

# INSPECTION REPORT

## GRANGE SCHOOL

Kempston, Bedfordshire

LEA area: Bedfordshire County Council

Unique reference number: 109735

Headteacher: Mrs Ellen Zapiec

Reporting inspector: Rita Kirkwood  
10421

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> –13<sup>th</sup> October 2000

Inspection number: 189660

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Halsey Road Kempston Bedfordshire
Postcode:	MK42 8AU
Telephone number:	01234 407100
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Catherine Farr
Date of previous inspection:	30 <sup>th</sup> September 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Rita Kirkwood 10421	Registered inspector	French	How well the school is led and managed
Ann Moss 9079	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
Ingrid Bradbury 21397	Team inspector	English Music English as an additional language	
Kathy Hooper 2971	Team inspector	Mathematics History Geography	
David Hughes 20444	Team inspector	Design and technology Physical education	How well pupils are taught
Mary Kingsley 12920	Team inspector	Art and design Religious education Equal opportunities	Curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
Frances Thornton 5714	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology	The school's results and pupils' achievements Special educational needs

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**PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT****INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Grange School is a day community special school for boys and girls aged five to sixteen. The school is situated in the small town of Kempston, West of Bedford. One third of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. At the time of the inspection there were 154 pupils on the school roll. All the pupils have moderate learning difficulties and, in addition, twenty one have autistic spectrum disorders. All pupils have statements of special educational needs. Eighteen pupils have English as an additional language and are from eight different ethnic backgrounds.

**HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is an effective school, in which pupils make good progress in their learning, achieve good standards in relation to their abilities and enjoy their time at school. Effective leadership and management, good teaching and the broad and balanced curriculum all contribute to the school's success in meeting the needs of all pupils. The school continues to provide good value for money.

**What the school does well**

Teaching and learning were good or better in two thirds of lessons seen, being very good in art and design in the secondary department and in music, except in key Stage 1.

The very good management of pupils promotes the positive attitudes they have to learning and to the good relationships within the school.

The curriculum is enhanced by the excellent range of extra-curricular activities and the provision of homework.

Provision for the moral, social and personal development of pupils is very good.

The programme of staff development makes a significant contribution to the growing expertise of both teachers and learning support assistants.

The inclusion of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders is very successful.

The links with parents are very effective.

**What could be improved**

The link between pupils' learning and the planning of lessons.

Transition arrangements for pupils transferring from the primary to secondary departments.

The use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.*

The school has many more strengths than weaknesses. The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the governing board.

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

Improvement since the last inspection, which was in September 1996, has been good. The school has been successful in addressing the issues from the last report. The quality of teaching has greatly improved and is now good, with a number of strengths. This is having a positive effect on the behaviour of pupils and their attitudes to learning, which are consistently good in lessons and generally around the school. The provision of homework and the encouragement for pupils to develop their independence and private study skills has increased their achievements. The range and frequency of extra-curricular activities is impressive and regular monitoring ensures pupil participation. The quality of pupils' individual education plans has improved. The school is successful in meeting the challenging targets it has set and has increased the routes to external accreditation for pupils in Key Stage 4. Art and music are strengths in the curriculum and careers education and the work-related curriculum continue to be very effective. There has been improvement in the content of the curriculum in a number of subjects and the provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is now good overall. Learning resources have improved and are now satisfactory. Child protection procedures and responsibilities are firmly in place and health and safety issues relating to the accommodation have been addressed.

## STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

<b>Progress in:</b>	<b>by age 11</b>	<b>by age 16</b>	<b>Key</b>	
speaking and listening	B	B	very good	A
Reading	B	B	good	B
Writing	B	B	satisfactory	C
Mathematics	B	B	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	B	B	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B		

\* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

The school sets targets each year for pupil achievement in end of key stage tests and in GCSE and Certificate of Achievement examinations at the end of Key Stage 4. Standards reached are higher than for the average for schools of this type. Pupils achieve good standards in relation to their abilities and there is no difference in the achievements of boys and girls, pupils for whom English is an additional language or those with additional special needs.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very good. They enjoy school and are enthusiastic about learning. They work hard and are proud of both their own and the school's achievements.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good throughout the school, both in and out of lessons. Pupils are courteous to staff and visitors and considerate towards each other.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of pupils is very good. They learn to take increasing responsibility for their own learning. Relationships between pupils and with staff are very good.
Attendance	Attendance is good and is improving.

Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. Involvement in extra-curricular activities enhances pupils' achievements and strengthens relationships between pupils and with staff.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>aged 5-11</b>	<b>aged 11-16</b>
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

The school is successful in meeting the needs of pupils and they learn well. Nearly all the teaching seen was satisfactory or better. In over one lesson in five teaching seen was very good or excellent. There is no whole school approach to link teachers' planning to day-to-day assessment of pupils' learning.

Teaching of English, mathematics and science is good overall. The use of homework makes a good contribution to pupils' learning and the introduction of the literacy hour is having a positive effect on pupils' achievements in the primary department. The National Numeracy Strategy is being used effectively. There are now good

opportunities for pupils to carry out practical investigations. The teaching of personal, social and health education is good, both in structured lessons and throughout the school day. Every opportunity is taken by staff to support pupils developing their independence.

#### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of the pupils. Opportunities for learning are considerably enhanced by the wide range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported by staff. An additional member of staff has recently been appointed specifically to support these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good and very good for their moral, social and personal development. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has very good procedures for ensuring the welfare of pupils. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic achievement are satisfactory.

The school has very good relationships with parents and works well with them to support the learning of the pupils. The information provided for parents is very good and the school responds rapidly to any concerns parents may have.

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

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management of the school are good and ensure that an orderly and happy environment is maintained, in which pupils learn well.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body provides good support for the school and shares the school's vision for its future development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good systems are in place to monitor the attendance and academic achievement of pupils and their progress towards the school's annual targets.
The strategic use of resources	The school's use of resources, including specific grants, is very effective and supports the school's improvement programme.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. Teachers and learning support assistants have the necessary expertise to match the demands of the curriculum. Specialist accommodation for some subjects, including music, science and physical education is restricted, but is used well. The school plans carefully in order to make the best use of resources to support the learning of pupils.

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

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The progress their children make at school, including their growth in self-esteem</li> <li>The qualifications the school offers to older pupils</li> <li>The quality of teaching</li> <li>The way the school deals with pupil behaviour</li> <li>Homework and the support available to parents to help their children's learning at home</li> <li>The school's rapid and effective response to parents' concerns</li> <li>The range of extra-curricular activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transition arrangements for children between the primary and secondary departments</li> </ul>



The inspection team supported the parents' views. The school is aware of the need to improve transition arrangements and plans for this were under discussion at the time of the inspection.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Throughout the school, pupils achieve good standards in relation to their abilities. There is no difference in the achievements of boys or girls or pupils for whom English is an additional language. Achievements of pupils at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are in line with national averages for pupils in schools of this type. Pupils' achievements at the end of Key Stage 3 are in line in English and mathematics, but in science achievements are well above the average for pupils in similar schools. Achievements at the end of Key Stage 4 are better than the national average for pupils in schools for moderate learning difficulties. In the 1999 GCSE examinations, 92% of pupils achieved at least one grade A to G. The national average for pupils in schools for moderate learning difficulties was 17.9%. The ability range within the school is wide and a few pupils in the secondary department are achieving standards in line with national expectation, particularly in art and music.
2. Throughout the school pupils achieve good standards in relation to their own abilities because teaching is good and pupils want to learn and do behave well. In nearly two thirds of the lessons learning was good or better. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders make good progress whether taught as a separate group or included in the main school classes. Pupils with additional special educational needs make good progress.
3. There is a good emphasis on literacy in most subjects. Throughout the school pupils' achievement in English is good. Many pupils answer questions confidently and read simple sentences. Higher attaining pupils write their own accounts of scientific experiments and word-processed a job application in an information and communication technology lesson. Lower attaining pupils complete their writing with staff support. There is a good emphasis on numeracy in science. Pupils interpret graphs and analyse data. Pupils' achievements in mathematics are good overall. In science standards of achievement are good, particularly at Key Stages 3 and 4 where the progress of some pupils is very good. Pupils achieve well in art and design and in music where the teaching is particularly good. All teachers place a very good emphasis on teaching personal and social skills. As a consequence, pupils' personal development is very good.
4. Throughout the school, standards of achievement in information and communication technology are at least satisfactory. Pupils achieve good results by the end of Key Stage 4. However, across the school standards are less than could be expected because of insufficient use of information and communication technology in other subjects. There are satisfactory plans to improve provision in subjects, initially by staff training.
5. Pupils obtain accreditation in a wide range of subjects. In 2000, pupils achieved GCSE grades in English, English literature, mathematics, science, art and music. In addition, most pupils achieved Certificate of Achievement in English, science, design and technology, information and communication technology, geography and history. All Year 11 pupils achieved accreditation in mathematics from the Bedfordshire Mathematics Group.
6. Pupils make good progress towards targets on their individual education plans. These targets state clearly what is expected of pupils and teachers are able to measure their progress. There is good provision for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder and for pupils with additional special needs. Pupils with additional special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language make good progress. Overall, standards have made good improvement since the last inspection.

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

7. The good standards of behaviour throughout the school have been well maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils' attitudes to the school are now very good. They are very responsive and interested, enthusiastically taking part in all the activities provided for them. Pupils are keen and eager to learn. They work and play very well together. Pupils are confident and establish very good relationships with each other and with adults. They share their knowledge and skills confidently with the rest of the class, and this has a positive effect on learning.
8. The pupils enjoy school. They are encouraged to think of other people. For example, they collect money for charities. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and they benefit from being encouraged to take responsibility, such as acting as monitors. The "buddy system" allows an older pupil to work with a younger one. The pupils' response to the values and standard set by the school is very positive. They develop good habits of working, settle quickly to tasks and persevere with them throughout lessons.
9. The pupils' behaviour in and around school is good. They are well behaved at lunchtime and the school is an orderly, happy and calm community. Pupils clearly understand what is expected and respect the rules and conventions that exist to safeguard them. Any incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with quickly and competently. The rewards and sanctions systems are well established and incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils treat each other and adults with courtesy and respect and are very aware of the impact of their actions on others. They show a growing understanding of each other and of different points of view. The school is currently investigating setting up a school council.
10. The personal development of the pupils is very good. Staff provide good role models. There are very good schemes of work for personal, social and health education. It is included in the timetable, but is also reinforced across the curriculum. This makes a positive contribution to the development of pupils' awareness of themselves and others. The pupils' self-esteem is regarded as important, and this has a positive effect on their learning. Pupils are quick to celebrate their own and others' successes. The work of all pupils is valued and this enhances their personal and social development.
11. The attendance figures of the school are above the national average for this type of school and they are improving. The school is monitoring attendance figures efficiently and has effective strategies for improving attendance. Registration figures are now properly documented and effectively implemented, meeting statutory requirements. There have been no exclusions in recent years.

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

12. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good. In almost all of the lessons observed during the inspection teaching was sound or better. In two thirds of lessons teaching was good or better and very good or better in over one fifth of lessons. On occasions teaching was excellent. Pupils' learning and achievements closely match the high quality of teaching. Pupils enjoy learning and form good and co-operative relationships both with teachers and with each other.
13. In English and mathematics teaching is good overall. Literacy and numeracy skills are well taught and enable the pupils to achieve well. The teaching of basic skills is good at all key stages, with attention being paid to speaking and listening and communication. Many lessons include lively discussions, where pupils listen well and answer questions confidently and contribute their own ideas. In science, French, physical education and religious education teaching is good and it is very good in music and art and design in the secondary department. The teaching of design technology, geography, history and information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory, although teaching of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Teaching of personal, social and health education is good.

14. Where teaching is good or better teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of both the subject matter and of the individual needs of pupils. This results in the positive attitudes and enthusiasm of pupils. For example in a Year 7 science lesson, pupils became completely absorbed in learning that gravity and air resistance act as opposing forces. Teachers use a wide range of teaching strategies and are skilful in presenting information in ways that are relevant and accessible to all pupils. They adjust their lessons to accommodate the varying learning needs of pupils, including those with additional special needs. However, there is no whole school approach to the use of the on-going assessment of individual pupil achievement to inform teachers' planning. Teachers and learning support assistants work hard to maintain the interest and involvement of pupils. However, the effectiveness of teaching in some lessons is limited by the use of a limited range of materials and variety of planned activities for pupils of differing abilities.
15. Teaching is effectively monitored by the headteacher and Senior Management Team. The development of the role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring the teaching of individual subjects is not adequately developed. Learning support assistants are well deployed and are committed and hard working. They make a valuable contribution to lessons and provide consistent support for pupils with additional needs, helping them to access and concentrate on their work. The setting of homework at all key stages is a strength of the school. Teachers devise tasks that pupils complete at home or in the school homework club. Homework is monitored and well assessed. Assistance is offered to parents so they are confident to support their children's study at home.

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

16. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. The range of curriculum opportunities is good and is relevant to pupils' needs. There is a good emphasis on literacy and numeracy. The provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent and this is a very good improvement since the last inspection when the range of extra-curricular activities was narrow and did not provide for the wide range of pupils' needs. Pupils at Key Stage 4 work towards accreditation on courses including GCSE and the Certificate of Achievement or the Unit Award Scheme. Pupils at the end of the other key stages participate in Standard Assessment Tasks.
17. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection. Art and design and music are strengths and careers education and the work-related curriculum continue to be very effective. There are opportunities for older pupils to have work experience outside the school. There has been improvement in the content of the curriculum in a number of subjects. The statutory monitoring of policies by the governing body is rigorous and provides governors with a clear understanding of what is taught. The monitoring of planning is carried out by subject co-ordinators, although this is inconsistent. In some subjects, for example, religious education, there is good liaison between the primary and secondary departments. However in some curriculum areas, liaison between primary and secondary departments is informal and does not offer optimum support for pupils entering their secondary phase of schooling.
18. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy and there has been an improvement in pupils' achievements in English. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has brought structure to the teaching of mathematics.
19. Provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. The curriculum is well planned and co-ordinated and closely linked to the pupils' individual education plans. There are a number of opportunities during the day when personal and social education is promoted, for example in assemblies, at lunchtime, during school trips and when the register is taken. Sex education is taught at an appropriate level for the pupils.
20. The school has a unit for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. These pupils are included in the classes, with additional support from learning support assistants, for an increasing proportion of the school day. This approach is very successful. Pupils with additional special needs, including sensory impairment, receive appropriate support.

21. The school provides many opportunities to enrich the curriculum. The provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent, with a wide range of before-school, lunchtime and after school clubs. Pupils participate in the clubs with enjoyment and enthusiasm. The school also runs residential trips, for example to Blue Peris Outdoor Education Centre in Wales. The steel band has enjoyed playing at various venues including the Royal Albert Hall. Some pupils participate in horse riding lessons each week. Pupils have access to mentors from local industry and commerce. There are links with other schools to share Theatre Group Presentations. Pupils all have equal access to the curriculum.
  
22. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with very good opportunities for moral and social development. During assemblies pupils have the opportunity for reflection and during lessons there are opportunities for spiritual development. For example, pupils displayed incredulity at an aspect of a program on the computer. Staff provide very good role models and there are many opportunities for pupils to reflect upon their own and others' behaviour. Pupils learn to behave in a socially acceptable way and to help each other. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are made aware of their own culture by visits to Bedford and Luton Museums and learn of other cultures in lessons, for example in religious education, French, music, geography and history.

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

23. The school has very good procedures, supported by clear policies, for ensuring pupils' welfare. There are high standards of pastoral care. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good and those for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic attainment and progress are satisfactory. However, the use of assessment information in curricular planning is unsatisfactory. Good use is made of record sheets to evaluate levels at which pupils are working and these records are used to plan individual targets. Arrangements for statutory assessment are well managed and careful analysis is made of the results to set targets for each key stage. This analysis forms a very useful evidence base in showing progress from one key stage to the next in core subjects at all key stages and other subjects at Key Stages 3 and 4. Day-to-day assessment is not used in all subjects to inform curriculum planning and its use is unsatisfactory in history and geography. The use of on-going assessment is satisfactory in most subjects and good in art and design, music and physical education. Lesson plans often show general learning objectives that are linked to the curriculum rather than to individual pupils. Specific targets for individuals are not noted and methods to meet individual objectives for pupils are not always included. However, teachers and staff know individual pupils very well, and are aware of their physical, emotional and intellectual needs.
  
24. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. Behaviour management remains a strength of the school. Staff have very high expectations for good behaviour and very effective measures are in place for promoting discipline and good behaviour. Teachers and learning support assistants make a significant contribution to providing a caring atmosphere and a safe environment for learning. There are very good procedures in place for child protection. There is a good range of accredited courses at Key Stage 4. When they leave at sixteen, all pupils have achieved some form of accreditation.
  
25. A bilingual learning assistant has recently been appointed to work with pupils who have English as an additional language. She is at present undertaking training. Work in this area is at an early stage of development. However, there are no issues concerning the equality of opportunity for these pupils in lessons, where they are well supported by teachers and learning support assistants as and when necessary.
  
26. There are very good schemes of work throughout the school for supporting the pupils' personal development, and these are used at every opportunity, such as in class circle time and visits by the community policeman. Good use is made of music therapy and the mentor system, in which older pupils support younger ones, provides further support for pupils. Pupils are included in self-assessment. Their personal development is further enhanced by school trips such as a day trip to France, and residential visits for older pupils.

27. The working environment is safe and pupils are well supervised at work and at play. Although the site manager and health and safety committee make rigorous informal observations of the site, there has been no recent formal risk assessment. The health and safety issues mentioned in the last report have all been addressed, and the school is waiting for funding to make further improvements.

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

28. The school has very effective links with parents, who are very supportive of its work. These links consolidate and extend pupils' learning by the very good use of homework, homework diaries and through parents' evenings. Annual reports to parents and annual review reports are clear and useful. The quality of relationships between parents, staff and governors is very good. Parents feel welcomed into the school, where some make a valuable contribution by helping in the classrooms, or work on specific projects in the school such as helping with the Summer Fete. Distance from the school for many parents makes personal contact difficult at times, but there is a high rate of parental attendance at sports days and special assemblies. The Friends of Grange parents' group is very active in raising money and has provided a range of learning resources for the school. Some parents assist with extra-curricular activities.
29. The support for families with English as an additional language is good. They are always invited to bring a friend with them to translate if necessary, and the appointment of a bilingual learning assistant offers additional support. Parents speak highly of the systems for informal communication with staff about day-to-day matters and school events. Parents appreciate the informative school prospectus and the governors' annual report. They receive very good information about the school through monthly newsletters. Parents are happy about the homework that their children bring home and the support available for them and their children.
30. Staff are regarded as very approachable and seen to have a thorough knowledge of the children. Parents are pleased with the way their children settle happily and are eager to attend school, although some were concerned about support for their children when they transfer from the primary to secondary department. This is supported by inspection evidence.

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

31. The school is very well led by the headteacher, who has a clear vision for the school that is shared by members of the senior management team and the governing body. There is a very positive ethos that supports the learning of all pupils. The school has been successful in making significant progress towards resolving the issues identified in the last inspection report. Subject co-ordinators have clearly defined responsibilities and their role is developing well in the secondary department. The informal nature of the liaison between primary and secondary co-ordinators limits the effectiveness of subject co-ordination across the school and therefore progression. The school has focused on the training of teachers and learning support assistants, in order to increase both their subject expertise and their knowledge of special educational needs. This has been very successful in the development of a skilled, knowledgeable and committed team.
32. The school has a policy on the monitoring of teaching and the process has started, with monitoring by members of the senior management team. The headteacher and deputy head have significant curriculum responsibilities, which limits the time available to them for monitoring the school's work.
33. The governing body is supportive and effective in fulfilling its responsibilities. Members of the governing body play a significant part in the life of the school, serving on a range of sub-committees, attending school functions and paying informal visits to the school.

34. Financial procedures are thorough and resources are efficiently used to support pupils' learning. However, there is some uncertainty about future funding levels, which makes forward planning difficult for the school. Administration is very efficient and the monitoring of expenditure is very effective.
35. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources overall are satisfactory. There is a good match of teachers to the needs of the curriculum. The programme for staff development is good and there are good induction procedures for new staff. Learning support assistants are generally well deployed and promote pupils' learning well.
36. The accommodation is satisfactory although space is limited, particularly in science, physical education and music. This restricts the range of activities experienced by the pupils. For example, stacked chairs limit activities in physical education in the hall. The building is well maintained and attractive. It is enhanced by good quality displays of pupils' work. There is now a good library that is well used and supports pupils' literacy well. Learning resources are satisfactory, having been improved since the last inspection. Good strategic planning has enabled the school to make informed decisions about where and how to improve learning resources. Expenditure is low in comparison with schools for pupils with a similar range of disabilities. The school continues to provide good value for money.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

37. In order to continue to improve the learning and achievement of pupils the headteacher and staff need to:
- Strengthen the link between pupils' learning and achievement and teachers' planning, by developing
- a whole school approach to assessment, recording and planning; (paragraphs 14, 23)
  - transition arrangements between primary and secondary departments; (paragraph 17)
- Increase the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum, by developing a whole school approach and increasing staff expertise. (paragraphs 4, 13, 87)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	117
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	55

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1.5	21	44	32	1.5	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*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	154
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	53

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	18

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	7.23

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.80

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	8
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	0
White	137
Any other minority ethnic group	0

**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, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

**Teachers and classes****Qualified teachers and classes: Y1 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	19
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	8.7
Average class size	12.0

**Education support staff: Y1 – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	447

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	912,350
Total expenditure	936,198
Expenditure per pupil	6159
Balance brought forward from previous year	39,742
Balance carried forward to next year	15,894



***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

**Questionnaire return rate**

out

Number of questionnaires sent

157

returned

Number of questionnaires

99

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	25	6	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	55	32	4	1	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	38	3	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	38	6	2	4
The teaching is good.	67	24	2	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	27	5	2	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	16	5	2	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	26	0	2	1
The school works closely with parents.	63	22	6	3	4
The school is well led and managed.	67	23	0	3	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	24	3	1	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	28	5	3	21

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

**ENGLISH**

38. The pupils' achievements in English are good. They enter the school at Key Stage 1 with the majority of them working towards level one of the National Curriculum. All pupils at Key Stage 4 take some form of external accreditation, either GCSE or Certificate of Achievement and Unit Award Scheme. All pupils work on programmes of study, which are based in the appropriate key stage. School records and an analysis of results show an improvement in achievement since the last inspection.
39. The pupils' achievements in speaking and listening are good. Pupils at Key Stage 1 are beginning to listen carefully. They ask and answer questions appropriately. They make a huge effort to remember a story and retell it. They talk about themselves in a group. At Key Stage 2 pupils make contributions to lessons by speaking confidently and fluently, asking appropriate questions. They discuss work in pairs and answer questions. The older pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 discuss the books they are reading, demonstrating their skills of story analysis through discussion. They listen carefully and attentively, which enables them to answer questions confidently. At the end of Key Stage 4, pupils take part in discussions about their set texts, remember colloquialisms, and explain words. For example, they know the meaning of *determined*, *dishonest* and *observant*. Pupils are happy to explain their work to visitors and speak with confidence and fluency.
40. Overall pupils' achievements in reading are good. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are beginning to recognise key words from a story. Examples are *no*, *my*, *dad*, *I*, *here* and *in*, both with lower case and appropriate capital letters. They handle books appropriately and are beginning to understand that print carries meaning. They learn high frequency words from the National Literacy Strategy and higher attaining pupils know up to twenty of these. They listen to stories with concentration and pupils match words on flash cards with those in the story. Pupils read their reading scheme books with expression and with very little prompting. They successfully predict outcomes. They are learning initial sounds and are beginning to sound out simple words. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils read more accurately, with expression and understand the use of phonics to make words. Pupils recognise a speech bubble. They spell simple words and change the initial letter to make different words. Examples include changing *it* into *bit*, *sit* and *lit*. Challenging work is set for different levels of ability. By the end of Key Stage 3, higher attaining pupils explain their previous reading and are beginning to analyse stories and read with greater fluency. They study set texts. They read with fluency and accuracy and read at home for pleasure. By the end of Key Stage 4, the majority of pupils are reading set texts for examinations, including *Beowulf* and *A Kestrel for a Knave (Kes)*. They summarise the story and discuss what they have read. They work well in pairs, reading the script and discussing what they have read. They use the library regularly and have access to a good range of age appropriate fiction and non-fiction.
41. Pupils' achievements in writing are good. They become more confident as they get older and their handwriting improves. However, little cursive script is used, although some pupils are capable of writing in this way. They develop letter formation skills and handwriting improves in Key Stages 1 and 2. At Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils write creatively, as well as producing narrative to complete substantial pieces of work. Work is well presented throughout the school. The emphasis on spelling is very good and forms the basis of some of the homework. This helps pupils to learn to spell in a structured way.
42. The pupils' responses and attitudes to English are good at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and very good at Key Stage 4. They concentrate well, take turns and are very enthusiastic and keen to respond. They listen to others and complete their work in a quiet and purposeful way. Older pupils organise themselves, work well together, concentrate hard and move quietly from one activity to another. Pupils at Key Stage 4 are extremely well behaved and involved in the lessons, know what is expected of them and have a very good rapport with staff and each other. They sustain their concentration for long periods of time, while working

purposefully. There is no difference in the progress made by boys and girls or by pupils for whom English is an additional language.

43. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. At Key Stage 4 it is very good and occasionally excellent. Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stages 1 and 2. In the most successful lessons teachers have very good subject knowledge, especially when using set texts. They wait an appropriate amount of time to give pupils the opportunity to answer questions and there is very good use of questioning to help pupils' recall. Lessons are well paced to help pupils to concentrate and resources are used well to encourage and sustain effort. Teachers make good use of their voice levels and inflection to help pupils learn specific points. For example they verbally signal the start of speech passages in a text. Lesson objectives are communicated to the pupils so that they understand what they are learning. Teachers make good use of praise to increase pupils' confidence. They also have excellent questioning techniques, which help pupils to develop their vocabularies and to analyse characters in a book. The use of a spelling scheme is consistent throughout Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 and homework is used well to support this. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, cursive script is not encouraged and the pronunciation of phonics is not always correct. This means that pupils may learn incorrect pronunciation, which will inhibit their learning at a later stage. At times the pace of the lessons is slow. Learning in lessons is not always effectively supported by the use of dictionaries.
44. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Planning is good at Key Stage 4 and satisfactory at other key stages. Links between the pupils' individual educational plans and their English targets are sometimes unclear and this is unsatisfactory.
45. The co-ordination of the subject is shared between primary and secondary co-ordinators who manage the subject in their departments well. Monitoring and evaluation of English are good. There are good policies and schemes of work. The literacy hour is supported by recording sheets, which show progress over time. There is a very good scheme of work for the senior department covering all aspects of the National Curriculum. The primary department now has a resource room, which includes the library. This is satisfactorily stocked with a range of appropriate books, including big books. There are also satisfactory resources in the senior library. There are books available in all the classrooms in addition to the libraries and there is a satisfactory range of dictionaries and work sheets in the senior department. Resources prepared by the teachers are satisfactory although sometimes they are not specifically adapted to meet individual pupils' needs.

## **MATHEMATICS**

46. Standards in mathematics are good overall. In the primary department, pupils' standards are good. At Key Stage 1 pupils count up to five and recognise numbers up to ten. Higher attaining pupils count up to 100 and are beginning to use addition. For example, they know that two and three make five. At Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress in understanding numbers because they have regular opportunities to use them in games. They are learning to make calculated estimates and guesses and to use standard and non-standard units to measure. For example, Year 6 pupils used their feet and metre sticks to measure the length and breadth of the playground. Pupils are becoming very confident with numbers. They add ten on to single digit numbers and find the missing number when adding two single digit numbers to make ten. Higher attaining pupils do this in their heads, whilst lower attaining pupils use number grids for support. They are familiar with tens and units. Higher attaining pupils add and take away sums to 25 in their heads, add up to a pound when buying sweets and crisps from the shop and tell the time in hours and half hours. They are familiar with 2 and 3 dimensional shapes. During Key Stages 1 and 2, activities are enjoyable and relevant and pupils persevere well in lessons. They are eager to learn and often ask good questions.
47. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils are attaining satisfactory standards. They understand the basic rules of computation. Higher attaining pupils multiply two digit numbers using a number grid. Lower attaining pupils learn to count up to 20. As a result of the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, higher attaining pupils in Year 7 attain at similar levels to many in Year 9. They add numbers up to 1,000, construct bar charts from collected data and identify missing numbers in equations.

48. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' standards are good. They tell the time using digital and analogue clocks. They use calculators confidently and accurately, estimate, multiply and divide figures up to 1,000. Higher attaining pupils add pounds and pence in their heads. They analyse and quantify data in a range of ways and are developing an understanding of median, mode and range in order to interpret their results. Higher attaining pupils calculate angles and the area of a circle. Lower attaining pupils are reminded to add a nought on to the end of additions using pounds and pence. Pupils have insufficient experience of using information and communication technology to make calculations and to present their work.
49. Results from national tests and examinations are good when compared with similar schools, particularly at Key Stages 1, 2 and 4. All year 11 pupils achieved accreditation in mathematics from the Bedfordshire Mathematics Group.
50. Overall, teaching is good. It is good in the primary department and at Key stage 4. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 3. The best teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 has a number of positive features. Planning is arranged so that learning occurs in small steps and new knowledge and skills are reinforced well before moving on. Pupils, including those with autistic spectrum disorders, use everyday objects to understand concepts. For example, they use sets of socks before they are shown more abstract ways of ways of multiplying numbers. Familiarity with numbers is rehearsed frequently through games and pupils work figures out in their heads. As a consequence, pupils become confident with numbers and enjoy manipulating them. They are encouraged to make calculated guesses and estimates before checking their results. Pupils are given strategies for checking their work rather than only getting the right answer. Good teaching gives pupils time to respond to questions. In the best lessons, teaching strategies are appropriate for pupils with poor literacy skills, allowing all to be successful. Some teachers in the primary department set different levels of work for different groups of pupils according to their ability. However, there is insufficient modification of activities matched to pupils' individual needs.
51. The best lessons in the secondary department enable pupils to gain new insights. For example, in a Year 9 class, one pupil exclaimed, "Sir, it's a pattern! I've got it!" when using a number grid to work out multiplication of numbers. There is a good emphasis on mental mathematics and pupils have access to a range of appropriate resources to support them in their calculations. Pupils are encouraged to identify where they have problems and successful strategies for working sums out are shared. There is a good pace, which helps pupils to maintain their concentration throughout the lesson, with sufficient time to reinforce the main learning points. In the secondary department teachers are sensitive to the progress of individual pupils. Higher attaining pupils are appropriately challenged. Occasionally there is a narrow range of individual activities. This prevents pupils from making very good progress. In good lessons, vocabulary is well reinforced, for example, *add*, *plus* and *more than* when working on addition. Marking in Key Stage 4 is constructive and helps pupils to improve. Pupils with additional special needs, for example those with visual impairment and autistic spectrum disorders, are well integrated. Teachers' planning is good overall. It is satisfactory at Key Stage 3, where there is insufficient detail in planning and outcomes for different pupils are not identified. There is little on-going assessment at Key Stage 3 and teachers' records do not yield information that could help them to plan lessons to meet individual pupils' needs precisely.
52. The use of the National Numeracy Strategy is developing well in the primary department. A system of recording individual progress is developing but is not yet well established. Developments in the secondary department have been limited by the lack of a co-ordinator. An adequate assessment system is yet to be established. Whilst the time devoted to the subject in the secondary department is satisfactory, pupils do not have daily opportunities to work with number. The links between Key Stages 2 and 3 are weak and this affects pupils' progress at the beginning of Key Stage 3. Monitoring of colleagues in the classroom is satisfactory. Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently throughout the department. Since the last inspection, the National Numeracy Strategy has been influential in improving standards in the primary department. Resources are satisfactory.

53. Pupils in the primary department develop their numeracy skills well across the curriculum because teachers are aware of their individual needs. In the secondary department, pupils' numeracy skills are satisfactorily developed. Several subjects contribute well to pupils' progress in numeracy. In science, pupils practise mental mathematics and collect and analyse data. In music, geography and French, pupils rehearse their counting skills. However, the school does not have a numeracy policy.

## SCIENCE

54. The pupils achieve well in all areas of science, which is a good improvement since the last inspection. Overall pupils' achievement in science is good. There is no difference in the progress made by boys and girls or pupils for whom English is an additional language.
55. The pupils achieve well in almost all lessons in all key stages. However, in Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils' achievements in scientific enquiry are lower than their achievement in other areas. In Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils' achievements are good in all areas. Overall, in comparison with similar schools for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, pupils achieve good standards in science in nationally set tests at the end of Key Stage 3. They achieve good standards in relation to their own abilities because there is some very good teaching.
56. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils understand that chocolate melts when hot and water freezes when very cold. In lessons, they made good progress in their understanding of materials through their experience of making bread. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 understand that only some materials are magnetic and they develop an understanding that metal objects containing iron are magnetic. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress in their understanding of habitats. Pupils with additional special needs are well supported by learning support assistants and by the use of appropriate activities. For example, pupils in Year 5 with autistic spectrum disorders made good progress in sorting a range of materials into magnetic and non-magnetic groups.
57. In Key Stage 3, pupils in Year 7 increase their understanding of gravity and air resistance. Higher attaining pupils in Year 8 increase their understanding of a solar eclipse. They know the names of the planets and use computers to find information from a database. Pupils read graphs and start to link the temperature of the planet to its distance from the sun. Other Year 8 pupils know the sun shines on the moon and this is reflected onto the earth. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 construct the nitrogen cycle and know that lightening changes nitrogen in the air to nitrates. Achievement overall is good, with some pupils making very good progress.
58. In Key Stage 4, achievement is good. In a Year 10 lesson, higher attaining pupils consolidated their understanding of the properties and uses of helium and neon gases. One pupil explained why these gases are inert in relation to their atomic structure. Other pupils in Year 10 recall that potassium is the most vigorous alkaline metal. Year 11 pupils analyse results. From a graph made from a class experiment, they explained that the black card became hottest because it absorbed the most heat. Pupils receive good support from both the teacher and learning support assistants. This helps them to make good progress. All pupils follow an externally accredited course and achieve a result.
59. Pupils have very good attitudes to work. They clearly enjoy their science lessons. They respond well to the teaching and settle to work quickly. Nearly all pupils concentrate throughout the lessons. Older pupils work in groups and collaborate well. For example, pupils in Year 8 co-operated to simulate an eclipse and pupils in Year 9 collaborated to show the action of lightening on nitrogen in the air. The high standards expected and consistently enforced ensure that most pupils behave well including some with challenging behaviour. Pupils have good relationships with teachers and with each other.
60. The good teaching highlighted in the last report has been maintained. Teaching in science was good or better in almost all of the lessons. It was always at least good in Key stages 1, 2, and 4, and in most classes in Key Stage 3. Pupils learn effectively in lessons. Teachers plan activities that interest pupils. Planning takes account of all pupils' needs. For example, in a Year 7 lesson, the teacher planned interesting activities for the whole class on gravity, in addition to activities matched to individual pupils' abilities. This stimulated pupils' interest. Higher attaining pupils were expected to write their own

predictions, whilst other pupils were supported in this activity. All pupils learn effectively. In Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers know the pupils well and effectively support individuals, but there is insufficient planning for individual needs. In the primary department assessment is carried out at the end of a module. As a result, pupils' previous learning in science is not always built upon. In all key stages teachers aim to improve pupils' literacy skills. Pupils are encouraged to spell key words and pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 have wordlists for each topic. In a Key Stage 4 lesson, good knowledge of both the pupils and the topic, enabled skilful questioning to challenge pupils to think and relate the abstract topic of noble gases to everyday events. Pupils increased their understanding of why some gases are inert. Time is used well in most lessons with clear time limits for tasks. Pupils occasionally lose concentration, when too long is spent talking to them. Teachers provide good support and check pupils' progress through frequent questioning. On all occasions teaching focuses on pupils' gains in knowledge and understanding. Pupils are well managed and relationships are good and based on mutual respect. This creates a good working atmosphere and leads to effective learning.

61. The curriculum is broadly based and balanced and meets statutory requirements. Throughout the school, there are opportunities for the teaching of science investigations, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Planning of the curriculum is satisfactory and effectively covers all aspects of the National Curriculum. Planning for continuity in pupils' learning is satisfactory within the primary and secondary departments. However, the scheme of work in Key Stage 3 does not sufficiently acknowledge pupils' work in Key Stage 2. Teachers do not use the results of external tests. They wait until internal tests have been administered in the new key stage. There are satisfactory systems for assessment and teachers record pupils' progress, but assessment is not consistently used to inform curriculum planning. However, there are good examples, such as in Key Stage 4, when the teacher uses the results of end of topic tests when planning to revisit a topic. In Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils' have precise targets and their progress is assessed. However, this information is not used to plan the future curriculum for each pupil.
62. The subject co-ordinators are effective in developing and managing science within their departments, but the link between primary and secondary departments is insufficiently developed. A number of important improvements have taken place since the last inspection. Most issues raised in the last report have been taken care of apart from the use of assessment to inform curriculum planning in Key Stages 1 and 2. The co-ordinators monitor the curriculum now and the secondary co-ordinator monitors pupils' work.
63. Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 make good use of information and communication technology as an information source, to capture and record data and to produce graphs in experiments. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There are plans to extend this use to Key stages 1 and 2. The school has a good science laboratory, although space is limited. Resources are satisfactory. Good attention is paid to health and safety.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

64. Achievement is good for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 and very good in Key Stages 3 and 4. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are beginning to experiment with colour and begin to work from primary and secondary sources. They use the work of contemporary artists to provide a stimulus for their work.
65. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils use a range of media and know the challenges, which each medium produces, for example, they learn not to smudge their work when working in charcoal. They produce well-drawn abstract designs, using a range of straight and curved lines, working in chalks and charcoal. They produce collages of spiders and learn that spiders have eight legs and practise counting them.
66. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils draw from a range of primary and secondary sources and evaluate their own and other pupils' work. Higher attaining pupils explore ideas and develop them with an end purpose in mind. They achieve work of a high standard. They design and make three-dimensional models based on the work of famous artists, for example Picasso. To produce these works pupils use two-dimensional drawings and designs to help them build their prototypes, which they modify and amend. Lower attaining pupils build models and produce drawings. All pupils put a great deal of effort into their artwork.

67. By the end of Key Stage 4 higher attaining pupils achieve good grades at GCSE. They are confident in working in a range of media. They use primary and secondary sources well. They draw and paint from still life and plan, draft and execute work of a high standard.
68. Teaching is good overall. It is very good in the secondary department. The best lessons are characterised by being well-planned, with good subject knowledge on the part of the teacher, for example when discussing the tone of Cezanne and the flat colours of Matisse. Pupils understand what is expected of them, which enables effective learning. Tasks set for pupils are challenging and this stretches their capabilities. They evaluate their work and that of each other and offer mature constructive comments. The senior management team monitors lesson plans.
69. The subject is managed effectively and there are links between the primary and secondary co-ordinators. The secondary art co-ordinator has provided useful in-service training for other staff.
70. Artwork is displayed well around the school and provides pupils with good opportunities to value each other's work. There is limited space to display three-dimensional. Work at home is encouraged. For example, pupils ask family members to pose for them to draw. Resources are good. The good standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

71. Pupils throughout the school show satisfactory achievement in the practical skills of making and assembling. In Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils learn to handle tools and a variety of materials and apply these tools to manufacture. For example, they use knives when making sandwiches in Year 2 and a variety of materials to make signs in Year 5.
72. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils understand and apply basic safety rules, such as the correct way to handle knives in food technology and the need for basic hygiene. They assemble the ingredients for dishes, such as soup in Years 7 and 8 and a variety of fillings for pasties. They understand that altering the ratio of ingredients in pastry causes variations in the finished product. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils have developed a wide range of skills and have designed and constructed objects, using a broad range of material, including wood, plastics, fabrics and food ingredients. They appreciate the need to design, produce prototypes and then modify these in the light of their evaluations.
73. Teaching in design and technology is satisfactory overall. In the lessons seen teaching was either satisfactory or good. The more successful lessons have a clear purpose and are well organised. Good use is made of the skills of learning support assistants and all pupils, including those with additional special educational needs, are fully involved in the learning. Teachers provide a relaxed and purposeful atmosphere in lessons in the senior school and this ensures good co-operation between pupils and with staff. They encourage independent learning and decision making in Key Stage 4, which results in pupils being keen to learn. They enjoy their work and take great pride in their finished products.
74. The subject is well led by the co-ordinators with a satisfactory policy and well structured schemes of work that satisfy both the needs of the National Curriculum and the requirements of the external accreditation in Key Stage 4. However, there is insufficient planning of the curriculum between the primary and secondary departments to ensure progression throughout the school. Cross-curricular aspects are well supported. For example in mathematics, when components are weighed and measured, in information technology, when initial designs are modified, and in science when a link was established between animal habitats and the making of hedgehog models. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

75. Pupils' standards of achievement are satisfactory overall. In Key Stage 1 pupils develop an understanding of place through visiting different pupils' houses and identifying them on a map. They are beginning to understand the purpose of addresses by sending letters. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to explore their local environment. In Key Stage 2 pupils learn about conventions used on maps. For example, they use a key to show how to identify rivers or railways. Pupils continue to develop map skills by locating significant places on a map of the local environment. They understand that people do different

jobs. Pupils in Year 5 learn the names of countries in the United Kingdom and Europe. In Key Stage 3 pupils continue to develop their knowledge of other countries. For example, they learn about the European Union. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have an awareness of the impact of geographical features, such as the lack of natural resources on the population. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils make good progress and attain good standards in the Certificate of Achievement. For example, they write clear descriptions of how volcanoes erupt. Pupils make better progress in lessons where the activities and the vocabulary are within their understanding. In these lessons, they demonstrate high levels of perseverance. Pupils with additional special educational needs and whose first language is not English, make similar progress to others in the class.

76. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Good features include relevant activities in the primary department that reinforce pupils' literacy skills. In lessons where pupils work in groups and pairs, progress is good, as the opportunity to discuss issues stimulates their learning. The use of familiar objects, for example, postcards from distant places, reinforces learning and increases pupils' understanding of place and maps. Teachers set clear boundaries and question pupils well to reinforce and extend their learning. Appropriate resources are used to help pupils with visual impairment.
77. The co-ordinator has recently taken over the subject and provides sound leadership. The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced but schemes of work are too general. Planning does not identify learning outcomes for different levels of ability. There is no adequate assessment system to generate detailed records of learning. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology. Since the last inspection, standards have been maintained and accreditation at Key Stage 4 has helped to raise standards for the oldest pupils. Resources are now satisfactory. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

## **HISTORY**

78. Achievement in history is satisfactory overall. In Key Stage 4, the pupils' achievements are good. In Key Stage 1 pupils begin to develop an understanding of chronology through talking about the days of the week, yesterday and tomorrow. When studying Victorian Britain, pupils at Key Stage 2 put significant dates into chronological order and compared Victorian schools with their own experiences. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are beginning to understand that there are different kinds of evidence. They widen their experience of the past through reading literature.
79. In Key Stage 3 pupils learn what it might have been like to be a Roman soldier through dressing up. Higher attaining pupils have developed good writing skills from finding out information for homework. Some pupils compare the lives of gentlemen and labourers during the sixteenth century. In Key Stage 4 pupils develop a good understanding of the world in the 1900s. They know what conditions were like in the trenches through learning about the Western Front and World War One. They make use of a good range of evidence including video, books, poetry and resources such as gas masks. Higher attaining pupils know how the First World War was started. Others describe the causes of the downfall of the Tsar of Russia. They have a growing understanding of chronology, for example, through learning about the sequence of events that precipitated conflicts in Europe and Russia. Pupils are keen to learn and work hard throughout lessons. Those with additional special needs and those with English as an additional language make sound progress. Pupils' standards are good by the end of Key Stage 4 in Certificate of Achievement examinations.
80. Teaching is satisfactory overall and good in Key Stage 4. In the best lessons, teachers explain and reinforce key words in ways that promote pupils' understanding. Questioning is targeted at an appropriate level for individual pupils' abilities. Information is presented in ways that link with pupils' own experiences. Teachers set clear boundaries and have high expectations that encourage high standards of behaviour. Teachers use several interesting activities within a lesson, which helps pupils to maintain their concentration. The pace of lessons is well geared to pupils' needs. For example, there are more opportunities for reinforcement and explanation for pupils with greater learning difficulties. Activities help pupils to understand how people may have felt in the past. Relationships are good and teachers challenge pupils to think for themselves. As a result, pupils become sufficiently confident to ask questions. Pupils'



progress is supported through regular homework. Materials for pupils with visual impairment are appropriately modified. There is no adequate assessment system to generate useful records of pupils' progress, particularly in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. Teachers make insufficient use of information and communication technology.

81. The subject is well led and since the last inspection resources have been greatly improved. They are now satisfactory. Standards of achievement have been maintained. The curriculum is broad and balanced and contributes well to pupils' literacy and their social development.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

82. Since the last inspection, standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved. Achievement is satisfactory overall, but vary between discrete ICT lessons and the cross-curricular use of ICT. At present pupils' achievement in the skills in the communication and information strands of ICT are higher than achievement in modelling and finding out. However, pupils in all key stages are now being taught a comprehensive curriculum, which includes all aspects of ICT.
83. In Key Stage 1, pupils use a mouse and a keyboard to type their name in lower case letters. In Key stage 2, pupils use drag and drop techniques to create the story of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. They type sentences accurately and correct mistakes. They learn to print their work. Overall, pupils' achievement at Key Stages 3 and 4 is satisfactory. However, during the week of the inspection, the ICT co-ordinator was absent. Pupils' achievement in lessons was restricted to applications taught by other teachers within the school and a temporary teacher, which restricted the range of topics, taught and affected standards. In Key Stage 3, pupils change and highlight text to create a headline for a history poster. They handled data after completing a traffic survey in mathematics. In Key Stage 4, pupils used ICT equipment and software to type a menu for design and technology. In a Year 11 lesson, pupils wrote and stored an application for a job. Standards in the Certificate of Achievement for ICT are good, with almost all pupils completing the course in the year 2000 and all achieving some accreditation. Pupils find information from CD-ROMS and from the Internet. They organise text and produce a poster using text and graphics.
84. Throughout Key Stages 3 and 4, there are satisfactory plans for pupils to use ICT for their work in English and for data collection and handling in mathematics. However, during the inspection only pupils in science made good use of ICT. In other subjects, such as English and mathematics, opportunities were missed. The school has recently installed new computers and plans are in place for staff to start their training in the week following the inspection. There are firm plans in place to buy new and relevant software. In science, pupils make good use of data-logging equipment. They use CD-ROMS for research and data-handling programmes for results of experiments. In a Year 8 science lesson, pupils used a database to find out the link between the surface temperature of the planets and their distance from the sun. In this lesson, pupils increased their knowledge of the solar system and improved their ICT skills.
85. When using computers, pupils are motivated and work hard. There are sufficient computers for most pupils to work alone. Pupils persevere very well and enjoy using and improving their skills. Pupils often visit the library and computer rooms in their own time at lunchtime.
86. Overall, teaching of ICT is satisfactory. In almost half of lessons teaching was good or very good. In one lesson, the teacher used a simple adventure game to create a story of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. Pupils developed their skill in using the mouse in drag and drop techniques. Teachers and learning support assistants are effective when correcting mistakes and judging when to intervene in order to support learning. A good example was seen in Year 9 when pupils were creating a header for a history poster. Teaching of discrete ICT is well established in the school. Lessons are effectively planned and taught with confidence. Teachers provide straightforward and effective demonstrations. In Year 5, good use of question and answer encouraged pupils' curiosity and interest. Teaching of discrete ICT is helped by a well-structured curriculum, which ensures that pupils make steady progress. Curriculum provision is satisfactory overall. The weekly specialist lesson provides a firm foundation for the development of

pupils' ICT capability. However, the school is in a transition stage and a new personal computer network has recently been installed in the secondary computer room. Old software cannot be used in the secondary department, as it is incompatible. There are appropriate plans to buy new software, after completion of the staff training.

87. Overall, assessment is unsatisfactory. It is unsatisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4. Teachers do not formally assess and record pupils' capabilities at Key Stages 1 and 2. At Key Stage 3, teachers in discrete ICT lessons assess pupils' capability and at Key Stage 4, pupils' work is assessed through the Certificate of Achievement. There are satisfactory plans for all subjects to provide evidence of assessment. However, at present, cross-curricular assessment is not taking place. Management of the subject is satisfactory. There have been some key improvements since the last inspection. The primary and secondary co-ordinators have developed schemes of work and support colleagues in their teaching. The secondary co-ordinator maintains a portfolio of each pupil's work. The head of the secondary department is successfully training teachers. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French**

88. All pupils in Key Stage 3 study French. Their achievements are good, including those for whom English is an additional language. Pupils enjoy lessons and concentrate well. Pupils answer simple questions, for example '*combien de..?*' and develop their writing skills. Higher attaining pupils count from one to ten accurately, while others count from one to five with support. Pupils enjoy singing *Un, deux, trios Dracula.* which reinforces their learning. Pupils learn to speak French with increasing confidence when asking or answering questions.
89. Teaching of French is good. The teacher has good subject knowledge and is working to increase her level of expertise. Lessons contain a range of interesting and varied activities. The use of question and answer is effective in encouraging the participation of all pupils. The pace of lessons is good and the teacher has high expectations and a good relationship with pupils. Pupils' achievement is assessed through tests given at intervals, but opportunities for on-going assessment are missed in lessons. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders are effectively included in lessons, sometimes without specific support from a learning support assistant.
90. The curriculum is appropriate and addresses all the areas of the National Curriculum programmes of study at Key Stage 3. French is not available to pupils at Key Stage 4. Homework is given regularly and reviewed in lessons. This makes a positive contribution to pupils' achievements. The subject is well managed and there is a suitable development plan in place. Resources are satisfactory and include an increasing range of suitable software. The curriculum is enhanced by an annual day trip to France. There have been good improvements in the subject since the last inspection, although there is no accreditation available at Key Stage 4.

### **MUSIC**

91. Overall, the pupils' achievement in music is good and they make good progress. In Key Stage 1 achievement is satisfactory. In Key Stages 2 and 3 achievement is good and at Key Stage 4 it is very good. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils sing together, mostly in time and in tune. They remember words

and tunes, and anticipate the next part of a song. They begin to follow a conductor and be controlled when playing instruments. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils understand some musical terms, such as *presto* and *grave*. They know a scale starting with C and suggest patterns to represent a scale graphically. They write a tune and play the tune on hand bells accurately, counting four to a bar. In Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils read music, as well as numerical notation. They understand note length and discuss and use musical vocabulary correctly. They beat complex rhythms, follow a conductor and play instruments. For example, they play brass instruments and steel pans and practise their compositions on keyboards. The steel band performs in public and has played in the Royal Albert Hall in London. Pupils play confidently. They receive additional tuition for brass instruments and percussion from peripatetic teachers. In addition they often choose to practise before school and at break times, supported by the music teacher. By the end of Key Stage 4 many pupils reach levels of achievement in line with national expectations. Pupils who study music in Key Stage 4 are successful in GCSE or the Unit Award Scheme. They have carefully kept music files and the teacher keeps tape and video records of their compositions and performances for examination assessment.

92. Pupils in all key stages demonstrate a good response to music lessons and their behaviour is very good. They are very enthusiastic in lessons at all key stages. They listen well, show real enjoyment and make suggestions spontaneously. Pupils respond well to the teacher and relationships are very good. They use musical vocabulary naturally and show enjoyment at hearing new musical terms and using them. The amount of time the older pupils give in their free time to additional practice is a reflection of their enthusiasm for the subject.
93. Overall teaching is very good. At Key Stage 1 teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are well prepared and a variety of activities reinforce learning by giving opportunities for pupils to join in. A music specialist teaches music at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 and the quality of teaching and learning are very good. The teacher has very good subject knowledge and uses a variety of activities to enable pupils to demonstrate their creativity. Lessons have clear aims and objectives, which enhances pupils' learning. There is very good teaching of basic knowledge, which leads to pupils making appropriate suggestions using correct musical terminology. Classroom management and relationships are very good and pupils listen well to instructions. This in turn helps them to perform well. There is good recap of previous work and the good pace and clear explanations help pupils to concentrate and build on previously learned skills. For example, revision of *grave* and *presto* led to pupils suggesting ways to represent these pictorially, beginning to form abstract notation. There are opportunities for all pupils to take part in all the activities. The teacher uses an appropriate mixture of listening and performance, so that pupils maintain their concentration. Learning support assistants work well with the teacher and often note pupils' progress through the lesson. This record is then used by the teacher to record progress and to plan for individual needs.
94. Music is very well co-ordinated. The curriculum is broad, balanced and age appropriate. The programme of study is linked to examination work at the end of Key Stage 4. The programme is carefully structured to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are studied. Resources are satisfactory. The music room is cramped and is not easy to move around in, although both teacher and pupils manage this problem very well. However, the recording equipment is not adequate. Good use is made of the allocated budget. A good range of keyboards is now available, as well as steel pans and a full drum kit.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

95. Achievements in physical education, including the achievements of pupils with additional special educational needs, are good throughout the school. Pupils experience a good range of activities as required by the National Curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2. They develop co-ordination skills and demonstrate growing control of their movements. Many pupils show skill with ball control. They dribble with the side of the foot and stop a moving ball by trapping it. By the end of Key Stage 2 many pupils swim, either with or without floats and almost all are confident in the water. This is in line with national expectations.
96. In Key Stage 3 pupils develop more sophisticated ball skills. For example, Year 7 pupils learn to pass and receive the ball. By the end of the key stage pupils pass and receive the ball in a variety of ways and understand the basic rules of field play. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils have developed more complex

collaborative physical skills. For example, some pupils devise dance or aerobics routines and perform complex sequences. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes are very good. They pair off well and work well together, for example, when passing a ball. They are enthusiastic, patient and co-operative with each other, allowing all members of the group to play a full part in the game, regardless of their ability.

97. The teaching of physical education is good. It was always at least satisfactory and sometimes very good. Teachers plan their lessons well and display an enthusiasm for sport that communicates itself to the pupils and ensures that they too enjoy the work. Time is well used and the management of pupils is very good. There is good co-operation between teachers and learning support assistants and no child is excluded from the full range of activities. Support and visiting staff are well used and a comprehensive programme of extra-curricular activities further enhances pupils' learning. Activities include aerobics, dance, table tennis, golf, rock-climbing and canoeing. Further opportunities are possible during school residential trips.
98. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator who has responsibility for physical education throughout the school. The planning for progression in the subject is carefully structured and ensures pupils' continued high achievements. Individual target setting through individual education plans and assessment procedures are now well in place. The subject makes a very positive contribution to pupils' personal and social development. Pupils benefit from the good resources provided by the school and from the well-maintained and extensive grounds.
99. Resources are adequate for the delivery of the National Curriculum, an improvement since the last inspection. However, there are some limitations to teaching due to the inadequacies of the school hall and lack of storage facilities. The hall has a highly polished floor, acts as a corridor and is used for the storage of dining chairs and tables and physical education equipment. This does not provide an adequately safe environment for all physical education activities.

#### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

100. The achievements of pupils are satisfactory. Pupils follow the Locally Agreed Bedfordshire Syllabus. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils identify that churches and mosques are special buildings and recognise some artefacts. They know that some new-born babies are baptised and they know that some people get married in church. They know that people celebrate different festivals, including Eid and rituals connected with Sikhism. Lower attaining pupils recognise a church building and know that a baby may wear a special gown in which to be baptised.
101. By the end of Key Stage 2 higher attaining pupils recognise different symbols connected with different religions and role-play the different family members in a Shabbat meal. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils are aware of the different ceremonies that are used to welcome new-born babies into the wider religious family. They learn that young children have to be looked after.
102. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils discuss the creed by which they live. They contribute their own ideas of the values that should be considered when developing such a creed. Other pupils take part in a 'value auction' with enthusiasm, deciding in groups how much they would be prepared to pay for a range of items. For example good health, or the ability to cope with stress.
103. Teaching is good. In lessons seen it was often very good and always at least satisfactory. Very good lessons are characterised by the teacher's commitment to the subject and enthusiastic teaching. There is a good scheme of work and primary and secondary co-ordinators work well together. Resources are well organised and clearly labelled. The subject continues to develop and has a positive effect on the ethos of the school.

#### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION**

104. The achievements of pupils in personal, social and health education (PSHE) are good throughout the school. This is reflected in pupils' very good personal development. Pupils make good progress, both

within PSHE lessons and throughout the day. They gradually learn to study independently and to take responsibility for their actions. Pupils develop independent travel skills, according to their ability, accepting real life challenges with courage. Good social behaviour is encouraged at all times, for example at lunchtime, during assembly and in lessons. Pupils develop good self-esteem and this has a positive effect on their learning in all areas of the curriculum. In Key Stage 3 pupils find out about local leisure facilities by researching in the local paper. They know the benefits of exercise and design an advertisement. In Key Stage 4 pupils take part in work experience outside school and learn how to apply for a job. They prepare their own packed lunches and evaluate the result.

105. Provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. The curriculum is well planned and co-ordinated and closely linked to the targets on pupils' individual education plans. Pupils are involved in setting personal targets and in reviewing their progress towards them. Sex education is included in the curriculum, at a level appropriate to the pupils. Aspects of hygiene and healthy eating are included in food technology. Trips into the local community, or further afield, enhance the social development of pupils. In Key Stage 4 the work related curriculum provides a suitable preparation for leaving school.
106. The teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and resourced. A range of interesting topics is included and pupils have good opportunities to discuss their ideas. Throughout the school all teachers place a very good emphasis on teaching personal and social skills and staff are good role models. This makes a positive contribution to the development of pupils' awareness of themselves and others. Since the last inspection the positive contribution made by the work related curriculum and career education has been maintained.