

INSPECTION REPORT

Linslade Lower School
Leighton Buzzard

LEA area : Bedfordshire

Unique Reference Number : 109515

Headteacher : Mrs J S Armstrong

Reporting inspector : Mr G Alston
IRN: 109515

Dates of inspection : 18th – 21st October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707961

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school : Lower

Type of control : County

Age range of pupils : 3 - 9

Gender of pupils : Mixed

School address : Leopold Road
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Appropriate authority : Governing Body

Name of chair of governors : Mr D Whitman

Date of previous inspection : May 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr G Alston, Registered inspector	English Design and technology	Attainment & progress Teaching Leadership & management Efficiency of the school
Mr A Smith, Lay Inspector	Equal opportunities	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Partnership with parents and the community
Mrs F Clarke	Maths Information technology Geography Special educational needs	Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Mr K Johnson	Science History Art Physical education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Mrs P Lowe	Music Religious education Under fives	Curriculum and assessment

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MAIN FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Overall, the quality of teaching is good; particularly for children under five and in Key Stage 1. Overall, this results in pupils making good progress.
- The 1998 National test results at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading and writing are better than most schools nationally. The 1999 results were better.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership and ensures that money is used effectively enabling the school to give good value for money.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good; they form excellent relationships and try hard with their work.
- Teachers are conscientious and successfully provide a happy, caring environment for pupils; including organising a good range of out of school activities.
- The school's good accommodation is used well, providing an effective learning environment.
- The help given by support staff, especially to pupils with special needs, is of a good quality.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance figures are above average.
- The school has good links with parents and the community. The support parents give pupils in school and at home, is a great help to them.
- Good provision is made to help pupils develop spiritually, morally and culturally; and is very good for their social development.

WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES

- I. Not enough pupils achieve higher levels in their writing. This is mainly because they do not have the spelling skills appropriate to their ability or sufficient opportunities to plan and edit their written work.
- II. Higher attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4 are not always fully stretched in their mathematics and science lessons.
- III. The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school.
- IV. The school development plan, which is effective as a short-term management tool, does not identify priorities beyond the year 2000, nor does it indicate how developments will be monitored and evaluated.
- V. Although the school has successfully improved the effectiveness of co-ordinators, they do not monitor the teaching of their subjects. The school has plans to develop this aspect.
- VI. Current assessment procedures do not give a clear picture of what pupils know, understand or of the skills they have successfully gained in their lessons.

The weaknesses are far outweighed by what the school does well, but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents and guardians of pupils at the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

The school has made a sound improvement since the last inspection and almost all of the areas of concern highlighted in the last report have been dealt with effectively. The school has made a great effort to improve the provision for music across the school. A great deal of training and support has been given to staff and as a result the teaching has significantly improved which has helped to raise standards. The school has an impressive choir and many pupils are learning to play an instrument. Pupils' punctuality is no longer a concern and the time allocated for pupils in Key Stage 2 is the same as most schools. The school has worked hard at developing the role of co-ordinators and improving assessment procedures. Although satisfactory progress has been made further improvements are needed. The school has introduced effective strategies and a strong commitment to make further improvements in many areas for example, by introducing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy and improving the role of coordinators. The school has set itself appropriate targets to help pupils do better in National tests and has already achieved them.

STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS

This table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds in 1998 based on the National Curriculum tests:

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

This information shows that standards in reading and writing are above average, and in mathematics are in line with the national average. When compared to schools with pupils from a similar background, results are above average in writing and average in reading and mathematics. In science standards are average when compared to schools nationally and to schools with pupils of a similar background. . By the time pupils leave the school their attainment is above the level expected for pupils of this age in English, mathematics and science. Inspection findings indicate pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 is better in science and in mathematics. Most recent National test results in 1999 confirm these improvements. Since the last inspection, standards have been maintained in English, mathematics and science. In information technology pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations. In religious education, pupils' attainment is above the level expected of the Locally Agreed Syllabus by the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave the school. Overall, the under-fives make good progress, and, by the time they reach compulsory school age they achieve the desirable learning outcomes in their physical development; and higher standards in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, creative development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' standard of work is above the level expected for their age in art, design and technology, geography and music; and at the expected level in history and physical education. Progress of the majority of pupils is good in most lessons. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. There is no significant difference in the progress made by boys and girls.

QUALITY OF TEACHING

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 –11
English	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good	Satisfactory
Science	N/a	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information technology	N/a	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Religious education	N/a	Good	Good
Other subjects	Good	Good	Good

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

In the previous inspection the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory in 10 per cent of the lessons seen. This was mainly due to teachers' weak knowledge and understanding in music in Key Stage 1 and a lack of continuity of learning in history and geography. In science, work was not well matched to pupils' abilities, and in information technology the computers were not used effectively. Overall, the good quality of teaching has been maintained and very few examples of unsatisfactory teaching were seen. The quality of teaching has improved particularly in information technology and music because of staff training resulting in well-planned lessons with clear learning objectives. It was not possible to judge the quality of teaching in geography because due to the way the curriculum is organised only one lesson was seen. Overall, the quality of teaching is good, resulting in pupils making good progress. The teaching is particularly strong for children under five where all of the teaching was good or better. Across the school, in 95 per cent of the lessons observed the teaching was satisfactory or better; and in 23 per cent of lessons teaching was very good. One lesson was of excellent quality. In Key Stage 1, the teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons being good in 57 per cent and very good in 13 per cent. In Key Stage 2, the teaching was satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of lessons; being good in 34 per cent and very good or better in 24 per cent.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	All pupils behave very well, exhibiting very good levels of self-discipline in and around school.
Attendance	Good; above the national average.
Ethos*	A warm, caring atmosphere; pupils are well motivated and show great interest in their lessons; relationships are very good. Most teachers are committed to high achievement.
Leadership and management	Good; governors are supportive; headteacher leads well; co-ordinators work hard and are successfully developing their subjects in the school, but do not monitor teaching.
Curriculum	Sound; appropriate planning. For under fives; there is strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy, but a lack of planned activities for regular outdoor play with large play equipment.
Pupils with special educational needs	Generally, work appropriately planned to meet pupils' needs; satisfactory individual education plans in place for pupils with behavioural difficulties, good help from support staff.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good; good provision for developing pupils spiritually, morally and culturally and strong for social development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory levels of teachers, good levels of support staff. Resources are generally good. Internal accommodation and external environment are good and used well. The inside of school is clean and attractive, colourful displays are a feature.
Value for money	Good; in view of the above average standards, average income, effective teaching, and the overall good progress made by pupils who have average attainment on entry.

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

THE PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What most parents like about the School	What some parents are not Happy about
VII. The school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school. VIII. The school is approachable. IX. The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on pupils. X. Pupils enjoy going to school. XI. The school handles complaints well. XII. The school achieves high standards of work and behaviour.	XIII. There were concerns expressed about the use made of parent helpers in school.

Inspectors' judgements support parents' positive views. In the areas of parental concern inspectors findings indicate that at times higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently well challenged but lower attaining pupils receive good support in the classroom from teachers and general assistants. However, individual education plans for pupils with learning difficulties are not precise enough. Parent helpers in the school at the time of the inspection were well used and felt they were highly valued by the school.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to further improve the quality of education the school provides for its pupils and build upon the sound improvements made since the last inspection the governors, headteacher and staff should:

1. Further raise standards in writing by; (paragraphs 89, 90, 93)
 - developing pupils' skills in planning, refining and re-drafting their written work,
 - improving pupils' spelling by devising a more effective, systematic approach to the teaching of spelling,
 - providing portfolios of pupils' assessed work so that they can be used as a reference point for teachers in making judgements about pupils' work.

2. Raise the quality of teaching to that of the best by; (paragraphs 20, 24, and 36)
 - ensuring all lesson plans clearly identify precisely what pupils of all abilities are to learn,
 - improving current assessment and recording procedures in order to enable teachers to gain a clear picture of pupils' attainment,
 - using this assessment information to plan challenging tasks for higher attaining pupils, particularly in mathematics and science in Key Stage 2.

3. Further improve management by; (paragraphs 59, 60)
 - extending the sound practice shown in the short-term development plan into a longer-term plan by establishing a three year plan reflecting the school's priorities, indicating how developments will be monitored and evaluated and incorporating a programme of curriculum review,
 - continuing the planned programme for the further development of the role of co-ordinator, with a strong emphasis on providing time and training to effectively monitor the teaching and learning of the subjects.

In addition to the key issue above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. These are indicated in paragraphs (76) lack of planned outdoor play for under children under five, (14) provision for pupils with learning difficulties, (63) no co-ordinator for physical education and (101) the effectiveness of setting in mathematics.

- 1.

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

- 1 Since the previous inspection, which took place in May 1996, the number of pupils with special needs has risen and the provision for children under five has been significantly changed. Linslade Lower School provides education for pupils in the 3 - 9 age range. There are 193 pupils in the main school; 109 boys and 84 girls. The school is situated in Linslade and serves families in the surrounding area. The school was built in the 1960s and has been redeveloped over the past three years. Early years provision caters for children whose ages range from three to five years, prior to entry into the main school in the term following their fifth birthday. Children are admitted chronologically as places become available. The three-year-old children are in a separate unit with two nursery nurses. They attend for five afternoon sessions and the sessions are one and a half hours long, normally for one initial term before transfer to the unit for four year old children, which is run by the nursery teacher and a general assistant. All four-year-old children attend either five mornings or five afternoons with the youngest children normally attending in the afternoons. All sessions are two and a half-hours long and offer equal opportunities and experiences. The four-year-old children are usually, although not always, located in the separate old school building, which has a secure outdoor play area. Movement from the afternoon to the morning sessions is dependent on numbers of pupils. The January reception children remain in the early years unit, but increase to full time, using the 'rear classroom' for more formal work. In the final summer term, the January and April reception pupils and the September cohort (4+), who together form two parallel Year 1 classes in September, remain in the unit but are joined into two full time parallel classes.
- 2 Most pupils come from owner occupied properties and a small minority come from rented accommodation. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Most pupils attend the nursery before starting school and children's attainment on entry is in line with the nationally expected level for their age. The priorities the school has identified are concerned with introducing the Literacy and Numeracy Hour, developing the role of coordinator and further improving the external premises.
- 3 Eleven pupils have special educational needs at Stage 2 or above in the Code of Practice, two of these pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. A further 6 have been identified at Stage 1 in the Code of Practice. At present there are 25 pupils (14%) who are eligible for a free school meal, this being well below the national average.

3

3 Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	31	24	55

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	29	28	30
	Girls	22	23	22
	Total	51	51	52
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	89	89	91
	National	80 (78)	81(79)	84(82)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	28	28	28
	Girls	22	21	22
	Total	50	49	50
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	81	85	86
	National	81(76)	85(82)	86(84)

¹

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

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year

		%
Authorised Absence	School	5
	National comparative data	5.6
Unauthorised Absence	School	0
	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	26
Satisfactory or better	97
Less than satisfactory	3

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

- 1 In the 1998 national tests the proportion of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 reaching the expected level (Level 2) and above was above the national average in reading and writing and in line in mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 3) was in line in reading, well above in writing and close to the national average in mathematics. When compared with schools with pupils of a similar background the school's results were above average in writing and average in reading and mathematics. The school has generally achieved these above average standards over the past three years although reading results fell in 1998. The most recent results from the 1999 national tests show a significant improvement in all three. Inspection findings support these results. Teachers' assessments in science show that the proportions of pupils expected to achieve the required level (Level 2) was broadly in line with the national average. 1999 results were significantly better and reflect inspection findings.
- 2 Weaknesses in the previous report were concerned with under-achievement in music and the need to develop pupils' skills in information technology, including their application across the curriculum. There has been considerable improvements in both these areas and they are no longer a concern.
- 3 On entry to the school, the attainment of most children is in line with the level expected for their age, although there is a wide range of abilities. Overall, the under-fives make good progress in the early years department, and by the time they reach compulsory school age, their attainment is higher than the national expectation in their creative development, personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics and their knowledge and understanding of the world. They achieve the expected level in their physical development. A lack of regular structured outdoor play restricts children's progress in their physical development. Most children are confident and articulate in talking and enjoy listening to stories. In reading, they are familiar with letters and their sounds and can compose simple sentences in their writing. In mathematics, they can understand number values, and recognise numerals to 20. They share equipment well and are beginning to work collaboratively. They are developing good attitudes to learning, sustain concentration, persevere with their work and show some independence.
- 4 Overall, pupils' attainment in English by the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time they leave the school is above the national average. Progress is good in reading and speaking and listening and satisfactory in writing. By the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 4, pupils' attainment is above the national average in speaking and listening, writing and reading. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils listen carefully, and the majority are articulate and use well-formed sentences and a good range of vocabulary. By the end of Year 4, the majority contribute well to class discussions and are able to explain clearly what they have learnt. In reading, all pupils show a developing enthusiasm for books and display an appropriate range of strategies to become independent readers. By the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils can successfully read from a range of texts. The most fluent, confident readers can discuss the meaning of what they have read and explain which parts they have particularly enjoyed. By the end of Year 4, pupils have sound library skills; and are able to use scanning and skimming skills successfully to find information. In writing, by the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils can express their ideas clearly. Standards in handwriting and the use of grammar are good but spelling is not always accurate. By the end of Year 4, most pupils can write for different purposes producing interesting, lively accounts. Although written work is generally well presented and handwriting is of a good standard, spelling is not always accurate. Pupils' skills in planning, editing and re-drafting are not well developed and even higher attaining pupils have had few opportunities to develop these skills. Higher and average attaining pupils produce a range of writing including stories, book reviews and poems.

- 5 Pupils' attainment in mathematics is above the national average by the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave the school. All pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and sound progress in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, pupils are competent in shape recognition and using mathematical language. They have a good understanding of the place value of tens and units and can competently add and subtract two and three digit numbers, some with remainders. By the end of Key Stage 1, good progress is being made in number and in solving problems. All pupils can measure using non-standard measures and are starting to use standard units. By the time pupils leave the school, most have a clear understanding of place value and of the processes involved in multiplication. Most pupils are developing their own strategies for solving problems and can explain their reasoning. For example, pupils in Year 4 could explain negative numbers in a sequencing task requiring them to count forwards and backwards. Data handling skills are good and in many instances pupils use appropriate computer programs well. Pupils' knowledge of shape, space and measures is good. On occasions, higher attaining pupils in Year 4 are not fully challenged. This is due to the tasks that they are given, which focus on consolidating previous learning rather than extending previously learnt knowledge or providing opportunities for new learning.
- 6 In science, pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time they leave the school is above the national average. They make good progress in key Stage 1 and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are developing a good scientific approach and exhibit sound skills in observation and communicating their findings for example, in studying the growth of bean shoots. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' ability to recognise the need for a fair test, to plan and carry out their own experiments and select relevant equipment is good. Pupils have a well-developed science vocabulary and good investigative skills for example, in investigating how heat, water and force can change materials. Pupils have good knowledge of the natural world, materials and their properties and the physical world. Progress for higher attaining pupils is limited at times, because the work that is given to them does not challenge them sufficiently well.
- 7 In information technology, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave the school and their progress, including pupils with special educational needs, is sound. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are confident in the use of a mouse and key board for word processing. By the end of Key Stage 2, the majority have a good facility with desktop publishing, including changing fonts and text. They have appropriate skills in word processing, can save their own work, find information on the CD ROM and use icons and menus; they can use the Internet effectively.
- 8 By the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave the school, attainment in religious education is above the expected level in the Locally agreed syllabus. The majority of pupils make good progress, including those with special needs. Pupils have a wide knowledge of Christianity, and knowledge of other religions, such as Judaism and Hinduism is strong. They are able to discuss their own views and feelings about such matters as rules and the effect they can have on people's lives.
- 9 Since the last inspection above average standards have been maintained in reading, writing, science and mathematics in both key stages. At the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave the school, their standard of work is better than the level expected for their age in art, design and technology, geography, music and at the expected level in history and physical education. This shows standards have been maintained in all these subjects and standards in music and geography have been raised. Progress in nearly all lessons is at least satisfactory; and in the majority it is good. Over time, pupils make good progress in art, design and technology, geography, and music and satisfactory progress in history and physical education. There is no significant difference in the progress made by boys and girls.
- 10 Across the school, pupils' literacy skills are given sufficient emphasis in other subject areas. Pupils' writing skills are utilised well; sufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to write at length and for different purposes, for example, in science and history. Likewise, there are numerous opportunities for reading for information. The learning in many subjects is enhanced by opportunities to use research skills for example, in religious education, history and geography. Pupils' numeracy skills are used effectively to classify, compare and measure in several subjects, for example in art, design and technology, geography, information technology and science. The school has exceeded the targets it has set itself for literacy and numeracy.

14 Non-statemented pupils with special educational needs (SEN) generally make satisfactory, and on occasions good, progress towards the targets set for them in their Individual Education Plans (IEP). This is dependent on how effective the pupils' IEPs are in setting appropriate targets and how well they are used in planning appropriate work for them to meet their targets. The IEPs for pupils who have behavioural difficulties are clear and precise and are well used by enabling these pupils to make good progress towards their targets. This is less so with pupils with learning difficulties where the targets are too broad making it difficult for teachers to plan appropriate work at times, as a result pupils only make satisfactory progress even though they receive quality support from general assistants. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs make good progress because they are well tutored by good quality support staff for example, in the literacy and numeracy sessions.

14 **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

11 The good standards highlighted in the previous report have been maintained. Pupils' attitudes to work are good. They listen attentively while the teacher is talking and follow instructions conscientiously. They make a prompt start on work given to them and in most lessons maintain concentration for extended periods, sticking to their tasks even when they experience difficulties. In the main pupils have positive attitudes to both literacy and numeracy. They are always keen to learn and show interest in their work. Many pupils compete enthusiastically to answer questions and many are able to generate independent ideas. They often show pride in the results of their efforts and pleasure when they improve upon previous work. Pupils do select their own resources well when given the opportunity.

12 The behaviour of pupils in class, around the school, in the dinner hall and playground is very good and a strength of the school. Occasionally staff intervene to correct unsatisfactory behaviour but little time is taken over this and pupils accept reprimands with good grace and return to their work or play quickly. An incident in the playground in which a group of boys was engaged in playing outside of playground rules was calmly and rapidly corrected to every one's satisfaction. This exemplifies the way in which their very good behaviour enhances a positive atmosphere within the whole school. Pupils maintain this very good behaviour when they remain in school in break-times. Pupils co-operate well when required and help others who have a problem. There have been no exclusions in the last reporting year of the school.

13 Relationships within the school are very good. Pupils are courteous to each other and to adults. They are encouraged to discuss differences between cultures and beliefs. There are no indications of pupils being unkind to each other and all pupils' work and play well together.

14 Pupils' personal development is good. Throughout the school pupils are eager to offer help and to accept responsibility willingly. From the reception classes upward, pupils perform various tasks and take responsibilities for tidying up, for example. As they progress through school these duties are increased satisfactorily to further develop pupils' sense of social responsibility. Pupils participate in whole school assemblies, organise the transfer of milk around the school and act willingly as classroom aids. Pupils also take responsibilities within their classes and collaborate in lessons when given the opportunity. Pupils regularly collect money for local, national and international charities.

18 **Attendance**

15 In the previous inspection attention was judged to be good. However, the punctuality of a significant number of pupils was considered to be poor at the start of the school day. Overall, the school has maintained the good attendance record. Both the attendance record and the rates of authorised and unauthorised absence are better than the national average. The school has made significant improvements in the punctuality of pupils since the last inspection. The greater majority of pupils are punctual, lessons start on time and this has a positive effect on their learning.

19 QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

19 Teaching

- 16 In the previous inspection the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory in 10 per cent of the lessons seen. This was mainly due to teachers' weak knowledge and understanding in music in Key Stage 1 and a lack of continuity of learning in history and geography. In science, work was not well matched to pupils' abilities, and in information technology the computers were not used effectively. Overall, the good quality of teaching has been maintained and very few examples of unsatisfactory teaching were seen. The quality of teaching has improved particularly in information technology and music because of staff training resulting in well-planned lessons with clear learning objectives. Two major factors which have contributed to the improvement in the overall quality of teaching are the development of effective schemes of work, and improving the effectiveness of coordinators by extending their role to provide advice and support to staff. However, at times work is not provided for pupils of all abilities and assessment procedures are not clearly identified. Other factors which have also contributed to the improvement in teaching are changes in teaching staff and staff training in English and mathematics. In a minority of classrooms a lack of precise learning objectives in lesson plans and weak assessment procedures in most foundation subjects, reduces the quality of the teaching.
- 17 Overall, the quality of teaching is good, resulting in pupils making good progress. The teaching is particularly strong for children under five where all of the teaching was good or better. Across the school, in 95 per cent of the lessons observed the teaching was satisfactory or better; it was good in 34 per cent; and in 23 per cent of lessons teaching was very good. One lesson was of excellent quality.
- 18 Overall, the teaching for under-fives is good. All the teaching in lessons for three and four year olds was at least good; and 86 per cent of lessons was of very good quality. The provision for teaching under fives is very good in most areas, but is good overall in that there are insufficient opportunities for pupils' physical development. They have very limited planned opportunities to develop skills in balancing, climbing and controlling wheeled toys, despite the fact that there is a very good adjacent outdoor play area and resources, except for climbing apparatus. In the early years unit, children work towards the desirable learning outcomes and all areas, except physical development, are well covered. Relationships are very good and the teacher has a good understanding of the needs of young children in these areas. The nursery nurses and the teacher cooperate and work well together, planning suitable activities to build the children's confidence and skills in most areas of learning. In a good mathematics lesson aimed at increasing children's understanding of ordering of numbers, the teacher interacted well with the children; good informal assessment took place leading to each successive step building effectively on children's past knowledge. The lesson was well organised to encourage children's independence and initiative in learning. Improvements are needed in the teaching through outdoor play, particularly in relation to large play equipment, in order to further improve children's physical and creative development.
- 19 In Key Stage 1 the teaching is good. In the lessons seen the teaching was always at least satisfactory; being good in 57 per cent of lessons and very good in 13 per cent. The good quality of teaching helps pupils to make good progress. In the very good quality teaching, careful preparation provides a good range of resources to support pupils' learning and pupils are well motivated by praise and encouragement. The teacher has high expectations of pupils and they respond enthusiastically. Lessons are well planned and organised providing pupils with challenging tasks. An example of good teaching was in a science lesson when pupils investigated healthy foods. Questioning was used very effectively to promote and assess understanding. The teacher had high expectations of pupils and valued their contributions to the discussion. In the literacy hour, teachers have established good classroom routines for pupils and there is an industrious working atmosphere. When parent helpers and support staff are present they are used purposefully and provide good support for pupils for example, in mathematics.

- 20 In Key Stage 2, the teaching is satisfactory. In almost all lessons (except 7 per cent) the teaching was at least satisfactory being good in 23 per cent of the lessons with 17 per cent of lessons of very good quality and one excellent lesson. The best lessons are well planned, cater for the needs of all pupils, have a clear purpose, include challenging activities and proceed at a good pace. In an excellent science lesson in Year 3 concerning irreversible changes for example, the teacher used an effective range of teaching strategies and had high expectations of what pupils could achieve and how they should behave. In this lesson, a very effective demonstration was followed with discussion, and questions were used well to challenge pupils and to check understanding. Whole class teaching was effective, but pupils also had the opportunity to work independently or collaboratively, which they did well. In an art lesson in Year 4 when pupils were drawing a range of parts of plants, the teacher used her time well in monitoring and supporting pupils as they worked. Opportunities to develop pupils' skills were effectively taken. In unsatisfactory lessons, the teachers' planning does not clearly identify what pupils are to learn and as a result, it is difficult to assess what pupils have achieved in order to help plan the next lesson to build on pupils' learning. For example, in a mathematics lesson following on from the class discussion, pupils were unsure of the task and as a result did not complete the task limiting the progress they made.
- 21 Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. Overall, the grouping of pupils for English is beneficial to most pupils; this is less so in mathematics. However, because current assessment procedures do not give a precise picture of pupils' attainment, higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently well challenged at times. For example in Year 4, in mathematics both higher and average attaining pupils at times complete the same task. Particularly well-taught subjects are art, design and technology, music and religious education across the school. There is good continuity between those lessons that are part of a series, especially in English and mathematics. The introduction of the National Literacy strategy has maintained the good teaching of English with clearly focused lessons ending with effective plenary sessions to check on pupils' learning. The teaching of mathematics through the National Numeracy Strategy is good in Key Stage 1 and sound in Key Stage 2; good use is made of mental exercises to give pace to the lesson. It was not possible to judge the quality of teaching in geography as due to the way the timetable was organised only one lesson was seen.
- 22 Homework is used appropriately to support the work in classrooms. The regular use of homework is effective in promoting the development of reading, spelling and mathematics with pupils. Good use is made of the reading diary and has great value as an effective link between home and school. Parents are happy with the amount of homework given.
- 23 The pupils with a statement of special educational needs (SEN) are well supported. They receive good individual help in the classroom from support staff and have access to all areas of the curriculum. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) exist for all pupils who have been identified as having SEN. They are well structured and identify appropriate and realistic goals for pupils with behavioral problems but less so for pupils with learning difficulties. Overall, pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them in their IEPs. Teachers use the good quality support they receive well and make appropriate use of IEPs in planning work; these have a positive effect on pupils' progress. Where teachers plan tasks based on pupils' IEPs and support staff are well briefed to work with small groups; pupils make good progress. For example, in a mathematics lesson when pupils were studying 'doubling' of numbers, the support was well used in helping pupils who found difficulty concentrating, remain on task.

27 **The curriculum and assessment**

- 24 The school has been successful in addressing most of the issues raised in the last inspection. Provision for music has significantly improved. The curriculum time allocation for pupils in Key Stage 2 is in line with most schools. The role of the co-ordinators has been developed to broaden links between co-ordinators and governors and to strengthen key stage coordination. There is good liaison and progress between early years and key stages. There is a planned programme for the development of the role of the co-ordinator to include training and time to effectively monitor the teaching and learning of the subjects of the curriculum. In order to build upon the sound improvements since the last inspection, the governors, headteacher and staff should further improve standards in writing by developing pupils' skills in planning, refining and re-drafting their work, and improve pupils' spelling by devising a more effective, systematic approach to its teaching. There is a need to establish a three-year plan incorporating a programme of curricular review.
- 25 The planning and content of the curriculum for areas of learning for the under-fives is good in most areas, but overall is satisfactory. The weakness is that there are insufficient opportunities for pupils' physical development through outdoor play. Children have very limited opportunities to develop skills in balancing, climbing and controlling wheeled toys, despite the fact that the resources are available, readily accessible and there is a very good outdoor area. This should be addressed, as a matter of urgency.
- 26 The school has suitable curriculum aims. All required policies are in place and are being implemented satisfactorily. The governors discuss curriculum matters regularly. The curriculum committee ensures that all National Curriculum subjects and religious education are taught for a reasonable amount of time. They have established a new monitoring system that is beginning to monitor and evaluate appropriately. For example, all non-staff members of the governing body have responsibility for a curriculum area. Termly monitoring is now taking place and the governors receive reports on the progress of all subject areas from the headteacher and link governors. The literacy governor and numeracy governor have participated in the national training programme. The governors receive regular reports on the curriculum development plan.
- 27 All pupils have access to the curriculum which is balanced and broadly based. The statutory requirements of the National Curriculum are met fully in all subjects and in religious education. The provision for pupils' personal and social education, including health and sex education is good.
- 28 The school has responded enthusiastically to the National strategy on the teaching of literacy, and gives high priority to the teaching of reading and writing which are beginning to raise standards. Daily well-organized literacy sessions, which adhere closely to the national framework, are taught in each class. Pupils' literacy skills are used sufficiently well in both key stages. The school is effectively implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. There is an appropriate emphasis being given to numeracy. Numeracy skills are being satisfactorily transferred into other areas of the curriculum. For example, they are used in design and technology, geography and science. A strength is the emphasis given to mental arithmetic where pupils are beginning to display satisfactory skills. Provision within the curriculum for subjects to deliver information technology is good.
- 29 The school environment is rich in opportunities to support the curriculum. Year 2 has recently had an enriching visit to St. Albans Abbey. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good, particularly in sport and music. Current clubs, mainly for Year 3 and Year 4 pupils, include chess/draughts, choir, recorders, table tennis, country dancing, football and a stamp club for all year groups. Extra-curricular lessons, paid for by parents, are available, subject to audition, in violin, cello, brass instruments, guitar and piano/keyboard. An extensive programme of visitors to the school, off-site visits, craft workshops, competitions, and joint activities with other lower schools, charitable events and school association activities, enriches the curriculum. There are good links with local churches, charities, Luton Town Football Club and members of the community. The school is the first school in Bedfordshire to become a BP Link School, resulting in excellent quality curriculum and management support. There have been recent links through the Israeli Embassy with a tree-planting scheme in Israel.

- 30 Satisfactory medium term planning is in place, but all lesson plans do not clearly identify precisely what pupils of all ability are to learn or give sufficient recognition to how assessment informs teaching on a day to day basis, thus often failing to provide tasks that are sufficiently challenging for the higher attaining pupils. There is satisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs and for equal opportunities. Work is usually varied to meet the needs of pupils, but is not always matched to the needs of higher attaining pupils. Pupils with an identified special need are well supported by the teaching staff and well-briefed support staff. Their needs are generally satisfactorily met through activities appropriate to their abilities, although individual education plans do not specify in sufficient detail the targets to be met by pupils with learning difficulties.
- 31 Overall, procedures for assessment are satisfactory for the under fives but unsatisfactory at Key Stages 1 and 2. Appropriate assessment is conducted with children prior to Year 1, in order to record their levels of learning before they begin the National Curriculum. Although systems of assessment and record keeping are satisfactory in a minority of subjects, there is no formal assessment or record keeping system in place in the foundation subjects and religious education and as a result, teachers do not have a clear picture of pupils' attainment or progress. Pupils are regularly tested in English and mathematics. However, these assessments are not effectively analysed by the majority of teachers and consequently, only indicate what pupils have covered not what they know, understand or can do. As a result, some teachers do not plan sufficiently challenging work for pupils of all abilities, particularly for high attaining pupils. The results of assessments are not always used purposefully to plan future work for individual pupils in most areas. The school effectively carries out the end of key stage assessments and carefully analyses these results to set targets for improvement. However, the school does not keep portfolios of pupils' assessed work for moderation and for informing assessment; these would further improve standards by providing a reference point for staff in making judgements about pupils' work. The planned programme for the development of the role of the co-ordinator to include training and time to effectively monitor the teaching and learning of all subjects should address these weaknesses. The best practice in marking offers oral and written constructive feedback and strategies for pupils to improve their work, but this practice is not always consistent. Assessment, recording and reporting procedures are not yet having an effect upon standards. The identification, targets and progress of pupils with special educational needs are recorded appropriately. The school complies with the statutory requirements for reporting to parents and termly meetings are held with them. The school acknowledges its weakness in the areas of assessment and recording and, as a result, it has a satisfactory capacity to improve its arrangements for assessing and recording attainment and progress.

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

- 32 Since the previous inspection the school has maintained the good provision for the spiritual, social and moral development of pupils. There has been an improvement in the provision for pupils' cultural development. Overall the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The aims and values of the school are reflected fully in the ways pupils are encouraged to show respect and concern for others in all that they do.
- 33 Spiritual development is facilitated through purposeful assemblies, good quality acts of worship and stimulating religious education lessons. Christian values are strongly promoted. In one lesson pupils listened to the account of Jesus calling his disciples, then spoke of how they might show respect for others by being better listeners. There is a 'thought for the week' in some classrooms, encouraging pupils to reflect on their relationships with other people. Visits to local churches also help to promote spiritual awareness. Pupils learn to appreciate the values and beliefs of others when studying different faiths such as Judaism. Interactive displays emphasise for example, the significance of Tallit and the Torah in worship. Year 2 pupils gained a sense of wonder at the creativity of past generations when visiting St. Albans Abbey to take brass rubbings and to produce their own work in clay tiles. Displays of art work, as well as tactile displays of natural and man-made artefacts, help pupils reflect upon the lives and beliefs of others and to express their own feelings for the natural world in prayers they write themselves.

- 34 Provision for pupils' moral development is good and is rooted in the aims of the school. Respect for others and positive caring relationships are central to the school's ethos. Pupils understand clearly the difference between right and wrong and respond fully to the school's high expectations of them. A strong moral code is the basis for acceptable behaviour and this is consistently emphasised through the day to day life of the school. Pupils are held individually responsible for their own action and behaviour and are encouraged to solve their own problems and arguments during open class discussion. An understanding of moral decisions is effectively developed during class discussions on the basis of truth, honesty, fairness and respect for others. There is a solid framework of values that encourages pupils to distinguish between right and wrong and staff provide good role models for pupils.
- 35 There is a very good provision for pupils' social development. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility, for example, older pupils take care of younger ones during break times, and others carry out day to day duties such as returning registers to the office. Relationships within the school are very good. Pupils are polite and courteous to adults and to each other. The development of the school playground with designated areas for ball games and quiet areas for more reflective pastimes, helps promote very good social interaction between pupils. Pupils improve social awareness through the many visits they make to the places of interest such as museums and local churches. Positive acceptance of disability is promoted strongly throughout the school. For example, pupils hear stories and reflect on their own feelings about children who wear glasses. Pupils support many charities among which are Save the Children and the Royal National Institute for the Blind. The school choir sings carols to raise money annually for a cancer appeal. Pupils gain awareness of a wider social setting by entering national and local events. The country-dance club and choir recently performed at the 150th anniversary celebrations of the local church. Pupils do well in national projects and competitions such as the young letter writers competition and the project promoted by the Israeli embassy in which children of the world illustrate the bible.
- 36 Provision for cultural development is good. This has improved since the previous inspection. Art and music feature strongly in the school's curriculum. There is a choir and a country dance club. Visits to local museums, and trips on the canal where pupils enjoy being 'Vikings for the day', all help pupils to appreciate their cultural heritage. The school helps pupils understand other cultures, for example by arranging Chinese, Lebanese and Indonesian visitors to demonstrate how favourite foods are prepared. In religious education lessons, pupils are taught about other faith cultures. Assemblies are used effectively to highlight such festivals such as Divali and the Chinese New Year.
- 40 **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**
- 37 The previous inspection reported that these aspects were generally judged to be satisfactory. Where there were concerns, these have been addressed by the school. The school ensures that absences are correctly coded in attendance registers and that unauthorised absences are accurately reported. Strategies to improve punctuality have been effective and during the inspection there were very few instances of lateness noted. Statutory fire requirements have been complied with.
- 38 The school identifies pupils with special educational needs through its established procedures. Pupils with Statements and those with behavioural difficulties are very effectively supported. Support staff are used effectively to support pupils with learning difficulties, but their learning targets as stated on their individual education plans are not specific enough.
- 39 For children under five staff take care to build positive relationships and use praise successfully to encourage the children and increase their confidence, ensuring they are sensitively introduced to school routines. This is further enhanced as parents are well informed about the curriculum and are welcomed into the early year's classes providing them with opportunities to observe good early education practice.
- 40 Procedures for recording pupils' academic achievements are in place but they are not effective because teachers do not consistently evaluate progress and use that knowledge to plan or modify the next lesson. There are half termly assessments but these are not fully effective in giving a clear picture of children's attainment across the curriculum.

- 41 Teachers have a good relationship with their pupils and their knowledge of them helps the teachers to monitor their personal development satisfactorily. The overall impression is of a school where pupils are very well cared for and respond by showing evident enjoyment of their time there. Class teachers and other staff are committed to ensuring pupils' well being. They respect them and respond sensitively to their needs. Most parents report that their child likes school.
- 42 The behaviour of the pupils is very good and no instances of bullying were noted during the inspection. Pupils did not express any concern about bullying but were aware of procedures to be followed if it was to occur. Procedures for promoting good behaviour and good attitudes to learning are effective and the school is an orderly place. Pupils spoken to were very clear about school rules and what is acceptable behaviour. The excellent external facilities also promote pupils' good behaviour. Good attitudes are promoted. In Year 1 pupils learn about the Country Code. In class assemblies observed, pupils were encouraged to say positive things about their neighbour. Smiley faces and positive comments support pupils' work. At the whole school assembly each week pupils receive certificates for good work and behaviour.
- 43 Good attendance is promoted through the ethos of the school where pupils respond to high expectations and parents generally understand the importance of regular attendance. The school has good procedures for ensuring ease of transition from the early years unit into Year 1 and there is sound liaison with the three middle schools to which the pupils transfer at the end of Year 4. Child protection arrangements are satisfactory and all staff are aware of the provisions of the school's policy. The headteacher is the designated coordinator; she has received training and is effective in her role. Files are kept securely.
- 44 There is a sound policy for Health and Safety, and a named governor. The staff information booklet comprehensively details various procedures to promote pupils' health and well being in school. Four staff are named as specifically responsible for first aid. Supervision of pupils during lunchtimes and break times is satisfactory. School security is good. The governors have developed an appropriate policy on sex education. Risk assessment is carried out conscientiously and other safety procedures such as fire practice, electrical safety checks, equipment checks take place regularly. The school carries out regular fire drills.
- 45 The school is supported adequately within the resources available by a range of additional services, including the school nurse and the educational psychologist who has provided support for staff in the management of pupils with behavioural problems.

49 **Partnership with parents and the community**

- 46 The last inspection report judged that partnership with parents to be strength of the school and that there were good links with the Local Middle Schools. However, the links with the community and commerce were less well developed. These standards have been further improved and built upon successfully since the last inspection. Relationships between the school, parents and the local community are good. This is as a result of the commitment of the head teacher and the support of the staff and the governors.
- 47 The quality of information provided by the school for parents is good. The initial introduction of pupils into school is well managed and close relationships are developed between parents and staff. Parents are pleased with the quality and regularity of newsletters. They receive information about the curriculum that their children will be following in the current term. The annual pupils' reports are satisfactory and contain all legally required information. They give good details of strengths and weaknesses, particularly in the core subjects of the National Curriculum. They do set targets for pupils to aim for next. There are regular parents' evenings to discuss pupils' work and parents feel welcome to come into school. The information in the prospectus is satisfactory. The school operates a successful "open door" policy for parents.

- 48 The part parents play in the life of the school is good. They are encouraged to hear their children read at home throughout the school and to make comment in the home/school diary. Since the last inspection report, the school has made good efforts to involve parents even more. There are a significant number who regularly assist in classrooms, and generally around the school as well as on school outings and trips into the local area. These provide much valued and useful support for staff. There is a very strong Parents/Teachers association, which is very active in raising additional funds for the school. The group consults with the head teacher and staff to ensure that monies raised are used well to support pupils. Parents and the local community support fund raising events very well.
- 49 Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved suitably overall in their child's progress. They are informed of the provision being made if their child has special educational needs. Parents of children who are on stages 3 to 5 are informed by the school of progress and are invited to annual reviews where their views are taken into account.
- 50 The school has good links with the local community, including other schools in the area. The teaching staff make good use of the local area as well as more distant places of interest, to give greater meaning to the pupils' knowledge and wider understanding of the world. The school benefits from the interest and involvement of the local community, for example, the support for the seasonal fayres, senior citizens in school talking about the area's history, the regular church speakers in school and the strong support from local business and industry. There is much development in the school's association with larger business/commerce since the last inspection. There are now good links forged, for example the school's involvement with "Investors in People", environmental agencies and other commercial attachments, such as the nearby Luton Town Football Club. The quiet area, which has been developed in the school playground, was augmented by the support from a 'Woodland Trust' whose expertise enriched the project. The involvement with a large supermarket's charity target furthers pupils' awareness of groups less fortunate in society.
- 51 A minority of parents expressed concerns about a lack of information in what is being taught, about the provision for higher and lower attaining pupils and how the school uses parents helpers. Inspectors' judgements support one of these views. The school provides clear written information on the national curriculum being taught in school. However, inspectors findings indicate that at times higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently well challenged but lower attaining pupils receive good support in the classroom from teachers and general assistants. However, individual education plans for pupils with learning difficulties are not precise enough. Parent helpers in the school at the time of the inspection were well used and felt they were highly valued by the school. Inspectors' views also support parents' positive views for example, they are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school, pupils enjoy school, the school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on children and pupils enjoy coming to school.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

- 1 In the previous inspection report weaknesses were highlighted in the ineffective use of the senior management team as monitors of teachers' work. There was also concern over the limited effectiveness of coordinators. Significant improvements have been made in these previously weak aspects and plans are in place for further improvements.
- 1 The management of the school has played a major role in the improvements the school has made since the last inspection and ensures that there will be a planned programme for continued improvements. They have successfully managed the implementation of the 'Literacy' and the 'Numeracy' Hour and improved the provision of information technology and music.

- 2 The headteacher is a strong leader who has a clear vision of the path the school needs to follow to continue improving. She is committed, conscientious and effective. Her all round performance over past years means that she has secured the respect of governors, staff, parents and pupils. She has been instrumental in improving the effectiveness of co-ordinators, re-organising the structure of the early years department, implementing the Literacy hour and developing a team approach; all of which has contributed to maintaining and raising standards. A strong emphasis has been given to extending the school's involvement in the community and, as a result, links with parents, the middle school and the local church are particularly strong and add much to the caring ethos of the school. There is a good management structure that is well supported by the headteacher; this leads to effective involvement of all staff through clear channels of communication. Subject coordinators provide appropriate management, particularly in devising policies and schemes of work.
- 3 The governing body carries out their responsibilities effectively and has clear responsibilities that are dealt with through a rigorous committee system. It supports the school well, occasionally as a 'critical friend,' and although several governors are new to the school they approach their role enthusiastically. There are clear plans in place to develop specific areas of interest for governors and to regularly meet with staff for in depth discussions in order to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. All statutory requirements including collective worship are being met.
- 4 Curriculum development is appropriately planned for the core subjects and monitoring systems are in place. This is mainly by the headteacher and co-ordinators who regularly review these areas of the curriculum through scrutiny of teachers' planning. Co-ordinators have clear responsibilities laid out in their detailed job descriptions and relevant targets set for the development of their area are a feature of the school's development plan in English, mathematics and information technology. Appropriate structures exist for coordinators to give advice on and develop their subject. However, adequate time has not been given within the school day to effectively monitor the teaching of these subjects by coordinators. The school has plans to implement such a scheme and areas of development identified will form a basis of the new school development plan. The monitoring of teaching is undertaken both informally and in a formal, systematic way by the headteacher. Although a professional discussion follows in order to further improve the quality of teaching, this has yet to prove to be fully effective.
- 5 Development planning involves the whole staff and governing body in the setting of priorities and targets for the coming year. The format shows sound practice, it identifies key areas for development, is carefully costed and has criteria set with which success can be judged. However, this is only detailed for the past year and the long-term vision is not sufficiently well documented; there is no indication of how developments will be monitored or evaluated. Although the school has an agreed procedure for reviewing curriculum areas in foundation subjects it does not have a documented long-term plan that reflects the school's priorities for development in these areas.
- 6 The aims and values of the school draw policy and practice together and provide a sound basis for the good ethos that exists within the school. The good standards are being maintained and are rising in some subjects. Although the school is rightly committed to the continuing raising of standards, higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently well challenged. The highly effective day to day management and organisation by the headteacher ensures that pupils are well taught in a safe and happy environment that promotes effective learning, enabling satisfactory standards to be achieved.
- 7 Although management of matters concerning special educational needs is sound, further improvements are needed. The school works in harmony with the Local Education Authority (LEA) by applying the LEA policy and criteria when making assessments and assigning pupils to the Code of Practice stages and all staff are appropriately involved. The individual education plans for pupils with behavioural problems are of good quality but targets for pupils with learning difficulties are not specific enough and review dates are not specified.

63 **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

- 8 Concerns were expressed in the last report about the lack of expertise in the teaching of music. There was also a lack of designated coordinators in some subjects and limited opportunities for coordinators to work alongside colleagues. The first concern has been successfully addressed by staff training and by the appointment of a music co-ordinator. There are now co-ordinators for all subjects except physical education and the role of co-ordinators has been developed and plans for them to work along side colleagues are in place. Deficiencies detailed in the report about library provision are being remedied. The library has been relocated to a central area and replenished with books to an adequate level.
- 9 The school has a sufficient number of qualified and experienced teachers. Their qualifications and experience are sufficient to meet the demands of the National Curriculum and the needs of children under five, including the provision for literacy and numeracy. Teachers have clear roles and responsibilities within the classroom. Co-ordinators' roles are appropriately defined and are being further developed. The school has a large number of classroom support staff who play an important and effective role in the school and make a significant contribution to the standards achieved. Good use is made of support staff for special educational needs, for teaching library skills and for taking small groups to develop computer skills. The school development plan identifies suitable priority areas for staff training, for whole school issues and the personal development needs of staff are also catered for. All staff, including non-teaching assistants and clerical staff, have the opportunity to attend training. Procedures for teacher appraisal have been developed and are in place. Appropriate support is provided for supply teachers and for students.
- 10 The internal accommodation is good. The large hall provides adequate accommodation for assemblies and physical education and there is a separate dining area. The school is kept well maintained and clean. The classrooms and corridors are bright and attractive and pupils' work is celebrated by high standards of display in all areas of the school. Every available space is used to enhance the learning environment and equipment is adequately stored. The library is now well situated and imaginative use of space has provided adequate storage for the computers.
- 11 The school site is large and the external accommodation is very good and enhances the quality of education and the educational standards achieved. For example, the environmental study area is an excellent resource, and is used for a wide variety of curriculum activities. There is an area that provides a pleasant retreat for pupils who want to engage in peaceful activities during playtimes and lunchtimes. For pupils to further develop social skills, there is a specially resourced area for board games and hard areas for team games as well as spacious grassed areas. There is also an interesting walled area that is used by the pupils for imaginative games. There are very well maintained garden and flowerbeds.
- 12 The school has good levels of resources to support learning in many subjects of the National Curriculum and for pupils under five. Resources for information technology, history, music, physical education, religious studies and for the under fives, are good and at least satisfactory in all other areas. There are sufficient reference books and fiction books for the development of literacy; the school has plans to improve this over time. The curriculum is further enhanced by extra curricular activities such as the computer club, by school outings and by activities such as visits to the theatre or from theatre companies and by various workshops.

The efficiency of the school

- 13 The areas of concern highlighted in the last report were concerned with a lack of time allocated for teaching at Key Stage 2 and that areas for development were not prioritised in the development plan. These aspects have been improved and are no longer a concern.

- 14 Overall, the school uses the money it receives well. Educational developments are supported well through financial planning; for instance, large amounts of money have been spent on priorities such as literacy and information technology. Members of the governing body are appropriately included in consultations and receive regular updates on income and expenditure. The modest surplus has been carefully acquired over several years by careful budgeting and is seen as necessary in providing extra teachers so as to keep classes of one-year group only; this is a major concern for parents. The school has invested in high levels of support staff, which is beneficial to pupils' progress. Furthermore, there is a planned programme of development of the outside environment to further enhance the good provision. Although the headteacher has clear ideas about future priorities, detailed financial planning is for the past year only, and the longer-term developments are not recorded in a sufficiently detailed long-term outline financial plan. This means that financial planning is not sufficiently far extended beyond the year 2000 to take account of likely long-term commitments.
- 15 Funding for in-service training and special needs is used well. Particularly effective is the use of in-service funding to improve knowledge and understanding in literacy, numeracy, information technology and music. Coordinators are able to appropriately update their knowledge and understanding through regular course attendance. The resources of the school are used effectively to support pupils with special educational needs.
- 16 Financial control is good. There are a number of recommendations in the most recent audit report; the majority have been successfully implemented. Although the spending on administration is average, the administrative staff contribute strongly to the smooth running of the school.
- 17 Effective use is made of staff and resources. Staff are deployed well throughout the school, and those who receive responsibility allowances are generally effective and provide worthwhile support for the headteacher and colleagues. Support staff are conscientious and ably support pupils well. The accommodation is fully utilized; the library and the computer room are well used. Learning resources are used effectively and are accessible.
- 18 In view of the average amount of money the school receives, the good quality of education provided, the above average standards achieved by the pupils who enter school with average attainment and the extent to which the school has improved since the last inspection, the school gives good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

74 AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

- 19 The previous inspection found that the provision for the under-fives gave a 'sound basis for later education', with children achieving good levels for their age. The quality of teaching was good and pupils gained from a balanced range of planned experiences, with activities well matched to their needs. The school has maintained the quality of education for the under-fives although there have been staff changes and a reorganisation of the 'early years' department. Further improvements are needed to the provision made by teachers for children's outdoor play.
- 20 Early years provision caters for children whose ages may range from three to five years, prior to entry into the main school in the term following their fifth birthday. Children are admitted chronologically as places become available. The three-year-old children are in a separate unit with two nursery nurses. They attend for five afternoon sessions and the sessions are one and a half hours long, normally for one initial term before transfer to the unit for four year old children, which is run by the nursery teacher and a general assistant. All four-year-old children attend either five mornings or five afternoons with the youngest children normally attending in the afternoons. All sessions are two and a half hours long and offer equal opportunities and experiences. The four-year-old children are usually, although not always, located in the separate old school building, which has a secure, outdoor play area. Movement from the afternoon to the morning sessions is dependent on numbers of pupils. The January reception children remain in the early years unit, but increase to full time, using the 'rear classroom' for more formal work. In the final summer term, the January and April reception pupils and the September cohort (4+), who together form two parallel Year 1 classes in September, remain in the unit but are joined into two full time parallel classes. The organisation is relatively new and is complex. Initially, it meets the school aims, but the school recognises that it requires longer term careful monitoring of pupil development. At the time of the inspection there were 50 four year olds who attend either a morning or afternoon session in one class, and 13 three year olds in another class.
- 21 At the time of this inspection, the admission arrangements seem to be working very well. All children appear to be very happy and settled and relate well to adults and to one another. When they start school, most children's attainment is around the level expected for their age, although there is a wide range of abilities. Overall, the under-fives make good progress in the early years classes and, by the time they reach compulsory school age, they achieve higher than expected standards in their personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, creative development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. A lack of outdoor play activities restricts children's progress in their physical development but most children achieve the expected levels in this area of their development. They are developing good attitudes to learning, sustain concentration, persevere with their work and show some independence. There is sufficient planning between both members of staff to link the small steps required to achieve the skills laid down in the desirable learning outcomes, to ensure continuity in the teaching and progression in the children's learning. The provision for teaching the children who are under five years of age is very good in most areas, but is good overall, despite there being insufficient opportunities for pupils' physical development. They have very limited planned opportunities to develop skills in balancing, climbing and controlling wheeled toys, despite the fact that there is a very good, adjacent outdoor play area and good resources, except for the lack of climbing apparatus. These resources are available and readily accessible. In the early years unit, children work towards the desirable learning outcomes and all areas, except physical development, are well covered.
- 22 Visitors to support the curriculum are used extensively, for example, 'People who help us' including school staff, police, fire service, health visitor, etc. There is daily contact with parents and six open evenings are held each year, as well as a day for grandparents. Nursery children's work is displayed in the main school and they invite staff and pupils to see or hear their special work. Morning children use the school hall weekly for physical education, music and movement. They attend two main school assemblies and walk around the main school to familiarise themselves with it.

Language and Literacy

- 23 All aspects of language and literacy are appropriately developed and the four elements of speaking, listening, reading and writing are successfully promoted across the curriculum enabling children to make good progress. Children are encouraged to join in class story time, sing rhymes and share speaking games with each other and with the teacher. They talk about their own experiences, such as birthday parties and what they have done at the weekend. They listen well and they speak with confidence using sentences and good vocabulary. They become engrossed in stories, such as 'We are going on a bear hunt,' by Michael Rosen. They make up their own stories and take part in role-play. Most of the children like books and understand how to look at them. They know that print has meaning and like to point at the words and 'read' the story to an adult. They recognise their own names and fix their name cards on the wall, on entry to the school each day. The home corner successfully develops children's participation in constructive play, for example, 'Goldilocks and the three bears'. Children's understanding and identification of initial letters is successfully reinforced by a table displaying objects that begin with a specific letter which, in the week of the inspection, was the letter 'b'. Concentrating on a specific colour each week enhances their identification of colour; children brought in a great many items that were orange, in colour.

Mathematics

- 24 Children are provided with many opportunities to promote their mathematical development and as a result, they make good progress. They can use a range of mathematical language, such as before, after, longer, shorter, zero. They are able to order themselves from 1 to 10; they know that 9 is before 10 and that 7 is after 6. They join in poems such as 'One teddy all alone.' They are familiar with many number rhymes, counting games, songs and stories, which they join in with obvious enjoyment. They are beginning to compare, match, sort, order, sequence and count, using everyday objects. The three-year-old children use construction toys for building and counting. They are beginning to write numbers with increasingly correct orientation. They can count up to ten and count back to zero.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 25 Children make good progress and are beginning to understand the difference between then and now and effective use is made of their own baby photographs for them to explore differences and similarities. They are aware of and can describe the community, in which they live and identify the forms of transport that they use to travel to school. They like to talk about family and home and adults build skilfully upon the experiences in order to extend their knowledge about their own lives. The many craft activities provided allow children to explore and select materials, such as when folding paper to produce dancing bears, cutting with scissors and, in the case of the three year old children, to reassemble their own jigsaw cuttings and glue them on to backing paper. During the inspection, the children effectively painted pictures of the teddy bears, which they had brought from home and enjoyed talking about them.

Physical development

- 26 Progress in their physical development is satisfactory. In movement they enjoy responding to music. In the playground, they run, jump, hop, play with hoops and kick and throw balls. They are beginning to understand the first rules about taking turns and following each other. They are developing an awareness of space and of others. The weekly physical education lesson in the hall was not seen during the week of the inspection, but the stated objectives of these sessions are to develop physical education, music and movement. No outdoor play experiences of balancing, climbing or controlling wheeled toys were planned during the inspection.

Creative development

- 27 A good range of activities are provided to stimulate creative and imaginative play enabling children to make good progress. Opportunities to develop through role-play using outdoor play equipment are limited. Painting, drawing, role play, sand and water play, making porridge and sticking activities are all thoroughly enjoyed by the children and are well resourced in the classroom. They enthusiastically explore colour, texture, shape, space and form, in two and three dimensions, and to successfully help to make, smell and taste porridge. They effectively paint large-scale pictures of themselves and know the main parts of the body. They respond in a variety of ways to what they see and hear and talk confidently about autumn leaves, the weather and things that are familiar to them. They are beginning to communicate their feelings creatively. They use a range of materials appropriately to draw, paint, make models and explore sand and water. They express their ideas and feelings well in imaginative play. They enjoy singing, particularly familiar songs and nursery rhymes. They are developing a sense of rhythm. They develop listening skills and sound discrimination and recognise unseen sounds and instruments. They enjoy playing simple accompaniments on castanets, tambourines, maracas, bells and wood blocks.

Personal and social development

- 28 Children are secure and happy in school and relate well to one another and to adults making good progress. They are confident and behave in appropriate ways. They are aware of right and wrong. They share resources well, work together in groups and are beginning to understand the need to share and take turns. They work well independently and are able to select an activity or a resource. They treat their environment and living things with care. They take initiative and have personal independence in dressing and hygiene. Their behaviour is very good and is encouraged by praise and positive attitudes. They learn quickly and try hard.
- 29 Teaching for the under-fives is good overall. In the lessons seen, the teaching in 86 per cent of the lessons was very good and 14 per cent was good. Good teaching is having an impact on the standards of attainment and good progress made by the children in the early year's department classes, especially in language, literacy, mathematics and music. Teaching and support staff know the children well and match the work effectively to their differing needs. Together with parent helpers, they form an effective team who plan and work well to provide a positive learning ethos within a caring environment. Strengths in the good lessons include very high expectations of the children's attainment, thorough planning in which both adult roles are very clear and smoothly executed, and effective questioning that extends children's thinking. These are seen in both literacy and numeracy lessons, which are carefully planned to promote and link understanding of number, pattern and rhyme in both poetry and song. Both teacher and support staff encourage and value the children's efforts, achieving high levels of concentration and behaviour.

85 ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

85 English

- 30 In the 1998 end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests in reading and writing the proportion of pupils who reached the nationally expected standard (Level 2) was above the national average and those who attained the higher level (Level 3) was close to the average in reading and very high in writing. In comparison with similar schools the performance of pupils in 1998 was above average in writing and average in reading. In Key Stage 1, trends over time show results have been consistently above the national average although there was a fall in reading results in 1998. 1999 results show an improvement from 1998.
- 31 The inspection findings show that for this present cohort of pupils at Key Stage 1 the majority are in line with the national average and a significant proportion of them are above. By the time pupils leave the school, in Year 4, standards are above the level expected for pupils of this age. This evidence broadly supports the targets the school has set which it has exceeded. The standards at the last inspection have been maintained. Areas of concern identified in the last report were concerned with the under-use of the library and under-developed assessment in aspects of English. The school has now developed an accessible library that is well used. Assessment has been improved but further improvements are needed.

- 32 By the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time they leave the school, pupils achieve above average standards in speaking and listening. Pupils at seven are articulate and use well-formed sentences and a good range of vocabulary. Their responses are considered and appropriate, reflecting the quality of their listening skills especially during the literacy hour. Higher attaining pupils speak clearly and during the class shared reading of 'Red Riding Hood' they confidently explained their understanding of the plot and the characters. The few lower attaining pupils answered questions related to the text but lacked some fluency of speech. By the time they leave the school, pupils are skilled at discussing and evaluating the meaning and purpose of a variety of texts they study. For example, pupils in the shared reading examined closely the style of instructional writing in 'Playing Conkers' and in the plenary session, using the same criteria, examined the quality and effectiveness of their own examples. During 'circle time' and role-play pupils express their ideas and feelings fully and confidently. They also engage in good levels of conversation with adults and respond confidently when given more formal opportunities for speaking and listening to a wider audience in class assemblies and drama productions. The skills of lower attaining pupils are more limited but with the encouragement they receive especially in the whole class tasks, they are beginning to show confidence in sharing their ideas together.
- 33 Reading standards are above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave the school. By the end of Key Stage 1, higher attaining pupils are independent, fluent and confident readers of both fiction and non-fiction. They have a good understanding of the text and are beginning to recognise the structure of stories and use the correct vocabulary to evaluate the book. All pupils use a wide range of strategies to read new words and to self correct more difficult ones. The improved reading resources to support the literacy hour and particularly the use of the big books, has improved the level of enjoyment shown by the pupils in their reading and is increasing the ability to read with expression. Pupils show a good understanding of alphabetical order in using the index of reference books to find information. The literacy hour is used well to plan opportunities for linked reading and writing tasks such as the writing of book reviews in Year 2. By the time pupils leave the school, the best readers are able to discuss the text they read with clarity and understanding. They are fluent and articulate in their reading, but expression is underdeveloped in many pupils. Pupils read a wide range of texts from the good range of both fiction and non-fiction books. Many have favourite authors and discuss their preferences and the different styles of writing clearly explaining why. Lower attaining pupils are more hesitant in reading a new text but most have a good knowledge of strategies to use and are gaining confidence and independence in their reading. The library has just been established and pupils are developing sound study skills and making use of the catalogued library. Higher order reading and research skills are well developed especially in other areas of the curriculum.
- 34 Pupils' attainment in writing by the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time they leave the school is above the national average with some examples of higher attainment in Key Stage 1. At seven, handwriting is clear and well formed with the majority confidently using a cursive style. In their extended writing pupils demonstrate a good awareness of the structure and sequencing of events in a story. Their ideas are imaginative, varied and clear. Spellings are not always accurate, but the use of punctuation including speech marks and the apostrophe is good. There are frequent opportunities during the literacy hour to practise phonics rules to improve spellings but pupils are not confident in using these skills independently in their written work. There are some very good examples of different forms of writing including letters, diaries, and poems and retelling favourite fairy stories. Some of the written work is linked well to other areas of the curriculum such as history with some good factual information about St. Alban's after a visit. A small minority of lower attaining pupils in Year 2 are still printing but can write sentences with some adult support and spell simple words correctly. By the time pupils leave the school, most pupils use good expressive language and grammatical awareness in a variety of well structured and planned work that includes letter writing, book reviews, poetry, diaries, plays and science experiments. There are an appropriate number of examples of extended writing. Most pupils can work independently and there are good opportunities to use research skills in the library or through information technology. Pupils often illustrate and edit their work on the computer. Although written work is generally well presented and handwriting is of a good standard, spelling is not always accurate. Pupils' skills in planning, editing and re-drafting are not well developed and even higher attaining pupils have had few opportunities to develop these skills.

- 35 Progress in reading and speaking and listening at both key stages, is good for all pupils including those with special educational needs. In writing, progress is satisfactory for all pupils with good progress in some aspects especially handwriting in Key Stage 1. However, higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 2 are not always challenged. This is mainly due to the fact that teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for regular planning and editing of pieces of written work, or for effective teaching of spelling. The literacy hour is well established and effective teaching and management strategies are being used in many lessons and this is helping to accelerate the progress of pupils especially in Key Stage 1. The plenary session is used well in most cases to extend and reinforce ideas from the lesson and provide valuable feedback. The effect of this progress has yet to show in higher results for the higher attaining pupils in Year 4. Pupils in Year 1 learn how to speak more clearly, widen their vocabulary and listen more carefully. In Key Stage 2, discussion skills develop well particularly in extending pupils' technical vocabulary across the curriculum. In reading, in Key Stage 1, pupils move progressively through the reading scheme and staff place a high priority on hearing pupils read during guided reading sessions. In Key Stage 1, progress in writing skills develops consistently with the emphasis on sentence construction, spelling and punctuation. Good extended writing in Year 2 builds on this progress as pupils learn to write their stories. Handwriting skills progress well, especially in the transition to cursive writing. Generally, pupils with special needs make good progress but this is limited at times when the additional support is not present during the literacy hour. Pupils in Key Stage 2 do not edit their work to improve the structure, grammar and punctuation but make satisfactory progress in writing for different purposes. A lack of opportunities for pupils to plan and edit pieces of extended writing and to improve the quality of handwriting through re-drafting has slowed down the progress in these areas particularly for higher attaining pupils. Library skills are well taught but there is no effective policy to ensure skills in writing are progressively developed. Parents provide valuable support for their children with homework that aids the progress made at school.
- 36 Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning, and work hard with enthusiasm and interest to complete their work successfully. Year 3 pupils when sharing a text were fascinated by the origins of some of the words. Relationships are very good and pupils support each other well, giving help and encouragement to anyone whom has a problem. This support was particularly noticeable in Year 2 in which one pupil has a medical problem. Behaviour is generally good, especially in the literacy hour where pupils have the control to work independently. However, levels of behaviour and concentration are very closely linked to the ability of the teacher to manage the group tasks effectively and some staff are more skilled at this than others.
- 37 Overall, the quality of teaching is good: in 60 per cent of lessons observed it was good and in 40 per cent was satisfactory. In Key Stage 1, all the teaching was at least satisfactory with 75 per cent good. In Key Stage 2, all the teaching was at least satisfactory; being good in 50 per cent of lessons. Staff have worked hard to improve strategies for the teaching of the literacy hour. A particularly good example was in a shared reading activity when pupils practised their research skills, discussing 'Roman Baths'. Questioning was used effectively to promote and assess understanding. The teacher had high expectations of pupils and valued their contributions to the discussion. In the literacy hour teachers have established good classroom routines for the children and there is an industrious working atmosphere. In the good lessons, planning is clearly focused on practising and improving key skills for pupils of all abilities. Good classroom practices and management of time are well-established enabling learning to occur without distractions. Resources of a good quality are well used. In less effective lessons, staff do not clearly identify precisely what pupils are to learn. On these occasions progress is limited. The plenary session is not always focused sufficiently on re-emphasising points from the lesson or giving constructive feedback.

38 The subject is well managed by joint co-ordinators who have very successfully prepared the staff for the literacy hour. They are aware that there are still areas of improvement to resolve; more focus is needed in Key Stage 2 on raising the levels of attainment in writing of the higher attaining pupils who are not challenged at times. There are no reliable systems of assessment in place to monitor the progress pupils are making in their writing. The teaching of spelling is not totally effective and there are no portfolios of levelled written work to help staff to judge pupils' attainment. The literacy hour has been well resourced. Across the school, pupils' literacy skills are given sufficient emphasis in other subject areas. Pupils' writing skills are utilized appropriately; there are sufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length or for different purposes, for example, in geography and history. Likewise, there are sufficient opportunities for reading for information. The learning in many subjects is enhanced by the opportunities presented to pupils to use their research skills for example, in history and geography. The siting of a new, well-resourced library with good quality support is beginning to have a positive impact on these developments.

94 **Mathematics**

39 The results of national tests and of teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1998 indicate that levels of attainment in mathematics were in line with the national average both against national averages and against benchmarks for similar schools. At the end of Key Stage 1, 91 per cent of the pupils achieved Level 2 or better. However, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 3 was 21 per cent, which was close to the national average. This indicated a steady trend of above average results over the last three years. The latest results in 1999 show an improvement to 96 per cent at Level 2 or above and this is above the national average of 87 per cent in 1999. The performance of boys is slightly higher than that of girls at the end of Key Stage 1.

40 There is no data available to compare pupils' performance in the voluntary tests undertaken in Year 4 with the national average. However, evidence gained through the inspection indicates that the level of attainment in mathematics achieved by the time pupils leave the school is above the level expected for pupils of this age.

41 Inspection evidence supports most recent test results at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils' attainment is above average. Pupils in Year 2 can confidently add three digits with mental recall of facts. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have a good understanding of fractions and are developing methods of halving and quartering numbers. Most pupils can recognise the common two and three-dimensional shapes and can describe their attributes. They know addition and subtraction facts to 20. They can complete simple multiplication sums and have a growing understanding of place value. They can tell the time to the quarter hour. They know the units of measurement for length and capacity. In Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment is above average. Pupils can work in different number sequences forward and backward including negative numbers and can explain the rule used. By the end of Year 4 most pupils have a clear understanding of place value. They have a good understanding of the processes involved in multiplication. No significant difference was noted in the attainments of boys and girls.

42 Key Stage 1 pupils, including pupils with special needs, make good progress. They develop confidence in the four number functions and can apply these to gradually larger numbers. The majority of Year 1 pupils can describe objects in terms of length and make comparisons. They develop an understanding of shape. Older Key Stage 1 pupils can mentally add a set of digits and halve or double the number. Pupils in Key Stage 2, including pupils with special needs, make satisfactory progress. Their ability to solve mental arithmetic problems develops appropriately as a result of teachers' skilful questioning and use of techniques to help children consolidate their learning. However, higher attaining pupils in Year 4 are not always given sufficiently challenging work. For example, work done on sequencing utilised prior knowledge and developed the skills of some of the pupils but did not sufficiently challenge higher attaining pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress throughout both key stages, benefiting from effective classroom support.

- 43 There are opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their mathematical skills effectively in other areas of the curriculum. Young pupils use two-dimensional shapes to produce pictures. During registration pupils work out how many are present by subtracting the number of absentees from the class total. In a topic on senses young pupils produce simple graphs which represent the different eye colours in the class. Information and technology skills are used to correlate and communicate mathematical information collected from a study of mini-beasts. The correspondence between Roman and Arabic numerals is learned during a project on the Roman Empire.
- 44 Constructive attitudes and good behaviour in lessons are strong features of the school and these are consistent across both key stages. Most pupils have positive attitudes to their work. They answer questions eagerly and are keen to contribute during whole class sessions. In Key Stage 1 pupils clearly enjoy their mathematics and are able to sustain concentration even when unsupervised. In Key Stage 2 pupils enjoy challenging mental arithmetic activities.
- 45 The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is good. In the lessons seen the quality of teaching was good in 75 per cent and very good in 25 per cent. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and ask challenging questions. They encourage the children to apply their wider mathematical knowledge to the particular task in hand. For example, in one lesson, children's knowledge of doubling was used to develop their understanding of the process of halving and how near doubles can be formed by adding and subtracting one.
- 46 In Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching is sound. In the lessons seen, the teaching was good in 25 per cent, satisfactory in 50 per cent and unsatisfactory in 25 per cent. The teachers' understanding of the numeracy strategy is generally good and lower ability pupils are well supported by the classroom assistants. However, in a minority of lessons there is insufficient challenge for the higher attaining pupils, which limits the progress of a significant proportion of the pupils. It is not always clear what pupils of different levels of attainment are expected to know, understand and do by the end of the lesson. In the scrutiny of pupils' work it is clear that too often pupils of different ages and levels of attainment are expected to complete the same routine tasks from the same starting point. In the best lessons, enthusiastic teaching keeps all the pupils interested. After a carefully planned introduction, individual and group activities are provided to achieve learning objectives which themselves are appropriate to the pupils' capabilities.
- 47 Co-ordination of provision throughout the school is satisfactory overall, although there are some weaknesses. A policy is in place to support teaching. Medium term planning corresponds to the framework of the Numeracy Strategy and is linked to the National Curriculum levels. However, there is insufficient guidance to indicate the levels expected of pupils with high and low attainment. There is no complete assessment portfolio to help teachers to make accurate judgements about levels of attainment. Recent staff training has contributed to the quality of teaching and the teachers' confidence in the use of whole class teaching strategies for the development of mental skills. There are sufficient practical resources which are well used in Key stage 1 and in most classes in Key Stage 2, to enhance learning. A sufficient proportion of time is allocated to the teaching of numeracy. The use of information technology to support the subject is satisfactory. Setting arrangements in Year 3 and Year 4 are not totally effective in ensuring better provision for higher or lower attaining pupils at present. On one occasion it was observed that there was no difference in the activities being done in the two Year 4 classes. On another occasion it was observed that some slightly disruptive children were gathered together in one class and this affected the progress of all children in that class. The majority of children in the 'lower ability' class are potentially higher or average attaining pupils and there is evidence that sometimes the work they are given is not sufficiently challenging.

103 Science

- 48 The results of the 1998 teacher assessments for seven-year-olds show that the proportion of pupils attaining the expected levels was about average. When compared with schools with pupils of similar backgrounds, the proportion is below average. The 1999 teacher assessments indicate an improvement overall in the proportion gaining the expected levels. A significantly higher proportion gained level 3. Inspection findings support the latest results and pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time they leave the school is above average.

- 49 At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils respond well to suggestions about how to carry out an investigation. They make predictions, such as which flavoured crisps are the easiest to identify, test the products and record their observations. They are aware of the importance of their senses when finding things out and use these effectively to listen, observe, or taste. They understand change and growth recording accurately the progress of their bean shoots. They know that plant growth requires water, heat and light. They sort materials according to properties such as rigid, flexible or curved. They know that there are 'pushing' and 'pulling' forces, and objects may move or change shape when force is applied.
- 50 The majority of pupils, including pupils with special needs, make good progress in Key Stage 1. They make good gains in knowledge, understanding and skills, particularly in investigative science, and in their knowledge of physical processes including the sources of sound and electrical circuits. Sufficient time is allowed to enable pupils to progress, and the curriculum is well balanced to ensure that all aspects are adequately taught.
- 51 Year 4 pupils began to understand the principles of fair testing keeping one factor constant while the others change. They have a good knowledge of the human body. The majority confidently name the main bones such as the cranium and rib cage and can locate major organs such as heart and lungs. They describe a wide range of materials and their uses. Science is linked well to history, for example, when pupils compare the building materials used in the construction of Anglo-Saxon and modern homes. They know that materials can change when submitted to heat, water or force and some changes are irreversible. Pupils have a sound knowledge of the differences between solids, liquids and gases.
- 52 Overall, in Key Stage 2, progress for all pupils, including pupils with special needs is satisfactory. The very good progress seen in a Year 3 lesson can be attributed to the challenge and interest generated by the excellent teaching. Pupils learning about irreversible changes in materials were enthralled by the demonstration to show what happens when potassium permanganate and glycerin are mixed. This was linked appropriately to their Roman topic, particularly the eruption of Vesuvius. For a significant number of pupils in Year 4, however, the work is not sufficiently demanding. There is no programme of work planned specifically to challenge different abilities within the classes, particularly higher attaining pupils.
- 53 Numeracy and literacy skills are promoted well through science. All pupils record observations and describe investigations clearly, using scientific terminology where appropriate. Sorting and classifying different foods for example, and gathering data about eye colours to represent in a graph indicate good use of mathematical skills developed in Key Stage 1.
- 54 Pupils' attitudes to learning in science lessons are good. They enjoy lessons, showing enthusiasm for topics by sharing ideas and opinions confidently. They recall facts they have learned easily. For example a Year 1 pupil remembered that plants absorb carbon dioxide. Work in books is neatly presented. Behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils relate well to one another and are obedient and attentive to their teachers. They are sensible and co-operative when sharing resources and carrying out investigations.
- 55 The quality of teaching overall in science is satisfactory. In the lessons seen all the teaching was at least satisfactory; with almost 30 per cent of the teaching being good. Excellent teaching was seen in one lesson. Teaching is most good where the lesson is very well planned and prepared. The learning objectives are shared with the pupils, and the activity is purposefully linked to what the pupils learn in other areas of the curriculum. Such a lesson was seen in a Year 3 class, as mentioned earlier, where pupils were challenged and excited by their new learning. Good teaching was observed in Year 1 where teachers carefully prepared resources that interested and motivated the pupils when distinguishing between healthy and unhealthy foods. There were clear objectives to the lesson, which helped the teacher to focus on what pupils were to know. In all lessons teachers' knowledge of science, the teaching methods used and the management of pupils are good. Resources are generally used effectively to promote understanding of what is taught. In some lessons however, time is lost because books are distributed during the lesson, rather than before. In other lessons learning objectives are not specific, resulting in a lack of focus to the teaching. Teachers do not always have the full attention of pupils when instructing them and consequently time is lost in repeating what has already been taught.
- 56 The policy gives a clear rationale for the teaching of science. The scheme of work, written by the teachers

within each year group, provides for good coverage of all aspects of science. However, there is some inconsistency between the year groups in the clarity of key learning objectives. This results in some similarities, for example classifying healthy and unhealthy foods, between what is taught in different years. The scheme does not take account sufficiently of the different learning needs of pupils. Although assessment systems are in place the information provided does not clearly indicate individual levels of attainment to enable accurate target setting. There is no portfolio of moderated work samples to support the information recorded by individual teachers. Classroom assistants and parents, who help in school, work effectively with groups and individual pupils. Resources are adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum, and are used effectively throughout the school.

112 OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Information technology

- 57 There were no significant weaknesses in the last report. All concerns mentioned have been addressed. The school has significantly improved the quantity and quality of software and hardware and computers are used effectively to support learning in many curriculum areas. The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time they leave the school is in line with national expectations throughout the school.
- 58 At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can use the keyboard and mouse for word processing and can make effective use of simple mathematical and English games to help them with their numeracy and literacy. Using a computer programme and the mouse they are developing spatial and directional skills. They use a keyboard to write their name and short sentences. By the time that pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, they are proficient in word processing, they write poems and can edit their work and change fonts and print sizes to suit the style of their writing. Pupils can use a mouse to drag and drop accurately and move between menus with help. They are able to make use of data handling programs and can communicate information derived from a study on mini beasts through different types of graphs and charts. They can use a CD-ROM encyclopaedia to plot climatic zones and the migration route of a swallow. However, the pupils' skills and understanding of using instructions to control equipment is not sufficiently developed.
- 59 All pupils, including pupils with special needs, make satisfactory progress in both key stages. Year 1 pupils can identify the appropriate keys on the computer and are beginning to produce text. They understand that the computer can be used for writing and that mistakes can be corrected. In Year 2 they produce simple graphs and can use a programme to make patterns for Christmas wrapping paper. This progress is maintained in Year 3 as more complicated patterns are generated and pupils learn how to use the Internet to carry out a Web Site search to locate information on the Romans.
- 60 Pupils use their developing skills to enhance their learning in other areas of the curriculum. They develop literacy, historical and geographical skills as they use the CD-ROM to support their study of the Roman Empire. Information technology is used creatively to produce aesthetically pleasing pictures and patterns and literacy skills are developed as pupils describe the feelings these invoke. Pupils develop numeracy skills as they count and sort data derived during a study of mini beasts and communicate their findings through computer generated line graphs, pie charts and bar charts.
- 61 Pupils enjoy working on information and communication technology activities. They behave well and treat the equipment with care. The school has a lunchtime computer club, which is well attended by Year 3 and Year 4 pupils.

- 62 Teaching throughout the school is satisfactory. Little direct teaching was observed and judgements on the quality of teaching are made from the observation of two class lessons in Key Stage 2; observation of pupils working in small groups or on their own; a scrutiny of work and talking to pupils. In a good Year 3 lesson the teacher has a secure subject knowledge and high expectations and enabling pupils to broaden their experience of information technology through the use of different programmes. All teachers have increased their personal skills and confidence and are successfully passing these on to pupils. In information technology lessons, teachers often use the topics from other subjects as the focus and pupils make effective use of their literacy and numeracy skills. In these lessons the teachers have a good subject knowledge which enables them to teach specific new skills to the pupils. For example, pupils in Year 2 use programmes to produce simple graphs. Pupils in Year 3 successfully use a programme to improve their directional skills with a mouse. The management of the pupils is good and the resources are used well.
- 63 There are two co-ordinators for information technology, one for each key stage. Both have made satisfactory progress in the development of information provision over the past year but recognise the need for further development. The co-ordinators provide appropriate individual support for colleagues but they have not had opportunity through rigorous evaluation of standards of work, to ensure that pupils' learning is carefully matched with agreed levels of attainment in the different National Curriculum programmes of study. The level of staff expertise and confidence varies but this is being improved. The co-ordinators have produced a comprehensive three year development plan detailing the support and training which will be available to staff. Resources are good. Each class is equipped with one or two BBC or Acorn computers and initiatives have enabled the school to acquire a good number of PCs with CD-ROM and Internet facilities.

Religious education

- 64 At the last inspection report, religious education was satisfactory and no weaknesses were identified. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave the school is above the level expected of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. This shows a significant improvement since the last inspection and progress throughout both key stages is good.
- 65 In Key Stage 1, pupils have a good understanding of Christianity and receive an introduction to other world faiths. Pupils are encouraged to think about the unique nature of themselves and of others. They have good relationships with and sensitivity to others, including those of different cultures and beliefs. They respond to cultural and religious events and they show a range of feelings, such as wonder, joy or sorrow. Year 1 are aware of special ceremonies and celebrations, such as Christmas, Easter, Divali and Id-ul-Fitur, birthdays, christenings, weddings and family celebrations. Most pupils have a knowledge of special people in different religions, such as Jesus and Rama and Sita, and also consider people who are special to them. During the inspection week, they successfully learn about special books, namely the Bible. They learn much from a visit to Stockgrove Countryside Centre. Year 2 continue with the same themes. They visit St. Albans Abbey and discuss the design and function and how they relate to one another. They identify and name places of worship and experience quietness and stillness. They know about belonging to other faiths, such as Hinduism and Judaism. They think about Jesus and his friends and listen to the Enigma Variations. They think about symbols of friendship, such as the Olympic symbol. They know the creation story. Many pupils can explain the importance of water in Hinduism, the moon in Islam, the tree in Buddhism and the sword in Sikhism.

- 66 In Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 3 successfully continue the study of Christianity and study the life and times of Jesus and his teaching, linking it to Roman studies in history. They can talk about the census, the nativity, Christmas, parables such as The Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin and the Prodigal Son. Many pupils know about the miracles of Jesus and how the gospel writers believed Jesus to be a very special person. All pupils can relate the Easter story and describe first hand experiences of baptisms, weddings, and Holy Communion. They listen carefully to the story of the creation, 'Dreamtime' an aboriginal traditional tale. The majority are aware of, and respond to other religious belief and are aware of the importance of family life in Judaism. They know about Hanukah and the miracle of the oil, kosher food, and the menorah, Shabbat, Succot (linked to harvest), the Torah, Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah. By the end of Year 4, pupils have extended their knowledge of the life and times of Jesus. They understand the concepts of authority, inspiration, beliefs and values. They learn about choices and talk about lifestyles, beliefs, values and personal decisions. They know about the contribution of many famous people, such as Florence Nightingale, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela and Mother Teresa. They recognise the importance of confirmation to Christians.
- 67 Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in gaining awareness of special ceremonies, special people, special books, oneself and new life, particularly in relation to Christianity but also in relation to other major world faiths. In the lessons seen in Year 1, pupils make progress in learning more about the Bible, as the special book for Christians. They learn about the distinction between the Old and New Testaments. They compare and contrast an older version of the Bible with gold edged pages, no pictures and old fashioned language with a modern version, 'The Children's Bible Story Book.' They listen attentively to the story of The Good Samaritan and suggest many ways in which they should help others in need, in the playground, at home and in the community. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make good progress. The only lesson that was seen was in Year 4 and pupils showed very good progress in demonstrating knowledge and understanding of Christianity beyond expectations for their age. They talk confidently about the twelve apostles and understand the concept of 'Christian' as a follower of Christ. They make a link between 'Christian' and 'christened'. They know the significance of the cross as a Christian symbol. They build very well on previous knowledge and understanding.
- 68 The attainment and progress of pupils with special educational needs in oral sessions is good. Religious education promotes literacy skills. At both key stages, pupils engage in lively discussions, which help to develop their speaking and listening skills. Opportunities are provided for recording their ideas and opinions, which helps to develop expressive thought through their writing. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- 69 Pupil's attitudes are very positive at both key stages. At Key Stage 1, pupils are attentive and interested and take part in discussions very well. At Key Stage 2, the quality of debate and of pupils' perceptions of other people and cultures reaches a high standard. Circle time is well used in this respect and is a good means of exploring sensitive topics. Pupils offer their ideas confidently and have respect for the opinion of others. Their behaviour is very good and relationships are very positive.
- 70 The quality of teaching in both key stages is good. In the two lessons seen in Key Stage 1 and the lesson seen in Key Stage 2 the teaching was very good. Teachers have good knowledge and plan lessons in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus. Resources, including artefacts, are well used to promote learning. Teachers are skilled at explaining the significance of religion and promoting good discussion. Teachers' explanations of important celebrations and religious differences are sensitive. Pupils are given every opportunity to share their feelings and reflect upon outcomes. They develop a good understanding of, and respect for, people whose faith is different from their own. All lessons were very successful, for example, in Year 4, the lesson follows up the concept of listening, talked about in circle time immediately prior to the lesson.

71 The curriculum is based appropriately on the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The experienced subject co-ordinator gives good support to colleagues and has provided books and artefacts to enable teachers to plan effective activities for their pupils. Support staff make a useful contribution. Resources are good and are well used. The daily acts of worship are well planned and encourage pupils to explore questions about meaning and purpose, values and beliefs. Although assessment is ongoing and copies of the annual report are kept as working records this does not give a clear picture of pupils' attainment or of the progress they have made. The significant progress that has been made since the last inspection should be strengthened by improving current assessment and recording procedures, in order to enable teachers to obtain a clearer picture of pupils' attainment, using assessment information to plan challenging tasks for all levels of ability, including higher attaining pupils and implementing the planned programme of the role of the co-ordinator to include training and time to effectively monitor the teaching and learning of religious education.

127 Art

72 Standards reached by the end Key Stage 1 are above those seen in most schools. By the time pupils leave the school the majority of pupils attain standards above those expected for their ages in drawing and painting. This indicates an improvement in standards since the previous inspection.

73 All pupils, including pupils with special needs, make good progress. In Key Stage 1, they build an appropriate range of skills such as paint mixing, gluing and cutting which they apply effectively to their work, such as painting scarecrows or when decorating autumn leaves made from clay. Year 2 pupils extend the range of techniques for example by making brass rubbings and by adding relief designs to their clay tiles. Pupils in Key Stage 2 develop an awareness of tone, line and form and use this well in observational drawing to add dimension to their work. Such progress was seen in a Year 4 lesson where pupils produced some very good drawings of natural woodland objects. They respond well to the styles of other artists, for example Year 3's colourful interpretation of 'The Scream' by Edvard Munch and in the impressionist style poppies superbly drawn and painted by Year 4 pupils.

74 Pupils enjoy art lessons. They sustain concentration while working, trying hard to follow teachers' instructions. Most are able to organise their own workspace, and tidy up afterwards. Pupils enjoy showing their work to others and older pupils evaluate one another's work constructively.

75 The quality of teaching is good. In the lessons seen the teaching was good in 50 per cent and very good in 50 per cent. The main characteristics of very good teaching were seen in a Year 4 lesson where the teacher's subject knowledge and expertise were used very well to enthuse and motivate pupils towards better performance. There was very good planning which focused on specific skills. This was supported by a good selection of resources for the lesson. There was clear instruction on how to use shade and line effectively, to highlight the different textures and tones in the tree bark, leaves and berries which the pupils were drawing. Expectations of what pupils could achieve were very high. In all lessons, relationships with pupils are positive, resulting in a pleasant working environment. Classroom assistants are used effectively to support individuals and groups.

76 The co-ordinator supports colleagues effectively and has a clear overview of planning throughout the school. The scheme of work provides planned experiences, in line with the national curriculum, but some elements of artwork such as sculpture and painting for example require a stronger focus to enable better development of skills and techniques. Arrangements for assessing pupils' work are currently too informal, for example there is no systematic scrutiny of work samples to create a portfolio by which other work can be judged. Resources are sufficient to meet the current requirements of the scheme.

132

Design and technology

77 Weaknesses highlighted in the previous report were concerned with over prescribed tasks by the teacher and pupils not considering their own designs. These areas have been successfully addressed and standards have been maintained. Standards of attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave the school are above the expected level. Progress for pupils, including special needs pupils, is good.

- 78 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils work with a range of materials to construct models based on a simple plan they have drawn, such as models of houses from commercial construction kits. Through handling paper, card and wood they develop good skills in cutting, gluing and shaping. As they progress through the key stage they effectively design and make a pair of glasses. They exhibit good skills in evaluation as they examine their results as to how effective they look and how they could improve them. Pupils in Year 2 successfully design and make a musical instrument. They use their previously gained knowledge of materials and products well both in the designing and the making process.
- 79 In Key Stage 2, younger pupils construct large models from commercial kits and recognise the need for stability. They handle equipment safely in producing a Roman 'bulla' and display the ability to choose the best materials for the task. By the time they leave the school, pupils handle materials well to model with accuracy. They exhibit an appropriate range of skills and pupils are aware of safety issues. Making skills are of a good standard, for example in skeletons involving the use of hinges and joints. Pupils are capable of working to their own designs and modelling from them, employing good finishing techniques, for example in making scare-crows. The majority of pupils are skilful in solving a technology problem for example, making a shelter or a bag to hold 25 marbles. They evaluate their efforts successfully and through careful examination indicate whether they are suited for their intended purpose or not.
- 80 Pupils throughout the school enjoy this subject. In the lessons seen, where expectations are high pupils rise to the challenge and become deeply involved in the activity. They work well together, discussing their work sensibly and are sensitive in their evaluation of each other's attempts. Teachers praise pupils and encourage their efforts developing good relationships which pupils respond to by perseverance and a pride in their work.
- 81 The quality of teaching is good. In the lessons seen, the teaching was always at least satisfactory and in 75 per cent of lessons was good. In a good lesson in Year 4, the teacher had a good knowledge of the subject and planned a range of activities that challenged pupils. Good use was made of the support in the classroom. Instructions were clear and the teacher provided a wide range of resources and support for pupils. There was effective intervention and skilful questioning; pupils were encouraged to be critical of their work. There is an appropriate scheme of work, satisfactory resources and the subject is satisfactorily co-ordinated. However, there is no monitoring of the teaching or learning in the subject and assessment and recording procedures do not give a clear picture of pupils' attainment.

137 **Geography**

- 82 Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time the pupils reach the end of Year 4 are above those expected of pupils of that age. This represents an improvement since the last report when standards achieved were judged to be in line with national averages. The school now has planning in place to ensure continuity and progression in learning but weaknesses in the assessment of pupils' learning have not yet been fully addressed.
- 83 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know the points of the compass and can interpret a simple map. They are aware that pictures or symbols can represent objects or specific places on a map and they can draw maps of their journey to school marking the key physical features, including notable buildings and places such as parks. They begin to know about different countries in the United Kingdom and abroad. By the time the pupils leave the school, they are aware of the impact of people upon the environment. Their general factual knowledge of countries, continents and oceans is good and they have been introduced to the index and contents pages of an atlas. They can record locations on maps and record distances between towns. They can discuss the work they have done on climatic zones.

- 84 Pupils, including high attaining pupils and those with special needs make good progress. From Year 1 they familiarize themselves with the local area, and do observational drawings of the local environment. They make a simple plan of their bedroom and draw plans of their journey to school. Year 2 pupils develop their mapping skills and are learning appropriate vocabulary. Their excursion to St Albans enables them to make comparisons with this town and Leighton Buzzard. A topic on food and where it comes from is enhanced by a visit to Cogges Manor Farm. They watch a television programme and are able to make comparisons between their local area and a city, a town and a village. Through Year 3 and Year 4 they generally make good progress as they develop mapping skills and extend their knowledge of compass points. They have a boat trip on the Grand Union Canal and look at specific landmarks using a local map. Their knowledge of environmental issues is increased as they watch the television programme 'Badger Girl' and make comparisons between Leighton Buzzard and Newcastle upon Tyne.
- 85 Geography is taught through a variety of topics and geographical skills are applied successfully to other areas of the curriculum. Excursions promote these skills which in turn develop speaking and listening and narrative writing. Numeracy is enhanced when pupils measure wind strength on the Beaufort Scale, learn the points of the compass, use aerial photographs and develop their mapping skills. Opportunities to use information technology are well planned for and detailed in the scheme of work. For example, pupils in Year 1 use the computer to write their addresses and produce weather charts and pupils in Year 3 use a CD-ROM programme to identify geographical features of the Roman Empire.
- 86 In the one lesson seen in which Year 4 pupils were making a plan of the class room using their knowledge of aerial photographs, they were absorbed in their task and well behaved. In discussions Year 4 pupils displayed their good geographical knowledge and their enthusiasm for the subject.
- 87 Opportunities to observe the teaching of geography were limited. Only one lesson was observed. Therefore no judgements can be made on the quality of teaching. However, based on observation of one lesson, teachers' plans, pupils' work in books, displays around the school, and discussion with the coordinator and Year 4 pupils the National Curriculum programme of study is covered appropriately and pupils engage in a wide and varied range of activities which increase their geographical skills and knowledge. In the good lesson in Year 3, because of good resources and clear learning objectives, pupils enthusiastically learn about weather conditions in different parts of the world and produced a map detailing the different climatic zones.
- 88 The subject co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership and successfully overviews the curriculum plans to ensure coverage of the National Curriculum programme of study and appropriate linkage with work in Year 5 in the receiving middle schools. However, there is not the opportunity to monitor the teaching effectively and systems of assessment need to be developed to ensure that teachers are fully aware of the level of pupils' geographical skills. The provision of geographical resources is satisfactory and good use is made of the local area and excursions to other places to promote geographical knowledge and skills.

144 **History**

- 89 The standards reached in history by the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave the school are similar to those seen in most schools. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
- 90 All pupils make satisfactory progress overall. In Year 1 pupils develop a sense of 'past' effectively by describing how they change as they grow up. They develop a sense of chronology by placing pictures and photographs in the correct sequence. Year 2 pupils further increase their awareness of the past by studying significant events such as the Fire of London. They learn about the importance of historical sources such as Samuel Pepys diaries, in relaying information about long ago. Pupils in Key Stage 2 study in depth Roman, Anglo-Saxon, and Viking settlements, using written sources and artefacts effectively to find information about those times. A visit to a Victorian museum by Year 2, and a Year 3 trip to the Grand Union Canal in a canal boat, provide pupils with insights into how people used to live.

- 91 History makes a satisfactory contribution to the further development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. For example, in Key Stage 1, the contribution centres on gains in vocabulary and simple sentences, linked to an investigation of artefacts. In Key Stage 2, pupils use their library skills well and record their findings in written accounts. A sense of chronology is developed through the use of time lines.
- 92 Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They show interest in their work, which is generally neatly presented in books and in displays. They respond well to questions asked by their teacher and easily recall facts about topics that they have studied. They are attentive and well behaved in lessons and share resources sensibly when working in groups.
- 93 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In the lessons seen the teaching was always at least satisfactory; being good in 60 per cent. Teachers have secure knowledge of history. Positive relationships result in effective management and control of classes. Resources are chosen carefully to interest and motivate pupils, for example, the video shown to Year 2 pupils gave them a clear insight into life in 17th century London and they were able to record accurate information as a result. Teachers' planning focuses well on both skills and knowledge. In a Year 4 lesson about primary and secondary sources of evidence there was a good balance between purposeful information and allowing pupils to become effective enquirers.
- 94 The management and leadership of history are satisfactory. The co-ordinator oversees teachers' planning and discusses samples of pupils' work. The scheme of work currently in use reflects what is taught in each year group. However, there is inconsistency across year groups in the clarity of key learning objectives. This results in assessment being insecure because it is not always clear in the scheme what pupils are expected to know. There is good selection of history reference books in school and local places of interest are used well to support learning.

Music

- 95 Progress in music is good at both key stages and by the end of Key Stage 1 and when pupils leave the school standards are above those expected for pupils of this age. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when a Key Issue was to raise standards in music. Overall standards of attainment were below average and little progress was evident in lessons. The quality of teaching suffered from a lack of expertise and confidence amongst the staff, which limited continuity and progression. The use of information technology to explore and record sounds was under-developed. The school responded well and all aspects have been improved. Enthusiasm for music making and appreciation of music now permeates many aspects of school life.
- 96 In Key Stage 1, pupils make progress in listening attentively to music and in responding to its mood. In Year 1, they play simple pieces and accompaniments with confidence and awareness of pulse. They listen to rhythm and make progress in clapping in time to the beat. They explore, select and order sounds. They make simple compositions, using musical elements such as dynamics and timbre expressively. They sing a variety of songs, which reinforce rhythm, pitch and tempo. In Year 2, pupils are beginning to perform accurately and confidently, showing awareness of phrasing, pitch and melodic shape. They sing a range of songs tunefully, in unison and in two parts. They compose their own pieces, using a variety of instruments. They have a good understanding of rhythm, beat and repeating pattern and they are confident in creating short, musical compositions. They use symbols when performing and communicating musical ideas. They listen to music by Vivaldi, Strauss, Greig, Tchaikovsky, Handel and Beethoven and to music from Africa, Arabia, India and China. They design and make their own musical instruments and perform with them. They use information technology, namely, the 'Music Maker' program.

- 97 In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make good progress. In Year 3, they develop an awareness of audience. They learn about different musical styles, classical, folk and pop music and music from different times and places. They perform an individual part with confidence and control. They learn to interpret the mood of the music. They show an awareness of other performers and their own part within the whole. They develop musical ideas and compose music for specific purposes. They learn about the different sections of the orchestra and listen to music by a range of composers. Year 4 have a sound knowledge of different musical styles, for example, calypso - 'Rock about my Saro Jane' and 'Bongo Jo'. They recognise music from different times and places, for example, a puppet dance from Russia, by Stravinsky and African songs, such as 'A story from Africa' and African drumming. They create graphic scores and discuss notation. They discriminate between different sounds produced by different instruments. They listen to 'Tubby the Tuba', 'The Planet Suite', 'Peter and the Wolf' and the 'Four Seasons' which they link with art. They discuss and compare moods, melodies, styles and the use of instruments. They perform with confidence, control and awareness of style, making expressive use of phrasing. They refine and complete compositions and are able to explain their intentions and how they sought to achieve them.
- 98 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress at both key stages, due to good teaching, focussed encouragement and the fact that music lessons are made enjoyable for all pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties receive strong support and encouragement. They communicate confidently through music. High attaining pupils have the opportunity to develop their skills, in relation to what they are capable of achieving. Pupils of all levels of ability are welcome to join the choir and recorder groups, to enjoy music and to learn, in accordance with their abilities.
- 99 Music contributes to literacy through speaking and listening, performing and composing, learning about different composers and a variety of music from different times and places and writing about it. Pupils often use good, descriptive words when describing the mood of music, for example, when talking about Vivaldi's autumn music, for example, 'leaves crackling'. It makes a contribution to numeracy when composing, in counting beats and repeating patterns. Pupils add sounds to their compositions, when using information technology. The computer program, 'Music Maker' is used successfully in Years 2, 3 and 4.
- 100 Pupils enjoy music and their response is good. They show enthusiasm and interest and contribute ideas readily. They answer questions and contribute to discussions. They respect the contribution of their classmates. They work well together and contribute and share ideas. They sing with control and enthusiasm. They maintain interest and try hard to achieve success. They are keen to sing on their own, to demonstrate rhythm and pitch and to perform their own compositions. They are sensitive to other performers and try hard to fit their own part within the whole. Their behaviour is good and they form positive relationships with the teacher and with each other. The ethos, in which music is taught, together with the good attitudes of most pupils, has a positive effect on raising standards and enabling pupils to make progress.
- 101 The quality of teaching is good overall in both key stages. In Key Stage 1, in all lessons the teaching was at least satisfactory and good in 65 per cent of lessons. In Key Stage 2, in 50 per cent of lessons the teaching was satisfactory and in 50 per cent was unsatisfactory. However, the teaching in a Key Stage 2 choir session, involving 24 pupils was very good and it was good in a Key Stage 2 recorder session and at a special music assembly. The features of the most successful lessons are that teaching is purposeful and is based on secure knowledge. Objectives are clear, planning is effective and time and resources are used well. Teaching creates and sustains concentration, as in a Year 2 lesson on developing pitch memory and in a choir session on developing singing techniques. The one unsatisfactory lesson was repeated and further developed later in the week and was entirely satisfactory. Teaching challenges pupils of all levels of ability and promotes attainment, progress and enjoyment of music. Pupils are given opportunities for active involvement in performing and composing activities, individually and in groups and these are managed effectively.

102 There is a policy for music and a good commercial scheme of work, Silver Burdett, which is used effectively throughout the school. Leadership and management are good and are based on secure knowledge. Resource provision is good. All the weaknesses in the earlier inspection report have been addressed and there is an interesting range of musical activities to challenge pupils. The great improvements that have been effected should be further strengthened by improving current assessment and recording procedures, in order to enable teachers to gain a clear picture of pupils' attainment, using assessment information to plan even more challenging tasks for all levels of ability, including higher attaining pupils and implementing the planned programme of the role of the coordinator to include training and time to effectively monitor the teaching and learning of music.

158 **Physical education**

103 The majority of pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, reach similar standards in games skills and gymnastics to those seen in most schools. Throughout the school, all pupils, including pupils with special needs, make satisfactory progress. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

104 In Key Stage 1, pupils show appropriate awareness of space when moving around the hall in gymnastics lessons. They change speed and direction confidently and use hands and feet well to balance and to support their body weight. Key stage 2 pupils build effectively on earlier skills. In dance, they move easily, responding imaginatively to the beat of a tambourine, or the words of a poem. Year 3 dance lessons for example were linked to their history topic about the Romans, so their dance to illustrate the eruption of Vesuvius was meaningful to them, resulting in good progress during that lesson. In games pupils throw and catch with accuracy and competence and show agility when practicing attack and defence skills in small games where a partner has to defend a coloured band worn as a 'tail'.

105 The contribution of extra curricular activities such as soccer coaching by Luton Town FC staff, table tennis and competitive soccer and 'unihoc' matches, effectively helps the school maintain standards and progress. Indications from the school are that pupils generally progress well in swimming, though time allocated to that activity is to be reduced in the current year due to alterations in the level of funding from the local education authority.

106 Pupils respond well during physical education lessons. They listen and follow their teachers' instructions carefully. They are keen and active throughout the lesson. Behaviour is good and pupils establish good working relationships in pairs and in groups. They select their resources sensibly and store them after use.

107 The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory. In the lessons seen the teaching was always at least satisfactory; being good in 50 per cent and very good in 15 per cent. All teachers manage pupils well. Positive relationships are established, which promotes respect and good order during the lesson. Where teaching is most effective the teacher injects pace and energy into the lesson, by preparing a good range of activities which challenge pupils' skills. In one games lesson; for example, pupils practiced a series of attack, defence and handling skills. Little time was wasted between activities, leaving enough time to ensure the pupils consolidate and improve. Less effective teaching was seen in a gymnastics lesson, where the discussion was too prolonged leaving insufficient time for sustained activity.

108 There is no co-ordinator for physical education, though procedures established by the previous post holder are sound and are used effectively by current staff. There has been extensive staff training, given by the local authority adviser, as well as training in Top Play and Top Sport. This has secured a good subject knowledge on the part of teachers. The scheme of work supports planning satisfactorily but there are no systems in place for assessing skills or recording pupils' progress. Outdoor and indoor facilities for games and gymnastics are good, as are the resources for the subject.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

164 SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 1 The inspection was undertaken by a team of five inspectors who, over a four-day period, completed a total of 20 inspector-days in the school. For the majority of time in school inspectors visited classes, talked with individuals and groups of pupils and evaluated the work they had done. In excess of 50 hours was spent on these activities. In addition, interviews were held with the headteacher, teachers with curriculum and management responsibilities, ancillary staff, parents and members of both the governing body and the local community including police, youth workers, school nurse and an educational social worker.
- 2 Sixty lessons were observed; roughly equal numbers for the eight classes in the school, along with the work of the early year's department, support staff and visiting teachers.
- 3 Furthermore:
 - 15 per cent pupils were heard reading and they were questioned on their understanding and knowledge of books in general;
 - pupils from each year group were examined in their mathematical knowledge and understanding;
 - samples of pupils' work covering the full ability range were scrutinised in all year groups, along with samples of work from last year;
 - the policy documents of the school and the school development plan were considered;
 - attendance registers, the records kept on the pupils, including annual reports, and teachers' planning documents were inspected;
 - the budget figures were analysed.

DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y4	193	2	23	25
Nursery Unit/School	32.5	1	2	N/a

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR – Y4)

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

9
21

Education support staff (YR – Y4)

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

8
102.5

Qualified teachers (Nursery school, classes or unit)

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

1
65

Education support staff (Nursery school, classes or unit)

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

3
50

Average class size:

24

Financial data

Financial year:

1998

	£
Total Income	409,944
Total Expenditure	435,610
Expenditure per pupil	1656.31
Balance brought forward from previous year	67,640
Balance carried forward to next year	41,974

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

230

Number of questionnaires returned:

101

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	39	55	4	1	1
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	30	57	6	7	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	11	53	29	6	1
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	19	54	17	10	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	23	52	19	5	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	23	68	5	4	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	21	57	19	2	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	23	62	11	4	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	31	54	10	4	1
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	31	54	12	2	1
My child(ren) like(s) school	56	36	4	3	1

NB: Percentages of responses are rounded to nearest integer, sum may not = 100%
 Percentages given are in relation to total number of returns, EXCLUDING nil replies.