizes and shapes of blowers and made their own under adult supervision, twisting wire carefully to create a large and a smaller shape. They complete very simple picture flow diagrams to show the changes in the life cycles of frogs and butterflies. Children confidently use running stitch on binka material to create pictures of rockets. However, little use of information technology was seen during the inspection.

Physical development

54. Although the children use the quiet area of the playground, which is located directly outside the classroom, there is no designated play area for these children. There are some wheeled toys, but these resources are modest. To compensate, the class has three weekly sessions for physical education in the hall. The teaching of physical skills is generally satisfactory, although even these sessions do not always allow children to fully express their energy and skill, as such sessions are too tightly controlled. During a physical education lesson, these children showed good spatial awareness and co-ordination, and could roll and stop small balls with a bat. Finer skills, such as pencil control and cutting and sticking, are well developed.

Creative development

55. The teaching of creative skills is satisfactory. Children show a confident use of equipment in art activities, such as printing simple bubble pictures, and blowing paint to make patterns. They quickly learn techniques. They were keen to complete pictures of a clown and robot from the story they had read that morning, but this activity lacked the chance to be individually imaginative, and offered little beyond the chance to colour in photocopied pictures. Role play areas follow a theme, for example during the week of the inspection there was an office, but little use of it was observed, and opportunities for free imaginative play for these youngest children are not fully available throughout the year. Children sing with enthusiasm in assembly.

ENGLISH

56. In national tests at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have consistently achieved standards in writing that are well above the national average since 1997, with a well above proportion of pupils at the higher Level 3. In comparison with those schools that have a similarly low proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, these results are above national averages. In reading, standards have also remained consistent, and have been above national averages over the last three years. In comparison with similar schools, the results in 1999 were broadly in line with the national average. In the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999, pupils also achieved standards in English that were well above the national average, with a higher than average proportion of pupils achieving at the higher Level 5. Although test

standards dropped in 1998, they recovered in 1999. These results were in line with the national average in comparison with similar schools.

57. As year groups of pupils are not large, the results of individual pupils have a pronounced impact on the overall percentage scores each year. The school makes careful and detailed analyses of test and assessment data to look at the differences in individual cohorts of pupils, in order to plot pupils' progress and make predictions about future attainment. This information is used to set realistic targets into which the school builds an appropriate element of challenge. The school also uses this assessment to focus on areas needing improvement, for example standards in reading at Key Stage 1, by improving comprehension skills. Early indications are that pupils in the present Year 2 have achieved better standards in this year's national tests in reading and writing than in 1999, particularly in relation to the proportion of pupils achieving at the higher level.

58. Inspection evidence shows that attainment in all aspects of the subject is above national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1, and well above national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. The successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and the good quality of co-ordination and teaching of the subject have helped raise pupils' achievement in English. This is a considerable improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, when pupils were found to be achieving standards that were in line with national expectations at both key stages. The teaching of English is stronger at Key Stage 2, and significantly, at the end of the very end of the Key Stage. In keeping with the progress of all pupils, those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1, and good progress at Key Stage 2, both in lessons and in sessions where they are withdrawn from the classroom.

59. Teachers begin most lessons with question-and-answer sessions to recall topics or introduce new ones, and to establish a good pace for what is to follow. This elicits and further develops good standards of speaking and listening. For example, in a religious education lesson in Year 2, pupils were effectively encouraged to discuss with the teacher the rules of football and how to play snakes and ladders, when considering the value of rules in a society. In a Year 4 history lesson, pupils had carefully devised relevant questions for a visiting senior citizen to find out what social and industrial changes had taken place locally in the last 50 years. Their careful notes showed that they had listened well, and successfully absorbed the factual content of her replies. Pupils' well-developed social skills enable them to collaborate naturally together and exchange information efficiently whether they are directly supervised or not. Speaking and listening are developed well through all areas of the curriculum and in circle and registration time. Pupils listen very well, for example, in assemblies. In Year 2, they were very attentive when listening to difficult explanations about how plants make food. In Year 6, most develop good pronunciation of French through careful listening.

60. There is a very well developed book culture in the school, and reading is a popular activity with the majority of pupils. By Year 2, most pupils enthusiastically recall events in books they have read, and most read with expression. Higher attaining pupils read fluently and confidently, and are aware of punctuation. Pupils of all levels of attainment carefully sound out words they do not know. They distinguish between fiction and non-fiction, use reference books independently, and read other than school books at home. This enthusiasm for reading continues in Key Stage 2, where pupils have well developed tastes in literature, and higher-attaining pupils state why they like particular authors, and they compare different books by the same author. Pupils use books for research and can skim-read and summarise texts well. They develop inference and deduction, for example in Year 3, by analysing the style of an excerpt from a book to decide who wrote it. Books are prominently displayed in classrooms and regular book fairs enhance the profile of reading. Parents collaborate well in developing their children's reading, and there is regular dialogue between home and school by means of reading record books.

61. In writing, pupils make good progress at Key Stage 1 and very good progress at Key Stage 2. This is because the range of writing increases significantly at Key Stage 2. Standards of handwriting are above average for all pupils, as the development of handwriting skills is good. From Year 1, pupils practise a joined style of writing and most adopt this style permanently before Key Stage 2, and as a result, most pupils' writing is neat and well formed by Year 6. Pupils redraft work regularly, which helps them to take a pride in both the presentation and content of their work. Lower-attaining pupils are less consistent in the neatness of their work. Year 1 pupils space their writing well and show a ready understanding of the basic technicalities of grammar. They are already correctly using capital letters, paragraphs and full stops. They compile a personal dictionary, and thoroughly practise the discipline of spelling. In Year 2, pupils experience different styles in writing. For example, they complete empathetic accounts in history, write poems, postcards and instructions for cleaning teeth, and they write scientifically about snails' whorls. They enrich their writing with adjectives and adverbs, and they carefully plan their stories. All pupils benefit from this good range of experiences, although the work of middle- and lower-attaining pupils sometimes lacks substance.

62. At Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 3 write diaries. They rework well-known stories with a new slant, such as 'Cinder-boy'. In Year 5, they refine technicalities, such as the conventions of letter writing and they write poetry in the style of chosen authors. They write personally, for example, about a Victorian school day, following a history event in school. In Year 6, they complete work in a range of styles. For example, they re-tell the story of 'Toad of Toad Hall', and produce balanced written arguments about the dangers of alcohol; they devise posters, write in a journalistic style, and complete the diary of a visit to France. Pupils place commas to assist reading and understanding, and higherattainers write in coherent paragraphs.

63. The value of literacy is reinforced through effective displays in classrooms of work in progress. Key words and definitions for number work are displayed in Year 1, while in Year 2, there are descriptions of mini-beasts. In Year 4, there is historical information about OldBletchley. In Year 6, a variety of styles is on view, ranging from mock-ups of letters to parents about imaginary school trips, to interviews and newspaper reports, such as, 'The hospital trip that became fun'. Written work is good across the curriculum. There is a particularly good range in history, for example, pupils in Year 4 wrote about varied aspects of Greek life. In religious education, Year 5 pupils wrote up notes following a visit from a clergyman who talked about the church in the community. Some pupils use computers at home, but information technology is insufficiently used to develop pupils' literacy skills.

64. The quality of teaching is good overall, and sometimes very good at Key Stage 2. Teaching is strong at the end of both key stages, and particularly so at Key Stage 2. As a result, pupils make good progress overall in lessons, and sometimes very good progress at Key Stage 2. Teachers communicate their enthusiasm well, and they prepare lessons thoroughly so that they are able to teach with confidence. Time is carefully apportioned to each activity, and deadlines are set to ensure a brisk pace of work. For example, in a literacy lesson at Year 6, a brief recall of previous work at the beginning of the session focused pupils' attention quickly. Crisp instructions for group work ensured that no time was wasted in settling to tasks, and a good working ethos was established. Activities are carefully chosen to interest pupils. For example, at Year 3, excerpts from pupils' favourite texts genuinely attracted the interest of pupils, who were therefore keen to comment. Tasks are at an appropriate level to challenge pupils over the whole range of ability. Teachers maintain good standards of discipline. There is a good variety of individual and collaborative work. Appropriate resources are carefully selected. Marking is regular and constructive.

65. The teaching of English is carefully organised throughout the school. The co-ordinator has developed guidelines for all aspects of the National Literacy Strategy and has reviewed its effectiveness. Literacy lessons have been observed, and although opportunities for directly monitoring the work of colleagues are limited, much informal help is provided. Assessment systems are good. Test

and assessment information is carefully built up, particularly at Key Stage 2, and well used. Staff maintain detailed ongoing notes on the progress and achievement of individual pupils. Portfolios of work for each year are usefully available to standardise and moderate provision against National Curriculum expectations. All this information is now being used to track the progress of individual pupils and to set individual targets, although these innovations have only been introduced this year, and are not yet making an impact on progress over time.

MATHEMATICS

66. In the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999, pupils achieved standards that were broadly in line with the national average, and below the national average in comparison with similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was well below the national average. There has been a downward trend in test results over recent years. The school is aware of this, and is tracking cohorts of pupils more closely to focus on particular skills needing improvement and raise standards. Early evidence suggests that this has been successful in the recent national tests for the present Year 2, particularly with regard to increasing the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3.

67. In the tests in 1999 at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils achieved standards that were well above the national average, and above the national average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was also well above the national average. Results over the three year period from 1997 to 1999, show that the school has maintained consistently high standards against national averages.

68. Inspection evidence shows that the present Year 2 are achieving standards above national expectations. The current Year 6 are achieving standards well above the national expectation, with a high proportion of pupils achieving at the higher Level 5. The National Numeracy Strategy has been effectively implemented, and has been used effectively at Key Stage 1 to help raise standards.

69. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils confidently add, subtract, multiply and divide numbers, and higher-attaining pupils work accurately with two digit numbers. Nearly all pupils develop good mental strategies for adding and subtracting, and find patterns in the numbers to make computation easier. Pupils order coins confidently and add them up, and recognise the names and properties of basic shapes. They measure length using centimetres accurately, and read from a clock face to halves and quarters. Pupils have a basic understanding of simple fractions and are learning how to collect, display and interpret data in graph form. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1.

70. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils calculate confidently with numbers to 10,000 and use more challenging processes such as long multiplication and division. They are confident in their use of fractions, decimals and percentages. Most pupils have very good understanding of work relating to shape and space, are confident in handling and interpreting data, and in using and applying their mathematical knowledge to solve problems. Pupils' achievements improve considerably towards the end of the key stage, where they make very good progress in response to challenging teaching that uses and extends their existing skills. Pupils' recorded work in Year 6 shows consistent evidence of the more able pupils being extended, by being given challenging tasks. Similarly, less able pupils receive good support, and therefore make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress also at Key Stage 2.

71. Throughout the school, pupils' numeracy skills are well above average. Younger pupils develop quick recall of number bonds, and most of the older pupils know multiplication tables very well. These good basic skills support work in mathematics and some other areas of the curriculum. For example, in

science, pupils take accurate measurements and are able to tabulate and present their data in appropriate formats. However, the school is still developing its planned links between numeracy and subjects across the whole curriculum.

72. The overall quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Teachers generally plan their lessons carefully, and share their main learning objectives with the class. They have good subject knowledge, which is used to ensure that explanations are delivered at a good pace, with a high level of pupil involvement through questioning. For example, in a numeracy lesson at Year 6, pupils were asked progressively difficult questions when rounding decimals to the nearest number. Higher attaining pupils, who already had a very good understanding of the concept, were invited to pose the questions towards the end of the session in order for them to apply their knowledge. In a lesson at Year 4, all pupils were given 'angle turners' to respond individually to a series of questions regarding different types of angles. As their knowledge of angles improved, they were encouraged to estimate the size of different angles in degrees, and as a result, made good progress throughout the session. All lessons have a good structure, with a brisk mental mathematics session followed by an explanation of the main task for the lesson. The teaching is purposeful, so pupils listen carefully to instructions, are keen to participate in question and answer sessions, and offer their methods and ideas confidently. Lessons are well organised and, as a result, pupils work together quietly, selecting appropriate equipment or resources with a minimum of fuss, and sustain their concentration for long periods. When required to work together, they do so in a supportive and co-operative manner. Plenary sessions are used well to draw together the main learning objectives.

73. The school has a good scheme of work, which effectively incorporates new national guidelines. Good use is made of formal tests and half-term assessments to identify strengths and areas for development in teaching. End-of-year tests are thoroughly analysed, and this provides good information to help teachers to set targets for cohorts of pupils. Short-term targets for individual pupils have also been introduced, to add to their personal profiles, but this practice is comparatively recent. The subject is well co-ordinated, and the co-ordinator gives a good lead through the quality of her teaching. She uses this effectively to monitor the quality of teaching when working with colleagues in their classes, providing useful feedback and pointers for development.

SCIENCE

74. In the national tests for eleven year olds in 1999, pupils achieved standards in science which were well above the national average, with a well above proportion of pupils achieving at the higher Level 5. In comparison with similar schools, these results were above the national average. There have been fluctuations in results over recent years, but overall test standards have risen considerably since 1996. Despite there being differences in the achievements of boys and girls each year, taken over time boys and girls achieve equally well. Teacher assessments for seven year olds in 1999, showed pupils achieving standards which were above the national average, but the proportion of pupils achieving at the higher Level 3 was in line with national averages.

75. Inspection evidence shows that the good standards in science identified in the previous report have been maintained. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school, and are achieving standards that are above national expectations at the end of both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress, as work in lessons is planned appropriately to meet their needs. Commercially produced scribed material has been successfully introduced at Key Stage 1, and in Years 3 and 4, to give more structure to the science curriculum and allow it to be taught as a discrete subject. This material has also helped the teaching of practical and investigational science. Although these improvements are fairly recent, their good effects are already enhancing progress in lessons, which is often good and occasionally very good. However, Years 5 and 6 have not yet benefited

from these developments, and particularly with regard to experimental and investigational work. The school plans to extend the scheme to these classes next year.

76. By the end of Key Stage 1, all pupils make predictions about what might happen in their investigations and explain what they observe, for example in experiments with shadows. Higher-attaining pupils not only explain very clearly what has taken place, but are also suggesting reasons for what has happened. In a science lesson at Year 2, pupils identified air as a gas, and many confidently used associated vocabulary such as, oxygen and carbon dioxide. Higher-attainers accurately predicted what would happen when they measured their chests after taking a deep breath, and suggested why, although some had difficulty explaining this clearly. All these pupils used tape measures, some with adult support, and recorded their results on a planning sheet. In other activities, these pupils sort objects according to whether they are opaque, transparent or translucent, with growing understanding.

77. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 complete experiments on floating and sinking. They also explore forces, and the effects of friction and gravity. Higher- and middle-attaining pupils make predictions, complete good observational notes and record their conclusions. They use names for the major organs in their study of the human body, and describe their functions. There is good evidence of independent work, and of the knowledge and use of scientific vocabulary. Higher attainers present their work very well. In a science lesson at Year 6, higher attaining pupils had almost fully consolidated their knowledge of the reproductive parts of plants and their functions, whilst middle- and lower-attainers were still in the process of establishing their recognition and understanding through careful observations and dissections of a range of different flowers. To support their investigations, they used books, hand lenses and diagrams effectively. They were using the associated terms and vocabulary with increasing confidence.

78. The quality of teaching remains good overall, in keeping with the findings of the previous report. Occasionally, teaching is very good. As a result, pupils have good attitudes to the subject, particularly in those lessons where practical investigations are used effectively to develop understanding. For example, in the lesson at Year 2, investigational skills and expectations were explicitly promoted through explanation, demonstration and constant reminders. Pupils responded positively to this input. The majority of pupils were fully engaged in systematically measuring and recording, applying good levels of concentration and effort, and making very good progress. Timely interventions ensured that a minority of pupils who concentrated less well, were kept on task. At Year 1, well-prepared resources enabled pupils to get on quickly with their air experiments, tackling them with some excitement. At Year 6, the teacher's excitement at making discoveries communicated itself to the pupils who also displayed high levels of interest and application. Weaknesses in otherwise satisfactory lessons were to be found in the lack of sufficiently rigorous questioning, or exploration of ideas and concepts.

79. In keeping with the findings of the previous report, the subject still continues to benefit from having a high profile within the curriculum, and this has ensured its continued development. As a result of staff reviews, the school has adopted a commercial scheme for teaching science to ensure a more progressive development and revisiting of knowledge and skills. It is clear that this has successfully increased the amount and quality of work in those year groups where this approach has been introduced. However, there is more limited work at Years 5 and 6, and less evidence of investigational work, or of recording findings in a variety of forms, including charts, graphs and tables. Assessment is being further developed alongside the introduction of scribed material, but a common format has yet to be established. Many teachers also keep detailed ongoing notes of pupils' individual progress after each topic, but this practice is not wholly consistent. Examples of assessed work are collected each term and annotated against National Curriculum levels, and there is good analysis of test and assessment information, to track progress and predict test results. The co-ordinator takes a strong lead in the analysis of assessment and test information to improve standards. He also supports in lessons and

monitors teaching and planning, although these practices are not yet rigorously and systematically established.

ART

80. Few art lessons were seen during the inspection, but scrutiny of work and display shows that by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have made satisfactory progress in art, and standards match those of pupils of a similar age. However, pupils are not making satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1, where little work was seen. There has not been enough improvement to the art curriculum since the last inspection, although the school is fully aware of this and has now begun to consider how improvements can be made. The curriculum remains too narrow, particularly at Key Stage 1, and in the absence of a scheme of work, there is little progressive development of skills and understanding.

81. At Key Stage 1, pupils in the reception class paint, create bubble prints and large paper collages, and make symmetrical patterns on butterfly shapes. These pupils handle materials and equipment confidently and independently, and quickly learn simple techniques. At Year 1, pupils design patterns for and paint hot air balloons in connection with their science work. Pupils in Year 2 complete simple pressed prints, and use pastels and paint to complete observational pictures of flowers. They also make individual paper collages of ducks and flowers.

82. The amount of work pupils complete increases at Key Stage 2. Observational drawing is a strong element, and these pupils benefit from having sketch books which they use effectively to record and develop ideas. For example, sketches of daffodils by Year 6 pupils are used to create very individual pieces of work in different media, such as pastel, paint and collage. Year 6 pupils also successfully use the school grounds to sketch the natural patterns of bark and leaves. In response to the teaching of a visiting specialist, they completed carefully observed drawings of shells, and some pupils produced confident work, with a good use of shading. The works of other artists are satisfactorily studied during Key Stage 2. For example, pupils in Year 4 study works by Andy Warhol to create their own tin can designs. The styles of Seurat and Van Gogh are also used to make paintings, and sometimes pupils are invited to make a personal response to the work of other artists. Pupils at Year 4 use fabric paints to make quilted pictures.

83. Of the teaching seen, pupils made good progress where techniques and observational skills were given close attention, both from direct teaching, and from effective help and support from adults to individual pupils. The pupils' response was also heightened and sensitised by drawing their attention to the beauty of pattern and shape. The use of good quality materials enhanced both the profile of the subject and the quality of the work. Sometimes however, at Key Stage 1, art activities are little more than colouring in activities, and do not give enough scope for individual, imaginative response. This also reflects the findings of the previous report. The co-ordinator is keen to develop the subject further, and has led staff meetings recently to garner staff opinion and ideas. Effective assessment systems have yet to be developed.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

84. Very few lessons were seen during the course of the inspection, but from this evidence and from the scrutiny of work, it is clear that pupils at both key stages achieve standards overall that are appropriate to pupils of a similar age, with particular strengths in designing and making skills. The personal enthusiasm and expertise of the co-ordinator has ensured that design and technology has maintained an important place in the school's curriculum, and pupils benefit from regular and frequent work in the subject. The progressive development of skills is supported well by a scheme of work, which the school is looking to review in the light of new national guidance material.

85. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils work with a range of materials, and have had experience with food technology, textiles, and design projects which are often associated with work in other topics. For example, during the inspection pupils in the reception class tested different shaped bubble blowers as part of their work on air, and in preparation for making their own. These they competently completed with adult supervision by twisting the wire to make a large and a small shape to blow through. At Year 1, pupils design and make book marks from felt, attaching their patterns with glue. At Year 2, pupils design and construct a fruit salad, and also complete imaginative and thoughtful models of playgrounds using paper, card and straws, which they join with glue and sello tape. They also identify the particular features they like the most.

86. This good range of activities is maintained at Key Stage 2. For example, pupils in Year 5 make bread. In Year 3, party hats are designed and made, using a variety of appropriate paper. At Year 4, models of construction vehicles, such as JCBs and cranes, are powered pneumatically using syringes and tubing. During the inspection, these pupils were busily creating prototypes of shops for which they were planning appropriate electrical security systems. Much care and attention was given to these models, and the pupils were beginning to link the types of goods for sale in the shop with the most effective kind of system. They quickly grasped the skills demonstrated by the teacher for sawing wood and securing joints to make their final model, and paid good attention to safety. At Years 5 and 6 pupils make detailed designs, carefully labelled and showing different angles and views of their design, for example when designing buggies. They evaluate the fonts on packaging to design their own, and consider and survey commercially produced cycling helmets to assess them for safety. However, at both key stages, pupils are not consistently or sufficiently encouraged to evaluate their work in progress to make improvements to their finished product.

87. The subject is well supported by the co-ordinator, who monitors work informally and gives staff help and guidance. The subject benefits from good resources, particularly the discrete kitchen area.

GEOGRAPHY

88. Evidence from a small number of lessons, and a scrutiny of work, show that pupils' achievements have been improved in geography since the previous inspection, particularly at Key Stage 2. In consequence, whilst achievement matches that of pupils of a similar age at Key Stage 1, it is above by the end of Key Stage 2.

89. At Key Stage I, work in geography is linked to work in other subjects, for example science and design technology, and this enables them to apply knowledge gained in other subjects to their work in geography. For example, Year 2 pupils used their knowledge of hot and cold climates to help design different shelters in their topic on homes. Some good use is made of the local neighbourhood and the village to increase knowledge and skills. Pupils draw and interpret basic plans of their route to school, and learn to use map symbols. Their study of the village helps them to consider how they might wish to make changes to help improve the environment, and again, meaningful links are made to art, design technology, history and science. In one lesson, Year 2 pupils looked at different aerial photographs in order to identify geographical features on the ground. They compared areal photographs with satellite images of the earth from space, to help understand the concept of scale and distance. Pupils followed up the discussion by producing scale drawings of a sketch.

90. Further good use is made of local studies at Key Stage 2 to develop geographical skills and understanding. Year 4 pupils learn about the growth of Bletchley as a railway town, and how its situation has affected its development. In one lesson, these pupils considered the impact of a proposed new shopping and leisure complex on the town. They engaged in a successful role-play exercise, putting forward arguments in favour of and against the development, and showing a good understanding of a

range of relevant issues. In Years 5 and 6, pupils study the geography of Milton Keynes. They describe the new town and are able to compare and contrast it with their local village. Map skills are well developed throughout Key Stage 2, with older pupils producing some good quality work. These older pupils also make good progress developing their independent study skills. Year 6 pupils undertake a detailed study of France, prior to their residential visit. As part of this study, they are also encouraged to choose their own geographical themes or areas to research.

91. From those few lessons observed, it was clear that the teaching of geography is often good, and that as a result, pupils are well motivated. This is particularly well illustrated in the good quality in Year 6 about their trip to France. Teachers use an enquiry-based approach and pupils' knowledge of nearby places, to make studies stimulating and relevant to their needs. Since the last inspection, new national guidelines have been used to help improve the curriculum, and link it to a progression of skills in geography. Good links are made with other subjects, but information technology skills are not linked to learning in geography

HISTORY

92. Observations of a small number of lessons and a scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that pupils achievements in history match those of pupils of a similar age at Key Stage 1, and are above these expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection at Key Stage 2. Topics are organised thoroughly, and there is now very good development of historical skills, particularly during Key Stage 2. In consequence, these pupils make good progress. In addition, the subject is being further improved by modifications to the scheme of work, as the school moves towards teaching history as a separate subject.

93. At Key Stage 1, Year 1 pupils are developing an understanding of the passage of time, for example by considering the difference between toys and homes now and in the past. In Year 2, pupils know what a time-line is, and use the locality as a basis for their studies. They write about old and new buildings in Newton Longville and consider aspects of the past such as kitchens. Pupils in Year 1 also extend their historical knowledge when learning about the Montgolfier brothers in connection with science work on air, and they design and paint hot air balloons.

94. At Key Stage 2, pupils study a wide range of historical periods, and continue to develop more advanced skills in historical research. When Year 3 pupils they carry out a detailed study of Old Bletchley they use a good range of primary and secondary evidence, including aerial maps and an educational visit. In Year 4, pupils weigh evidence and information to contrast the social and political characteristics of Athens and Sparta. Literacy skills are well used and promoted and, throughout the Key Stage, there are some good examples of extended writing and careful illustrations in connection with their work. By Year 6, pupils have well-developed research skills, shown to good effect in projects on Victorian Britain. The best of these are extended and detailed, beautifully illustrated and presented, and have a bibliography. Although standards of presentation and the quantity of work of lower-attaining pupils are more limited, they too have researched their work with a good degree of care.

95. Where teaching was observed, the approach was imaginative and stimulating. For example, pupils in Year 4 considered the skill of interviewing to gain historical information. This was in preparation for a meeting with a senior citizen who had agreed to answer questions on Old Bletchley. In keeping with the findings of the previous report, knowledgeable and enthusiastic teaching generated considerable interest amongst the pupils and encouraged them to devise appropriately open questions. The subsequent interview gave the pupils a good opportunity to gain useful information to support their work. They took proficient notes, and later used them to draft a formal account. Although teachers mark work

carefully, there is no formal assessment scheme. There is a good range of resources of high quality and these have a positive effect on pupils' attainment.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

96. At the last inspection, pupils' knowledge and skills were below national expectations at the end of both key stages. Evidence gathered during this inspection, shows that pupils are still achieving standards which are below national expectations. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make unsatisfactory progress across both key stages. This is because the development of the subject has not received enough attention since the last inspection, when it was a key issue. Pupils do not spend enough time learning about information technology or practising their skills, and do not experience the full range of work required by the National Curriculum. Few pupils were observed using information technology during the inspection. Whilst the policy has been appropriately revised since the last inspection, it is not being fully put into practice across the school, particularly at Key Stage 2. There are not enough computers or software, and existing equipment is largely out-dated. Those in classrooms are not used with enough regularity or consistency during lessons. Neither is there sufficient planning for the use of information technology in other subjects, and opportunities are frequently missed in lessons to use computers to enhance pupils' learning. This is reflected in the small amount of work using information technology either on display, or in pupils' work books. However, the school has now begun to address these issues with some urgency, and new staff appointed for the coming school year have information technology expertise.

97. At Key Stage 1, pupils gain some introduction to word processing, using a basic program. However, this is not developed further by opportunities to use computers and start to use their skills. In Year 2, pupils use art programs in lessons. For example, First Paint was used to create rainbow pictures, and the Colour Magic program allowed them to arrange characters against different backgrounds. Some pupils have used Compose World to write their own piece of music to convey different moods. However, Year 2 pupils were unable to experience the control and monitoring aspect of the curriculum, as their mechanical toy was broken.

98. In Key Stage 2, information technology tasks are introduced in short demonstration sessions where the whole class crowds around one monitor. Teachers' confidence and knowledge of software is not always secure, and sometimes focus on a very limited use of software material to complete undemanding tasks, rather than teaching wider skills, for example in the use of desktop publishing packages or appropriate multi-media applications. Pupils in Year 3, satisfactorily use the program Dazzle to draw basic designs in art, and word process some pieces of writing for their local study. Whilst pupils in Year 4 enter and store data, throughout the school, spreadsheets and database programs are not used enough to support work in mathematics and science. Although some CD-ROMS are used for personal research in science, history and other subjects, these research skills are not developed sufficiently. Some programs are used by each class, for example, Plantwise in science, with little progressive development of skills. Similarly, word processing skills are not developed systematically in Key Stage 2, and pupils have limited experience of controlling, monitoring and modelling.

99. Overall, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory, with insufficient emphasis on follow-up work from lead lessons, and too few opportunities taken to link information technology with other subjects. The scheme of work does not take account of new national guidelines, and whole-school assessment procedures have not been developed. The subject has not been sufficiently well led, managed or monitored since the previous inspection, although some lessons have been observed, and under new temporary co-ordination, the school has now begun to look with greater urgency at its development. An

outline development plan is in place to improve the school's facilities and resources, and a discrete area has been identified for a computer room. Funding has been allocated to equip this area appropriately.

MUSIC

100. There was insufficient evidence to judge pupils' achievements overall in music at either key stage. However, in the few lessons observed, pupils' achievement was below national expectation for their age, and whilst enthusiastic, singing skills are underdeveloped. The school does not have any staff with specialist expertise, and although teaching is satisfactory, teachers lack confidence and sufficient subject knowledge, and consequently expectations are not high enough. In addition, the present scheme of work is in need of further review.

101. Although pupils in Year 2 clap short rhythmic fragments back to the teacher, incorporating loud and soft beats, and clap beats from simplified notation, they have only a limited working knowledge of musical skills. During a music lesson, they readily sang 'The Grand Old Duke of York', but their tone was poor. They managed, however, to add an accurate rhythmic accompaniment on untuned percussion, and they understood 'crescendo'. In Year 3, pupils showed their understanding of 'pulse' and sang steadily, but their tone was half-hearted in their 'Punch and Judy' songs. The pupils' responses were inaccurate when the challenge became slightly more difficult, but they understood the teacher's explanation of 'octave'. Pupils in Year 6 write their reactions to various pieces, including Debussy's 'Clair de Lune'. They react sensitively to the music and write some perceptive observations. In a French lesson, in order to consolidate their knowledge of vocabulary, the same class robustly sang words to the tune of 'Le Marseillaise'.

102. In the lessons observed, teachers satisfactorily and enthusiastically used their voices to lead the singing, and this gained a willing response from the pupils. Instructions were given clearly, and resources were well organised, and this helped to maintain the pace of lessons. The practical nature of activities effectively enables pupils of all levels of attainment to fully take part most of the time, and as a result they respond positively and value each other's contributions. However, sometimes lessons are over dominated by the teacher, and consequently, some pupils are not actively involved for enough of the time.

103. All pupils listen to music as they enter and leave assembly, and some teachers exploit this listening opportunity by giving information about the music and the composer to the pupils. By making very good use of recorded accompaniments, the teachers compensate for the lack of a pianist in the school, and pupils sing heartily at assemblies. The school is able to mount regular productions involving music, which give the pupils worthwhile opportunities for social and cultural development. The staging of 'Resurrection Rock' is remembered as a highlight amongst the school's recent extra-curricular provision.

104. The co-ordinator conscientiously carried out a thorough review of provision last year, and has used this to draw up a useful list of appropriate musical activities to ensure the progressive development of skills. The co-ordinator also assists colleagues informally with their planning. Opportunities for assessment are included in each activity, but their use has not yet been fully developed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

105. Standards in physical education have been maintained since the previous inspection, and pupils' achievements match those of pupils of a similar age at the end of both key stages. In the reception class, children take part in a good range of physical activities, including basic gymnastics and dance exercises. They learn to practise bat and ball skills, and extend their co-ordination. In Year 1, pupils are introduced to traditional dances, which they practise and perform confidently. They co-operate well as groups, but are not encouraged to consider what was good about their dances, or how they might be improved.

106. At Key Stage 2, pupils work enthusiastically during physical education lessons. They work sensibly, and try hard to improve their performance, and this helps to enhance their progress. In a Year 5 athletics lesson, for example, pupils were taught a good range of throwing skills, with an appropriate emphasis placed on correct techniques. Pupils kept a record of their best achievements in different throws, and this effectively encouraged them to continuously improve their performance. Year 6 pupils continue to develop their throwing and fielding skills prior to participating in small-sided rounders games. They are given clear demonstrations, and make satisfactory progress in ball skills. Year 6 pupils are also taught to swim at a local pool. Standards in swimming are good, as most pupils swim the expected 25 metres by the end of Year 6.

107. The school provides a varied physical education curriculum, covering a broad and balanced range of activities. A good scheme of work gives clear guidance on the development of skills. A small number of extra-curricular sporting activities also enrich the curriculum, and there is good use made of sports coaching from local associations and of local sporting events. For example, Aylesbury United FC, Bletchley Rugby Club, and the National Hockey Centre at Milton Keynes have all had coaching sessions with pupils. The school also participates in local cross-country and athletics competitions, and plays friendly matches in football and netball. There are sufficient resources, and outside facilities are well used.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

108. Provision for religious education has been improved since the previous inspection, particularly at Key Stage 1 where work is now recorded. Very few lessons were seen, but these together with a scrutiny of written work, indicates that pupils' achievements are meeting the objectives of the local Agreed Syllabus at the end of both key stages.

109. Pupils gain a good level of knowledge and understanding about Christianity and there are good opportunities for gaining insights into important aspects of other world faiths. For example, in Year 1, pupils learn the sequences of events in the Nativity and Easter stories. They begin to understand symbolism by thinking about the giving of Easter eggs, as the representation of 'new life'. Pupils develop the skills of speaking and listening well through religious education. For example, they talk and write about the concern of Saint Francis for living creatures. They begin to understand the need to value people by considering 'my special friend', and to consider morality and the common good, for example, in attitudes to dropping litter. In Year 2, they learn about celebrations, other cultures and the story of Moses. In the lesson seen, their understanding of morality was developed well through discussing the need for rules in sport. This was effectively extended into considering rules for life, when learning about the origins of the Ten Commandments. Pupils gain a good range of knowledge about the Old and New Testaments and they understand that the Torah is important in Judaism.

110. In Key Stage 2, pupils gain a wide range of knowledge about major world faiths. They compare festivals in major world religions. For example, Year 4 pupils write about the Seder meal in Judaism

and gain a good understanding of the symbolism of the food. Good opportunities for writing occur, as in Year 3, when pupils write as one of the Magi about their visit to Bethlehem, or in Year 4 in a letter about a Hindu wedding. By Year 6, pupils know about responsibility and have considered the qualities required in a good leader. They also consider the impact on society of figures such as Gandhi and Martin Luther King. They are familiar with significant elements in the design of mosques and pagodas, and their experiences have been enriched further by visits to local places of worship.

111. The written work in religious education indicates thorough and often imaginative teaching, including drama and role play. In the lessons observed, the value of purposeful discussion in communicating ideas about morality and religion was well demonstrated. Pupils in Year 6 were taught very effectively by a Muslim visitor. He made a deep impression on the pupils by explaining the significance for him of the Qur'an, and by demonstrating the rituals that surround its use. The impact of the lesson was increased by the contribution of a Muslim boy in the class, who was able to recite extracts from the Qur'an from memory. As a result, pupils are open minded and candid in expressing views and asking questions during lessons. They listen very well to adults, and sensitively consider the views of other pupils.

112. Since the co-ordinator of religious education assumed the responsibility a year ago, she has revised the scheme of work, which is reviewed as necessary in the light of experience. The requirements of the local Agreed Syllabus are very well represented, which is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, and there is an appropriate balance between Christianity and other religions. The co-ordinator carries out informal monitoring of teaching, checks colleagues' planning and suggests appropriate teaching methods for individual topics. There is a good range of resources. Teachers carefully mark pupils work, but religious education does not yet have assessment procedures specific to the subject.