

INSPECTION REPORT

GIFFARD PARK COMBINED SCHOOL

Giffard Park

Milton Keynes

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique reference number: 110381

Headteacher: Mr Richard Morgan

Reporting inspector: Mr John Burnham
5020

Dates of inspection: 07-10 February 2000

Inspection number: 191263

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First and Middle
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 -12
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Broadway Avenue Giffard Park Milton Keynes
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Monk
Date of previous inspection:	13.01.1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
John Burnham	Registered inspector	English as additional language Modern Languages	What sort of school? What should school do to improve? Standards: the school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Suzanne Smith	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Christopher Corps	Team inspector	English	
		Music	
Gill Pitt	Team inspector	Under Fives	
Peter Scott	Team Inspector	Special Educational Needs/Unit Information Technology	
Mary Sinclair	Team Inspector	Mathematics, Art	
Ian Thompson	Team Inspector	Science, Design and Technology, Physical Education	
Maria Wykes	Team Inspector	Equal Opportunities Geography, History, Religious Education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	13
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	16
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	20
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	22
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	24
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	25
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	30
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	32
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	36

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Giffard Park Combined School is a first and middle school. The school's roll of 335 full-time pupils consists of 173 boys and 162 girls aged between 5 and 12 years. This is above the national average for schools of this type but broadly average for the Milton Keynes area. The school has designated special needs provision for 25 pupils with moderate learning difficulties, although the department is currently over-subscribed, and provides special needs education for 29 pupils.

Baseline assessments indicate that the attainment of pupils on entry to the school as rising fives is above average, but there are significant variations between the levels of attainment in the relatively small groups joining the school each term under the city's admission arrangements.

The school serves a socially mixed area in the north-east part of Milton Keynes, and draws a significant proportion - nearly a third - of its pupils from outside the immediate catchment area. There has been a net fall in the number of pupils on roll over the past three years. Year group sizes vary substantially within the school, and there is a significant amount of pupil mobility, with pupils joining or leaving the school during each school year. At the age of twelve, the majority of pupils transfer to the nearby Stantonbury School. The remaining pupils transfer to other secondary education in the city; this proportion has grown slightly as Giffard Park School's roll has incorporated more pupils from outside the immediate area.

The proportion of pupils judged to be eligible for free school meals, 12.3 per cent, has risen over the past three years. This is close to the national average, and broadly similar to other schools in the city.

Most children join school in the term they reach five years of age. Most of the children have received pre-school education, many of them in the pre-school group which operates in the school's community centre. There are currently 12 children under five in the first class, which combines rising fives and children of reception age.

The majority of the pupils come from white United Kingdom heritage families; approximately one in ten pupils comes from other ethnic heritage family backgrounds. The number of pupils from traveller families is very low. There are 20 pupils for whom English is an additional language in the school, which is above the national average. Four pupils are at an early stage of learning English.

The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is just over 21 per cent, being just above the national average. 71 pupils are on Stages 1 to 5, with 79 per cent on stages 2 to 5 and 42 per cent on stage 5. The school has more children with statements than any other primary school in Milton Keynes, excluding designated nurseries. The proportion of pupils with statements, at 8.5 per cent, is well above the national average. This figure includes the 29 pupils in the school's department for pupils with moderate learning difficulties; when these pupils are extracted from the figures, the proportion of pupils with statements in the school is below average. All of the pupils with moderate learning difficulties are included in the national testing and assessment arrangements at ages seven and eleven.

The school aims to harness children's enthusiasm for learning, to develop imagination and creativity, and to promote high standards of work and behaviour. It seeks to build constructive links between home, school and the community; to provide a balanced curriculum which lays the foundations of understanding; to develop children's sense of responsibility, and to foster an understanding of the views of others. It aims to encourage children to think for themselves and to work independently; to ensure equality of care and opportunity for all children; and to provide a stimulating, secure and happy environment for teaching and learning.

The current priorities in the school development plan include the completion of numeracy training, a review of mathematics, implementation of the homework policy, classroom observations and evaluation, improvements to the playground environment, governors' training and a review children's reports.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. Standards in reading are consistently above average throughout the school. By the ages of seven and eleven, standards are at least average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. By the time pupils leave the school at the age of twelve, standards are above average in these subjects. Pupils behave very well and relationships within the school are very good. The school has made significant improvements since the previous inspection.

The quality of teaching is frequently good and sometimes better. The curriculum is of satisfactory quality although provision for personal, social and health education is unsatisfactory. Provision for pupils with special educational needs, and for pupils with English as an additional language, is very good

The school is well led and is managed effectively. The overall effectiveness of the school is good. Income is well above average; the school's cost effectiveness has improved and it provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- By the age of twelve, standards are above average in English, mathematics, science, history, geography, art, physical education and French.
- By the age of eleven, standards are above average in English, mathematics, art and physical education.
- Standards in reading are above average throughout the school.
- The quality of pupils' behaviour and relationships within the school is very high.
- Teaching is frequently good and sometimes better, and strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills are very effective.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they make very good progress.
- The progress of pupils for whom English is an additional language is very good.
- Pupils' social and moral development are very good.
- The leadership of the school ensures clear educational direction.
- The work of the support staff contributes significantly to the maintenance of high standards of behaviour and academic achievement.
- The accommodation is of very good quality and well maintained
- Resources for learning are generally of good quality

What could be improved

- Teachers' assessment information is not used consistently to inform their planning for lessons, the match of tasks to pupils' abilities or to set targets to help pupils improve their learning.
- Insufficient opportunities are provided for subject co-ordinators to develop further their monitoring and evaluation roles.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to work independently and creatively.
- The curriculum for personal, social and health education lacks cohesion.
- There are too few opportunities provided for pupils' spiritual development.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1997. Since the previous inspection, overall trends in standards in the core subjects have improved and the school is on course to meet its targets for English and mathematics. Children under five now make good progress in language and literacy, mathematical and physical learning, and in their personal and social development.

Pupils of higher ability are challenged by the work they are given to do, and more consistently attain high standards. Throughout the school, standards in art and design and technology have improved. Standards for pupils aged eleven are higher in English and physical education; standards in geography, whilst satisfactory, are not quite as high as indicated previously. By the age of twelve, standards are higher than before in mathematics, history, geography, physical education and French. Standards in other subjects have been maintained since the previous inspection. This is an improving school. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection in respect of the key issues identified for action. The overall quality of teaching in the school has improved significantly. Improvements have been made to the curriculum and the accommodation for children aged under five. The level of resources in art and design and technology has improved, and pupils now make better progress than before in these subjects. There have been improvements in numeracy and literacy as a result of the school's effective implementation of national strategies.

The effectiveness of the senior management team has improved significantly, with a review of roles and responsibilities and the inclusion of the school's co-ordinator for special educational needs. Whole school targets for the end of key stages are now set for pupils' academic attainment. A programme of monitoring for teaching and learning is beginning to inform management decisions, although this is not yet fully complemented by monitoring by subject co-ordinators. The school's development plan provides a greater level of detail to inform school improvement. An effective appraisal system for staff now operates, linked closely to the school's plans for its development. As a result of these improvements, the school's ability to identify and deal with its own weaknesses has been enhanced substantially.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	All schools			Similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	D	E	C/A ¹	C/A ¹	Well above average A average above average B Average C Below average D Well below average E
Mathematics	E	E	C/B ¹	D/B ¹	
Science	D	E	D/B ¹	D/C ¹	

The school provides education for 29 pupils with moderate learning difficulties in a designated special needs department. The results of their performance in National Curriculum tests are included with those of all pupils aged eleven at the school who took the tests. The second letter grade shown above for 1999 (1) indicates the grades when results for pupils aged eleven with moderate learning difficulties are extracted. The table shows that the overall performance for pupils at the age of eleven was well above average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science when compared with pupils in similar schools

Results for eleven-year-olds at the higher Level 5 were well above average in all three subjects in 1999. Over the last three years, the overall performance of pupils at the age of eleven in these three subjects has risen, and the school generally exceeded the targets set in 1999. Results for seven year olds in 1999, when results for pupils with moderate learning difficulties are similarly extracted, were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics when compared with pupils in similar schools, and trends in results over three years are generally rising. Results in reading at Level 3 were well above average.

Throughout the school, standards in reading are consistently above average. Children under five attain the targets expected for their age and exceed them in language and literacy, mathematical learning and in their personal and social development. By the age of seven, standards are average in writing, mathematics and science. By eleven, standards are above average in English and mathematics and at least average in science. Pupils attain above average standards in English, mathematics, and science by the age of twelve.

The standards attained by seven-year-olds are satisfactory in art, design and technology, history, geography, music and physical education. Standards for eleven-year-olds are good in art and physical education, and satisfactory in design and technology, history, geography and music. By twelve years of age, standards are good in art, history, geography, physical education and French, and satisfactory in design and technology.

Standards of attainment at the ages of seven, eleven and twelve in information technology and religious education are satisfactory throughout the school.

Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make very good progress throughout the school

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils show a genuine interest in the work they are given to do at school. They respond very well to the expectations and challenges set for them. The school successfully meets its aims in this respect, and this has a particularly good impact on learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is high, and is a strength of the school. They are courteous and polite to each other and to adults, and show respect for the views and property of others.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils, teachers and other adults, and amongst the pupils, are very good. Pupils of all abilities help each other in class with patience, and willingly undertake tasks when given opportunities to do so.
Attendance	Attendance is marginally above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years	Aged 11-12 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is frequently good, particularly for pupils in Years 5, 6 and 7. Throughout the school, pupils' behaviour is managed very well. Teachers' planning, the identification of learning outcomes and their expectations of what pupils should achieve are good for pupils in the majority of classes in the school. Resources are used effectively and support staff make a significant contribution to the good quality of teaching and learning in the school.

Some teachers do not make enough use of their assessments to help them plan the next steps in learning for pupils of different abilities. This results in a lack of differentiation in the teaching in a minority of classes. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well and applied extensively across the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, are taught well and make very good gains in their learning. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties are integrated very well into classes, supported very well by a high level of teacher expertise and sensitivity to pupils' learning needs.

98 per cent of the teaching observed was satisfactory or better, and over half of all lessons were good or better. 25 per cent of the teaching was very good or better. Only 2 per cent of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. Pupils usually show high levels of interest in what they are learning during lessons and make positive efforts to improve their performance.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school's curriculum provides a broad range of learning opportunities, but the balance of time devoted to different subjects is uneven. The curriculum for children under five is satisfactory. The school has implemented national strategies for literacy and numeracy very effectively. The curriculum arrangements do not allow sufficiently for the development of pupils' creative skills, or for them to take enough initiative to work independently.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and a strength of the school. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties and all with special educational needs are included very effectively in the life and work of the school. Their needs are very well met by teachers and support staff.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is of high quality. Teachers are keenly aware of pupils' language needs and plan a good range of suitable activities to extend their language skills. The positive ethos of the school ensures that all pupils are included in all activities and this helps them to make very good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Whilst there is some provision for pupils' personal development, the overall programme is narrow and lacks cohesion. There are too few opportunities for pupils to take on significant responsibilities. Provision for social development is very good; pupils co-operate well and share books and equipment effectively. The school's socially inclusive framework support all pupils very well, particularly those with special educational need and those new to the school. Moral development is very good: pupils have a keen sense of fairness and a very good understanding of the differences between behaviours that are acceptable and those that are not. Cultural development is broadly satisfactory, but there are too few opportunities provided for pupils' spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff promote positive attitudes for pupils. Child protection procedures are effective. Staff are alert to the welfare needs of pupils and vigilant in respect of their well-being, but health and safety procedures do not fully meet statutory requirements. Assessment information is not used consistently to inform planning for the next stage of learning.

The school maintains good links with parents through the provision of good quality information about children's progress and the work of the school. There is some inconsistency in the school's expectations of homework. The school benefits from strong parental support for its work.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led, and is successful in meeting its stated aims and objectives. The senior management team works effectively to promote high standards and is succeeding in bringing about significant improvements in the school. The role of subject co-ordinators has yet to be fully developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil all of their statutory responsibilities effectively, with the exception of procedures for health and safety. They provide good direction and support for the work of the school and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through the work of sub-committees and individuals. They work well with staff in their efforts to bring about school improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a good overview of its performance against an increasingly wide range of indicators, including national attainment tests and financial criteria. Information and communications technology is used effectively to support these processes. Subject co-ordinators currently have too few opportunities to extend the range and focus of monitoring and evaluation. Appropriate targets are set for school improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The school budgets systematically for expenditure, which is based clearly on the school's current priorities for improvements and the raising of standards. Pupils benefit from the targeted expenditure on specific areas of the curriculum, notably in mathematics, art, design technology and provision for pupils under five. Financial planning and management are both effective and efficient. The school successfully applies the principles of best value.

There is a good balance of experienced and recently qualified staff, all of whom work well as a team. Support staff make a significant contribution to this team approach and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning, particularly those pupils with special educational needs. The accommodation is of very good quality. There are adequate learning resources of good quality to support learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They would feel comfortable approaching the school with problems • Their children like school • The school expects children to work hard • Their children are making good progress • The teaching is good • Children's behaviour is good • The school is well led and managed • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consistency of setting homework • The information they receive about how their children are getting on • The school working more closely with parents • A broader range of extra-curricular opportunities

The inspection findings support the parents' views about the inconsistency in setting homework for pupils, although that which is set is usually of good quality. The school provides a significant number of extra-curricular activities, which are well attended, although inspectors agree that the range offered could be broader. The findings do not support the parents' views that there is insufficient information provided about how pupils are getting on: reports are of good quality, and there is good information about what is being taught. Inspectors also found that the school makes every effort to work closely with parents, and that staff and governors work hard to maintain the good links they have with parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 Assessments of the very small number of pupils admitted to the reception class during the first half of the autumn term indicate that they were above the average, for the local area, in their social, language and mathematical development. Work is planned for them in the six areas of learning recommended nationally for children of this age. These are personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development, and physical development. Each area of learning has specified targets or outcomes that the children are expected to achieve by five. The children make at least sound and often good progress in their first year at the school. By the age of five, the children achieve, and often exceed, the learning outcomes in language and literacy, mathematical learning, physical learning and in their personal and social development. The children are always very well behaved and are kind and considerate. There are particular strengths in their early reading and number skills. They are positive about their work and are eager to take part and to succeed. In their knowledge and understanding of the world around them, and in creative learning, children attain the desirable learning outcomes
- 2 The school has provision for 29 pupils with moderate learning difficulties. These pupils are integrated very effectively into the school, and make very good progress in relation to their prior learning. The results of their performance in National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments mask the generally above average, and sometimes well above average, test performances by pupils at the school.
- 3 The overall performance in the national tests and teacher assessments for pupils at the age of seven in 1999, when results for pupils with moderate learning difficulties are extracted, was well above average in reading, writing and mathematics in relation to pupils in similar schools. Over the last three years, results for seven year olds have fluctuated, reflecting the variations in year group sizes, although the overall trend has been upwards, and there has been no significant difference between the results of girls and boys.
- 4 On the same basis, the overall performance in the national tests of pupils at the age of eleven, when results for pupils with moderate learning difficulties are extracted, was above average. Performance for pupils aged eleven was well above average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was well above average in all three subjects. Over the last three years, the overall performance of pupils aged eleven in these three subjects has risen, with no significant variations between the results of boys and girls.
- 5 In the 1999 National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments, the performance of all pupils aged seven in reading was above the national average in comparison with all schools and similar schools, with well above average results at Level 3. When results for pupils with moderate learning difficulties are extracted, performance in reading was well above average. The performance in writing was close to the national average in comparison with all schools and similar schools.

When results for pupils with moderate learning difficulties are extracted, pupils' performance was well above average. In the tests for mathematics, pupils' performance was above the national average in comparison with all schools and similar schools, with well above average results at Level 2B. When results for pupils with moderate learning difficulties are extracted, performance in reading was well above average.

- 6 In 1999, the performance of all pupils aged seven in the teacher assessments for science, at Level 2 and above, was below the national average in comparison with all schools and similar schools. When results for pupils with moderate learning difficulties are extracted, performance was close to the national average in comparison with all schools and similar schools.
- 7 The performance of all pupils aged eleven in English, in the 1999 national tests, was close to the national average in comparison with all schools and similar schools, although performance at Level 5 was well above average. When results for pupils with moderate learning difficulties are extracted, performance was well above average. In mathematics, the performance of all pupils was close to the national average in comparison with all schools and similar schools, but performance at Level 5 was well above average. When results for pupils with moderate learning difficulties are extracted, pupils' performance was above average in comparison with all schools and similar schools. The performance of all pupils aged eleven in science was below average in comparison with all schools and similar schools, with performance at Level 5 well above average. When results for pupils with moderate learning difficulties are extracted, performance in science was above the national average when compared with all schools and close to the national average when compared with similar schools.
- 8 Evidence from the inspection indicates that, by the end of Key Stage 1 at the age of seven, pupils achieve standards in reading that are above average. A significant number of pupils shows the capacity to read beyond the literal meaning of the text, and to read challenging texts with considerable fluency. Their ability to manipulate phonics is generally good. Standards in writing, mathematics and science are average. Many pupils write with a well-formed, cursive script. Spelling is sound overall. Pupils show good understanding of the value of each digit in a three-digit number, and are beginning to count in steps of 3 and 4. They investigate successfully the effect of magnets on different materials and know some of the properties of materials such as iron. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards in art, design and technology, history, geography, music and physical education.
- 9 By the end of Key Stage 2 at the age of eleven, standards are above average in English and mathematics and are at least average in science. Pupils have successfully consolidated previously taught skills, and advanced their knowledge and understanding in English, where standards are well above the national average in reading and above the national picture in writing. In mathematics, pupils are very proficient at identifying number patterns and use the correct mathematical language to describe what they are doing. Pupils make good progress in the development of investigative skills and in experimental work in science. Standards are good in art and physical education, and satisfactory in design and technology, history, geography and music.

- 10 By the age of twelve, standards are above average in English, mathematics, and science. Standards in both reading and writing in Year 7 are good. Writing shows continued development in its accuracy, structures and purposes, and pupils' speaking and listening skills are well developed. In mathematics, pupils understand formulae and apply these with good levels of accuracy, and they use trial and improvement methods successfully to approximate square roots. In science, pupils have a good understanding of how sedimentary rocks can be transformed into metamorphic rock by the application of pressure and heat. Standards are good in art, history, geography, physical education and French, and satisfactory in design and technology. It was not possible to make a judgement on standards in music.
- 11 Standards in information technology are satisfactory throughout the school. Pupils throughout the school achieve standards in religious education that are in line with those set out in the locally agreed syllabus for the subject.
- 12 Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress throughout the school in relation to their prior learning in English, mathematics and science. Those pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress in these subjects. Gifted and talented pupils make very good progress, with sensitive and well-focused support from teachers.
- 13 The school has made good progress towards meeting its standards targets. Assessment information is used appropriately to analyse general trends in performance and to set targets. For pupils aged seven in 1999, the target for writing was marginally exceeded, the target for mathematics was achieved, and for reading results were slightly below target. The school exceeded the targets set for pupils aged eleven in 1999 for English, at 60% and mathematics, at 58%, which included the seven pupils in the department for moderate learning difficulties. Higher targets were also set, from which the results for pupils with moderate learning difficulties are extracted, and these, too, were exceeded in 1999. The school has set challenging and detailed targets for pupils at the ages of seven and eleven in English and mathematics for the next three years. These targets take appropriate account of those pupils with moderate learning difficulties.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 14 Attitudes to learning are good overall. Inspection findings confirm the view of parents that pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to do well. The positive learning environment, and usually high standards of teaching, result in pupils enjoying their work and the challenges set for them.
- 15 Pupils are interested and involved in their work, try hard and concentrate very well until individual activities are completed. They talk about their work with considerable confidence, are proud of their successes and show pleasure in those of others. As they move through the school, they increasingly make positive contributions to discussions. When required to do so, pupils demonstrate a good ability to work independently, for example in initiating tasks and making selections, but they have too few opportunities to show this, particularly the older pupils. Pupils enjoy and value the extra-curricular activities provided. They are responsible in their attitudes to homework, and there is little unfinished work.

- 16 Throughout the school there are clear and consistent expectations for high standards of behaviour and, as at the time of the last inspection, the response to this is very positive. As a consequence, pupils throughout the school benefit from a calm and orderly environment in which disruption is rare. In lessons, behaviour is of a high standard. During the week of inspection it was always at least satisfactory and usually much better, helping pupils to make the most of their lessons. Pupils are confident, friendly and welcoming to visitors. Those from ethnic minority backgrounds are well integrated. They work, socialise and play happily, and this enables them to become confident and secure learners. At break and lunchtimes, squabbles and differences are rare occurrences. There are high levels of respect for school property. Materials and equipment used in lessons are handled sensibly and put away with care. The many displays of work and artefacts around the school are valued and treated with respect. Those pupils who have transferred to the school part of the way through key stages respond very well to the positive learning environment. No pupils have been excluded from the school in the last few years.
- 17 The relationships between pupils, including those from the various ethnic groups represented in the school population, and with adults, are very positive and a strength of the school. Pupils are able to collaborate well, for example when planning dance sequences in Year 7. They value and respect the ideas and contributions of others and rarely interrupt when someone else is speaking. They show interest in what others have to say and are eager to share their own knowledge and views. This confidence is fostered effectively by teachers and results in high self-esteem and well-developed social skills. Throughout the school pupils show good levels of care for others, offering help and support where needed. They are confident they will not be bullied and have no hesitation in approaching staff if help is needed. Pupils show good levels of personal organisation and they help to assemble books and materials for lessons without being asked. They do not, however, further develop the exercise of responsibility and use of initiative through planned, increasing involvement in school routines.
- 18 The attendance rate for the last school year is 94.8% and marginally above the national average. Unauthorised absence is below average at 0.2%. Registers are completed as required. Reasons for absence are always required and are usually valid. The pupils who transfer to the school following difficulties with attendance elsewhere usually do well. The school has established an effective working relationship with the education welfare officer.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 19 The quality of teaching is good. 98 per cent of the teaching observed was satisfactory or better and over half of all lessons were good or better. 25 per cent of the teaching was very good or better. Only 2 per cent of lessons was judged to be unsatisfactory. Teaching and learning across the school is good overall. There are particular strengths in the teaching at Key Stages 2 and 3, where teaching is frequently good or better and the quality of learning is good. The quality of teaching for children under five and at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory.
- 20 Teachers throughout the school usually show at least sound subject knowledge. Their subject knowledge is good in the teaching of literacy and numeracy, and in other subjects, such as dance, French and science. In Years 6 and 7, the quality of teachers' subject knowledge is sometimes very good and occasionally excellent.

- 21 Teachers demonstrate competence in teaching basic skills, including the teaching of phonics. For example in a literacy lesson with Year 1 pupils, good teaching of phonemes, helped pupils to model words beginning with initial blends, such as 'snake' and 'skipping'; this successfully reinforced and extend pupils' learning. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well and applied extensively across the curriculum, notably in science and history. There are too few opportunities for information technology skills to reinforce learning in other subjects.
- 22 Teachers' short-term planning, the identification within planning of learning outcomes and their expectations of what pupils should achieve are good for pupils in the majority of classes in the school. Teachers' planning is usually good at Key Stages 1 and 2, and it is very good at Key Stage 3, and learning objectives for lessons are usually clear and shared very effectively with pupils. This was demonstrated effectively in a Year 5 information technology lesson, where objectives were set out at the beginning of the lesson. The pupils were given clear instructions about how to work through a new program which linked in with their work in science. As a result, they knew exactly what to do and were able to make very good gains in their information technology skills, working confidently through the different options available.
- 23 Teachers usually have appropriately high expectations of what pupils should achieve and set challenging tasks for them. Pupils in Year 2 made good gains in their learning in a physical education lesson where increasing levels of challenge were presented in the tasks. High levels of challenging questioning in an information technology lesson with Year 7 pupils successfully encouraged them to solve problems and make decisions using spreadsheets, and then to evaluate the appropriateness of their solutions. Whilst there have been improvements since the last inspection, there is some inconsistency in the level of challenge for children aged under five, and on a few occasions the range of tasks for these children is too narrow and the pace of working is too slow.
- 24 Teaching methods are at least sound and often good. Teachers use a wide range of teaching methods, including a high but appropriate proportion of direct teaching. Good use is made of group activities, plenary sessions, demonstration, discussion and role-play. In a Year 5 music lesson, a very effective transition between the teaching of listening skills and performance skills ensured pupils' levels of interest remained high. There are sometimes insufficient planned opportunities for pupils fully to bring to bear their creative efforts within practical tasks, usually because of time constraints, but most plenary sessions are of good quality.
- 25 Pupils' behaviour is managed very well, and this is a particularly strong feature of the teaching in the school. Very positive relationships exist between staff and pupils. This was particularly noticeable in a Year 5 literacy hour focusing on myths and legends, where excellent teaching ensured pupils worked with an intense sense of purpose, demonstrated commitment to their work and supported and learned from each other. The teacher respected and valued their ideas and opinions and, as a consequence, their behaviour was very good.
- 26 Teachers usually manage time effectively. Lessons start promptly and learning is conducted at a brisk pace. Most lessons finish promptly, and class changes to allow for work in sets is managed efficiently. This was demonstrated in a numeracy lesson with Year 3 pupils on time, using digital and analogue clock examples.

The work of the whole class, and of different groups, was shared effectively; an indication was given about the focus for the next lesson, and the lesson ended on time with a clear reminder to pupils about their homework task. Very occasionally, there is some slack time between the end of numeracy lessons and lunchtimes for the younger pupils.

- 27 Resources are used effectively, and the overall good quality of resources enhances the learning experiences of the pupils. In a mathematics lesson with Year 3 pupils, the teacher made very good use of a simple angle-maker based on two interlocking paper discs to allow pupils to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the characteristics of different sized angles. The use of information and communications technology in support of information technology is good; its use in support of other subjects is less frequent than it could be, and more opportunities for its inclusion need to be planned.
- 28 Support assistants make a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' learning in many lessons. They are well briefed and aware of the learning needs of pupils; they intervene sensitively in their work with groups and individuals to encourage and support their learning. They work very effectively with teachers to ensure consistently high standards of behaviour and discipline throughout the school.
- 29 The quality and use of teachers' ongoing assessment is inconsistent. It is satisfactory in Year 7 but unsatisfactory elsewhere in the school. Some teachers do not make enough use of their assessments to help them plan the next steps in learning for pupils of different abilities, although those with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils are usually catered for effectively. This leads to a lack of clarity in some of the arrangements for differentiation within lessons. On balance marking is sound. There are some very good examples of teachers' written feedback to pupils which identifies what they have to do to make progress; however, in a few classes, marking is cursory and comments do not provide enough help to pupils, parents or the teachers themselves about areas for improvement.
- 30 The amount of homework set is usually adequate, but there is some unevenness between classes, and between year groups, in teachers' approaches to the setting of homework. Where homework is set consistently and used effectively to reinforce what is learned in class, it makes a valuable contribution to learning.
- 31 The quality of teaching for children under five is satisfactory. Teaching in the area of physical development is good, and there are some good features of teaching in mathematical learning, particularly where there are clearly identified learning objectives, brisk and purposeful introductions, and children are clear about what they are expected to do. Some aspects of teaching knowledge and understanding of the world, notably the clarity of learning objectives, are unsatisfactory.
- 32 The teaching of English overall is good. Good teaching features detailed objectives, appropriate pace and clearly explained tasks. Teachers' good use of sensitive questioning enables all pupils to make significant contributions to whole class discussions.
- 33 Teachers' expectations in the teaching of numeracy are consistently high, and the best lessons move at a good pace, and link with pupils' prior learning. In mathematics, teaching is good overall. Almost all lessons at Key Stages 2 and 3 are of good quality, with some examples of very good teaching.

Learning objectives are set that pupils understand. Numeracy lessons are well structured, with emphasis on interactive oral work, and teachers make good use of resources to support mental calculation. Teaching is particularly effective when teachers' good subject knowledge is used to help pupils link what they already know to the new tasks set for them, and where tasks are carefully sequenced to increase the level of challenge through the lesson.

- 34 The quality of teaching in science is at least satisfactory and occasionally very good. Most lessons are planned well and start promptly. In the better lessons the pace is suitably brisk. Teachers' knowledge of the subject matter is never less than satisfactory and improves from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 3.
- 35 The teaching of information technology is satisfactory overall, and is good in Key Stage 2 and in Year 7. Teachers' knowledge of the programs is usually good. Pupils are given clear instructions which enable them to carry out their work confidently.
- 36 The quality of teaching in religious education is good overall, with the best teaching featuring detailed objectives, appropriate pace and clearly explained tasks. Teachers make good use of sensitive questioning which enables all pupils to make significant contributions to whole class discussions.
- 37 Pupils make at least steady gains in the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding in most classes, and often make good progress in their learning. The quality of pupils' learning is good overall, being slightly better at Key Stages 2 and 3, where the rate of learning is often good. In a well-planned Year 7 design and technology lesson, for example, pupils made very good gains in their understanding of the design of packaging. The lesson started with a clear initial exposition, and good quality learning was supported by a broad range of practical, investigative tasks including cooking biscuits, constructing histograms to demonstrate preferences for different food fillings and toppings and analysing different types of packaging.
- 38 Pupils make good links between what they have learned in different subjects. For example, in a history lesson, Year 2 pupils made effective links between the use of materials over time and their work in science on the properties of materials. In a Year 6 science lesson, information and communications technology was used very effectively by the teacher to further enhance pupils' skills and knowledge about how to measure, record and interpret changes in temperature as substances cooled. Pupils make mostly good, and often very good, gains in their physical and intellectual learning, but there are insufficient opportunities for them to develop their creative skills.
- 39 Pupils usually show high levels of interest in what they are learning during lessons and make positive efforts to improve their performance. Where expectations are high and challenging for pupils, they respond very positively. They show good and often very good levels of concentration on tasks. There are too few opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their skills as independent learners but, where these occur, pupils show they are more than capable of organising their own learning.
- 40 Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of their own learning. They are increasingly involved in self-evaluation as they move through the school, and particularly in Year 7.

This process is considerably enhanced where good quality written feedback is provided in pupils' books.

- 41 Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and make very good gains in their learning, particularly at Key Stages 2 and 3. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties are integrated very well into classes. Teaching for these pupils is planned comprehensively, with high levels of detail; there is a high level of teacher expertise and sensitivity by all staff to pupils' learning needs. Where gifted and talented pupils have been identified, they make very good progress in their learning. Those pupils for whom English is an additional language are also taught well and make good gains in their learning; pupils in the very early stages of learning make particularly good progress, benefiting from well-structured activities which take account of their needs and sensitive intervention by teachers and support assistants.
- 42 Since the last inspection, the overall quality of teaching has improved significantly. Teachers' subject knowledge in art and design and technology is now satisfactory. Teaching for children under five has improved and is now satisfactory. Teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. The very good quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs has been maintained. The very good contribution of support assistants continues to enhance the quality of pupils' learning and the progress that they make. The high quality of teaching in Years 5 and 6, and in Year 7, has been maintained.

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

- 43 The curriculum for children under-five is suitably broad, balanced and relevant to their needs. It includes all of the appropriate areas of learning normally encountered by this age group. Their personal and social skills are promoted effectively and they are prepared for work at the next level when they enter Key Stage 1. Good progress in this provision has been made since the previous inspection.
- 44 The curriculum is broad and relevant to the needs of pupils, and the school complies with the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. The science curriculum makes particularly strong links to life in the home and the wider world. The modern foreign language curriculum in Year 7, where pupils learn French, prepares pupils very well for their residential visit to Caen, and for the next stage in their language learning.
- 45 The school has worked hard, and has recently made very effective provision for the implementation of the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies. There is good development of these skills within other subjects; for example, a range of writing is developed within history and the interpretation of statistical data within geography. This intensive emphasis on literacy and numeracy has contributed to a less than sharp focus on other curriculum subjects, particularly in the planning of the progressive development of skills.
- 46 There are inconsistencies in the amount of time provided for the teaching of religious education across the school. There is also some imbalance in the amount of time provided for mathematics and the foundation subjects, where the time provided for the teaching of numeracy is sometimes too long.

The frequency and periods of allocated time for particular subjects, for example, art and design technology, is often too short to allow for sustained creative experiences.

- 47 The arrangements for personal and social education are ineffective. The planning for the teaching of health and sex education, including drugs misuse, within the science schemes of work indicates appropriate coverage. However, there are insufficient planned opportunities provided for the discussion of personal and social issues arising from or associated with these aspects.
- 48 The curriculum arranged for pupils with special educational needs enables them to make particularly good progress. Very effective procedures identify and support pupils who experience learning difficulties. Individual education plans are effectively co-ordinated and monitored to ensure an appropriate match within the classroom. The inclusive nature of the curriculum and the management of support for all pupils with special educational needs ensures a broad entitlement. The school complies fully with statutory procedures as laid down by the Code of Practice. Support from learning assistants is of good quality. All pupils have equal access to and equality of opportunity in the curriculum.
- 49 There are very good links with Stantonbury Campus and with other local schools, particularly in the core subjects; these arrangements support a good level of curriculum continuity.
- 50 Visitors to the school and visits to places of interest supplement classroom learning. The school provides a significant number of extra-curricular activities throughout the year; these are largely sporting or musical in nature. Pupils enjoy these and there is an appropriate balance in the proportion of boys and girls engaging in these activities.
- 51 Teachers plan the content of their lessons from the school's schemes of work, on a weekly basis. These plans typically indicate what is to be taught and the objectives underpinning these activities. There is appropriate guidance on what the success criteria of these lessons are, and what specific outcomes might indicate attainment at different levels. As a result most lessons contain an appropriate match of work to pupils needs, resulting in an effective balance between consolidation and extension. Where this work is taking place it has had a significant impact on the attainment of more able pupils, good progress has been made on this aspect since the previous inspection.
- 52 Teachers often plan their work in year group and phase meetings. This is a positive feature, ensuring that the same broad themes and topics are explored, regardless of in which class the pupils are placed. Planning does not always provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their creative and investigative skills in some subjects, or to make choices about their learning.
- 53 Pupils' spiritual development is largely promoted through daily assemblies where an act of collective worship is planned. The school meets its legal requirements, although pupils were not seen to be given sustained moments of reflection or sustained opportunities for personal prayer. Assemblies provide some opportunities to listen to stories and to music and thereby to reflect upon meaning and mood. Religious education plays an important role in pupils' spiritual development.

A sustained moment of awe and wonder was observed during the inspection when pupils in a Year 3/4 class experienced the re-enactment of the special customs involved with the reading of the Qu'ran. In other subjects, however, this aspect of education is largely neglected or incidental. Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their spiritual awareness and self-knowledge, or to reflect upon special moments in their lives.

- 54 Moral development is strongly promoted and the provision of this aspect continues to be very good. Pupils' behaviour and relationships are very good, both in school and in the playground. Good moral values are communicated through assemblies and through the implementation of the school's behaviour policy. Adults within the school act as good role models. Pupils of all ages have a very good understanding of the differences between behaviours that are acceptable and those that are not. Pupils' keen sense of fairness was observed on a number of occasions during science and information and communications technology lessons.
- 55 The provision for pupils' social development remains very good. The school provides a welcoming environment, where pupils are valued and respected and where in turn pupils welcome and respect. The quality of relationships observed in lessons and around the school reflects a good understanding of acceptable social behaviour and self-discipline. Pupils contribute money to a range of local, national and international charities on a regular basis and are able to discuss the reasons for this fundraising. Numerous opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively across the curriculum were observed during the inspection period. It was very evident that pupils enjoy these opportunities to work with partners and in different groups. There are too few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning within lessons. From an early age pupils take registers and messages to the school office, and older pupils also help with the organisation of assemblies and as school librarians. The range of these responsibilities is narrow, especially for the older pupils, particularly where opportunities to help in the school library are limited to pupils in one Year 6 class.
- 56 The promotion of cultural awareness is satisfactory. Children have some opportunity to take part in dance and develop links with the wider local community, through visits and visitors. Pupils study comparisons between England, France, Greece and St Lucia, but are not being given the opportunity presented to the school to benefit from the multicultural backgrounds of many of the pupils themselves. There is, however, some multicultural study and the celebration of the significant events of the major world religions, e.g. Christmas, Easter, Eid, Hanukkah, Divali, and Thanksgiving.
- 57 Overall provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of school life is satisfactory and makes a valuable contribution to the educational standards achieved.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 58 The welfare and personal support of pupils is given high priority by the school. Arrangements to ensure their health, safety and well being are satisfactory overall. There are suitable arrangements to deal with first aid emergencies. The statutory requirements for testing equipment and appliances are fully met.

Emergency evacuation procedures are practised regularly, ensuring pupils are familiar with these. Teachers ensure pupils follow safe procedures in lessons. Within this caring context the requirement to put in place risk assessment procedures has been overlooked, a key member of staff has not been suitably briefed and there is insufficient involvement of the governing body in consideration of health and safety matters. Nevertheless, health and safety concerns identified during the inspection were dealt with promptly by the school. Class teachers know their pupils well. The very good relationships between them and pupils ensure pupils are confident about sharing problems and concerns. There is a designated person with responsibility for child protection and suitable arrangements are in place to identify and deal with issues that arise. The school works closely with its education welfare officer and social services where this is needed. A suitable range of specialists from support services offers help and guidance as required.

- 59 The behaviour and discipline policy sets clear expectations that are shared effectively with both pupils and parents. Staff provide good role models and are very consistent in their approach to encouraging good behaviour and dealing with problems. This results in pupils understanding the standards required and what will happen if they misbehave. Younger pupils take pride and pleasure in the various stickers they are given for good work and behaviour. As they move through the years, pupils place greater importance on praise from their teachers and the pleasure shown by their peers when they do well. Sanctions for the few minor instances of misbehaviour are effective.
- 60 In the few cases where there is real concern staff seek to work with parents to identify and deal with underlying problems in a non-confrontational way. This approach is successful in bringing about change, and has worked particularly well with pupils who have been moved to the school after experiencing problems elsewhere. Parents are encouraged to send their children to school regularly and reasons for absence are always required. This results in few unauthorised absences.
- 61 Although positive steps have been taken to improve assessment procedures since the time of the last inspection the overall impact of these is not yet satisfactory. An assessment co-ordinator has been appointed. This is regarded as a key role and is undertaken by a member of the senior management team. Suitable procedures for assessment, recording and reporting are in place and 'Assessment Manager' is being used effectively to help with analysis of available data. Some aspects of assessment duplicate effort and are time consuming. At present there is insufficient involvement of staff on a whole school basis in the analysis of assessment data, the identification of performance criteria and the setting of individual targets for pupils. The number of pupils leaving and joining the school each year is very high and makes tracking progress and forecasting results particularly difficult. Information from previous schools is sometimes slow in arriving, making effective planning to sustain progress difficult. The assessment information which is available is not always used as effectively as it could be by teachers to help them plan work to provide suitable challenges for all pupils. However, planning to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs is effective. Teachers know pupils very well indeed and this helps them quickly to identify where they are experiencing problems and to take suitable action. Guidance for the provision of personal, health and social education does not ensure a coherent programme for all pupils. Their progress in this area is not monitored effectively enough.

- 62 The educational and personal support and guidance provided generally contributes satisfactorily to pupils' achievements. Their work is regularly marked. There are some examples that give pupils good guidance about their achievements and what needs to be done to improve, but not all staff achieve this consistently. Annual progress reports to parents suitably identify strengths and areas where improvement is needed in maths, science and English. Pupils are encouraged to develop self-awareness through making effective contributions to these by self-appraisal and setting personal targets. Good quality feedback is provided in lessons, although individual short-term targets are not routinely shared with pupils and used to raise standards. Pupils transfer to the next stage of education part way through Key Stage 3. The school has developed good working relationships with local secondary schools. There is suitable subject liaison to minimise any interruptions to learning in English, maths and science. Pastoral support provided at the time of transfer is very strong and helps pupils settle happily into their new school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 63 A high proportion of parents completed the questionnaires provided prior to the inspection, and response to the provision made by the school is generally good. The large majority feel comfortable about approaching the school with problems. They agree their children like school, behave well, are expected to work hard, make good progress and develop in maturity. They also consider the school is well led and managed, that teaching is good and an interesting range of activities is provided. Findings during the week of inspection generally confirm these views. Inspection evidence does not support the view of the few parents who feel they receive insufficient information about how well their children are getting on, and that the school does not work closely with parents.
- 64 Annual progress reports are of high quality and there are suitable opportunities for parent consultations. Those parents seen in the school during the inspection were encouraged to be involved both in sharing concerns and supporting the work of the school. Parents expressed concerns about homework both in the questionnaire and at the meeting prior to the inspection. Inspection findings support the view that there are inconsistencies in the setting of homework. That set during the week of inspection was usually of good quality and quantity.
- 65 As at the time of the last inspection, parents are provided with good quality information that provides an effective foundation for partnership between them and the school to support their children's learning. Annual progress reports have improved since the time of the last inspection. Those for English, maths and science give very good information about what pupils know, understand and can do, identifying particular strengths and setting suitable and achievable targets for them to work towards. Other subjects are satisfactorily reported. Parents are invited to contribute their own views to progress reports; they receive suitable guidance for this and many use the opportunity to provide the school with helpful additional information. Formal arrangements are made for them to discuss progress after the issue of reports during the autumn term, and at other times on request. Pupils' individual key stage test results are provided for parents, together with those achieved nationally for comparison.

- 66 The prospectus and governors' annual report are both well written and provide a comprehensive range of required information. Governors work with teachers to provide a range of 'focus' documents that give good quality information about various aspects of the work of the school. Regular newsletters give up-to-date information about news and events. Those provided at the beginning of term highlight what pupils will be learning and enable parents to support this at home. During their children's final year at the school, parents receive good information about the next stage of education, helping them to make well-informed decisions.
- 67 Parents take an active interest in their children's progress and their involvement with the school has a good impact on its work. Attendance at consultation evenings and other events where work can be seen and progress discussed is high. The home-school agreement is the result of good consultation with parents, from whom it received a high level of support. Information evenings have been provided to help parents understand the new literacy and numeracy strategies. Their views have been sought and used in planning provision for sex education, the length of the school day and after school-care. The parents' and teacher association is very effective in raising funds to support the work of the school, and plays an active role in taking decisions about how money raised should be spent. Those parents who offer support in lessons, and with hearing pupils read, are welcomed, and have a positive impact on the level of personal support available to pupils.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 68 The headteacher, in partnership with the staff and governing body, has secured commitment to a clear vision for the school within the community, and provides effective leadership. High standards are promoted through the very positive ethos for learning within the school, and there is a shared commitment to school improvement. This is underpinned by the very good teamwork of all staff, who are well motivated and committed to the school and its pupils. Working relationships between staff, pupils, governors and parents are very good.
- 69 The school's aims explicitly include the promotion of high standards and raising of standards, equal opportunities, a commitment to good relationships and the promotion of learning. These aims and values are reflected very successfully in the work of the school. Significant changes have been managed effectively, and the school has made good progress in addressing the key issues from the previous inspection
- 70 Since the previous inspection, the role of the senior management team has been significantly strengthened and improved by the reallocation of tasks and a clearer focus on the establishment of challenging goals for pupils' attainment. The team now has a wider perspective, in that it includes the teacher responsible for the moderate learning difficulties department, who is also the special educational needs co-ordinator. Management tasks are delegated effectively and the senior management team exerts a positive and strong influence on teaching and the work of the school. They meet regularly and help ensure the smooth running of the school on a day-to day basis, as well as providing secure long-term planning for school improvement. The management team and governors have planned successfully to manage a fall in the school's roll and to ensure the maintenance of high standards.

In particular, they have secured continuity in respect of support for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, all of whom are integrated successfully as a result of the school's clear focus on inclusive policies.

- 71 The school has made good progress in the establishment of procedures for monitoring and evaluating the teaching and learning, including classroom observations and the analysis of pupils' written work. This is beginning to provide valuable information to help guide decision-making, and the procedures now need to be extended to ensure subject co-ordinators are more fully involved. The deputy has oversight of assessment, and helps provide clear analyses of pupils' performance, including a value-added analysis, and makes good use of information and communications technology to record and analyse data. Further extension of this approach is planned. Baseline assessment is beginning to be used with greater precision to gain initial information about pupils' attainment as they join the school. The introduction of standardised tests, and a succinct analysis of standards across the school, has resulted in senior managers having a much more secure view of standards across the school, particularly in the core subjects, and of the performance of teachers.
- 72 The roles of subject co-ordinators have been improved in respect of curriculum planning but, with the exception of core subjects, they have not had sufficient opportunities to monitor teaching and learning at first hand. Nevertheless, because of the strength of the teamwork within the school, much good informal monitoring and evaluation takes place, forming a sound basis for further development.
- 73 The governors contribute effectively to the direction of the school and the work of the senior management team. Through regular contact with the school, and the good work of sub-committees, they gain a clear picture of the effectiveness of decision-making, particularly in relation to staffing appointments and expenditure on accommodation and resources. They also monitor closely the performance of pupils in statutory tests, and use this information effectively to complement other comparative data to inform their deliberations and decisions. They are effective in fulfilling their statutory duties, with the exception of meeting statutory requirements for health and safety.
- 74 The school development plan has been successfully revised since the last inspection and now includes appropriate detail of costs and time-scales, and identifies responsibilities, including those of governors, for specific areas of activity. The plan is now a more useful instrument for school improvement. However, the successful completion of the many actions within the plan is not shared as effectively as it could be. As a result, staff, governors and parents do not have a clear awareness of the school's successful development in the recent past.
- 75 Staff development and the school's staff appraisal scheme are effective, and linked closely to priorities stated in the school development plan. Systems for staff development, including support staff, are secure and have a positive influence on standards of teaching. Positive steps have been taken to remedy the shortcomings in teachers' knowledge, understanding and skills identified in the previous inspection, and this process is continuing. There is a very comprehensive programme of induction for staff new to the school. The school regularly works in partnership with institutions of higher education as a provider of teacher training.

- 76 Targets for pupils' performance are set in conjunction with the local education authority. The inclusion in national tests of pupils at the school with moderate learning difficulties makes this process significantly more difficult. Nevertheless, the school is successful in meeting, and exceeding, the targets set. There is clear evidence of added value in pupils' performance, and the performance of pupils with special educational needs is given due recognition. At the time of the last inspection, the performance of higher attaining pupils was identified as an issue for improvement. The 1999 results at both key stages, and particularly at age eleven, indicate that this target has been achieved very successfully. On the basis of its analysis of performance across the school, the current priority is, appropriately, to raise further the achievement of boys in writing at Key Stage 2.
- 77 The school budgets systematically and prudently for its development. There is a clear view of how potential changes in overall budget allocations, as a consequence of a fall in the numbers on roll, might affect class sizes, staff deployment and resources. Financial administration is very good, ensuring that the headteacher and governors regularly receive details of expenditure and balances. The principles of best value are understood and applied to the school's management decisions, for example when comparing costs and services, justifying revised expenditure patterns and seeking competitive tenders in a recent review of cleaning arrangements at the school. Comparative data for national and local schools is used routinely when establishing budgets and analysing performance. Specific funding for special needs pupils is used effectively for its designated purpose. The school makes effective use of information and communications technology, for instance in financial management, the management of assessment data, and in the use of its information technology suite for teaching specific skills.
- 78 There are sufficient, suitably-qualified staff to teach the full curriculum, and staffing levels have been carefully maintained to ensure that all pupils are taught effectively. There is a good blend of experienced and recently-qualified teachers. The work of the experienced support staff contributes significantly to the teamwork and maintenance of high standards of behaviour and academic achievement of all pupils in the school. In particular, they provide very effective support for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.
- 79 The accommodation is of very good quality. It is clean and well-maintained. Shared areas are of good size and are used effectively for a wide range of learning tasks. The accommodation for pupils under five has improved substantially since the previous inspection; it is well-equipped and is linked to an attractive outdoor play area. It now allows the curriculum for the youngest pupils to be taught effectively. The school library is attractive and kept in good order by staff and pupil librarians, but it is under-used by pupils during the school day for personal study. However, appropriate steps are being taken to make the library stock more attractive to boys, who are under-represented as users of this area. Overall, the accommodation provides a stimulating and welcoming place for pupils to learn and play.
- 80 Learning resources are generally of good quality, and most curriculum areas are well-equipped. The school makes good use of the computer suite and other computer facilities strategically located around the building to enable pupils good access for their work. Since the last inspection, the level and quality of resources has improved for art, design and technology, religious education and for pupils under five.

THE WORK OF THE MODERATE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES DEPARTMENT

- 81 The Department is very effective in meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs at all stages of the Code of Practice. Very high quality support for pupils with special educational needs is provided by the Moderate Learning Difficulties Department. The head of the department is also the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. This enables her to have an overview of pupils at all stages of the Code of Practice.
- 82 The Department provides support for 30 pupils with statements of special educational needs. There are a further 26 pupils at stages 2 and 3 for whom the department takes responsibility for assessing, planning the arrangements to meet the identified needs, monitoring the arrangements and reviewing progress. There are also 15 pupils at stage 1, where the responsibility is taken by the class teachers, but supported by the co-ordinator. Although the designation of the department is 'moderate learning difficulties', examination of the statements of special educational needs shows that a much wider range of needs is met, including communication, behaviour and physical development. The Department staff are skilled in meeting a wide range of individual needs.
- 83 Pupils are integrated into mainstream classes. Their special educational needs are met through a variety of arrangements tailored to their individual needs, ranging from withdrawal in core subjects to full integration into a class with appropriate support from a learning support assistant. The arrangements and individual programmes of work are carefully drawn up by the department staff, monitored on a regular basis and reviewed at least termly. Daily planning and discussion by department staff, however, mean that arrangements and progress are monitored continuously.
- 84 Pupils make very good progress as a result of the good teaching and careful planning undertaken by the Department staff which takes into account detailed knowledge of pupils' strengths and weaknesses.
- 85 Teaching is very well supported by experienced learning support assistants who make a valuable contribution to the progress that pupils make. They are well informed of the individual needs of pupils. They complement the work of teachers, contributing at key points in the lessons and anticipating difficulties. They provide supportive feedback to pupils, build their confidence and self-esteem, and enable them to contribute fully.
- 86 The teaching in Department classes is very good. The teachers have sound knowledge of the subjects they are teaching, using approaches suitable for pupils with special educational needs and detailed knowledge of the pupils they are teaching. They provide clear explanations so that pupils are clear about what they are required to do. Misunderstandings are dealt with sensitively. Planning is detailed, meticulous and of consistently high quality, taking into account all the needs of all pupils. The content of lessons is well defined and adapted to meet each child's needs. Specific behavioural objectives are included for some pupils and they are all very well managed. The methods used are wholly suitable, with differentiated work and expectations embedded in the lesson delivery. The pace of the lessons is always brisk.

- 87 Pupils' attitudes in lessons when they are withdrawn from classes are very good. They take part fully in the lessons, are well motivated, confident and enjoy what they are doing. Behaviour is also very good. Any instances of undesirable behaviour are dealt with quickly, firmly and decisively. On a very few occasions, a concentration of pupils with special educational needs in some mainstream classes has a detrimental effect on the management of the class, even when learning support assistant help is available.
- 88 Relationships with outside agencies are very good. The wide level of knowledge and expertise mean that most areas of concern can be dealt with competently within the department, so that other agencies are used as a resource that can be called in when time is an issue.
- 89 The documentation relating to maintaining and reviewing statements not only meets the requirements of the Local Education Authority but goes beyond this. Most of the statements have been modified by the Authority at the request of the Department as needs have changed or been better identified. This usually comes about following a statutory review, where very detailed evidence and suggestions for alterations are produced. Review documentation consists of a report prepared for the review, a comment sheet from the parents, verbatim minutes of review meetings, detailed objectives for the coming year and targets for the first term. These targets are reviewed termly with parents and the timing of the reviews is dependent upon their availability. Parents and class teachers are involved in all reviews of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) at all stages. The school's Educational Psychologist attends 50 per cent of the statutory reviews and carries out pre-review assessments of pupils when requested by the department. Class teachers are kept informed of the progress of supported pupils by regular planned discussion with lesson support assistants and department teachers.
- 90 The Department monitors closely the attendance of pupils in withdrawal groups and takes action if any patterns of non-attendance occurs. All but one of the pupils assigned to the Department are brought to school by transport arranged by the Local Education Authority.
- 91 The school's policy for special educational needs, updated in January 1999, includes not only all the required elements of the Code of Practice but also detailed guidance on identification and assessment, together with information on stage indicators, resources and the monitoring and review of progress. It is a valuable resource document for class teachers and others to use in identifying and meeting needs.
- 92 Class teachers have special educational needs files of good quality, prepared and updated by Department staff, which contain copies of current IEPs for Stages 2-5, previous review notes, Stage 1 concern, together with advice and guidance on filling in the forms and IEPs and on devising targets. Guidance sheets relating to an individual pupil's particular needs are also included, and there are also profile sheets which keep a close track of the pupils' movement through the stages and which record review dates and outcomes.
- 93 The management of the Department is very effective. The Department teachers teach and have regular contact with, and therefore a good overview of, all pupils with special educational needs. With the learning support assistants, they form an effective and efficient team with considerable vision, dedication and expertise.

- 94 The Department head is a member of the senior management team and she monitors the work undertaken by department staff and the work of pupils in the classroom. On-going training is provided for the learning support assistants and all staff undertake further professional development outside the school.
- 95 The Department continues to provide very high quality support as identified in the previous inspection report. Staff have continued to develop the range of their skills to cover a broader range of special educational needs. Detailed planning of teaching programmes, linked to national initiatives for literacy and numeracy, ensures that the progress made by pupils with special educational needs is very good. The department manager is now able to address special needs issues directly through the Senior Management Team. Monitoring of the progress of pupils in mainstream classes and increased liaison between Department and mainstream staff have been firmly established.
- 96 The contribution made by the moderate learning difficulties department is a significant strength of the school. It not only underpins the provision for statemented pupils, but also contributes to the support of pupils at all stages of the Code of Practice and beyond, because the same principles and level of assessment, monitoring and review are applied. This support is further enhanced by the high level of expertise in information and communications technology concentrated in the department.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve further the standards of achievement and quality of education provided, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) **ensure teachers' assessments more consistently inform the next steps in learning for pupils of all abilities by:**
 - more systematic monitoring of teachers' assessment and short-term planning (see paragraphs 29, 61, 107, 136, 147, 162 and 234);
 - setting clearer targets for individual pupils (see paragraphs 29, 61, 136, 147 and 162);
- (2) **further develop the effectiveness of subject co-ordinators by:**
 - providing more regular opportunities for monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning (see paragraphs 72, 138, 151, 161, 170, 186, 224 and 234);
- (3) **enhance pupils' independence and creativity by:**
 - extending the range of opportunities for pupils to take initiative and work independently (see paragraphs 17, 39, 109, 113, 130, 183 and 196);
 - providing a broader range of tasks which encourage pupils to work creatively (see paragraphs 24, 38 and 165);
- (4) **ensure greater cohesion in the curriculum for personal, social and health education by:**
 - drawing together the currently separate elements within one programme of study (see paragraphs 47 and 61);

- devising and implementing ways to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the programme (see paragraphs 47 and 61);
- (5) **improve opportunities for pupils' spiritual development by:**
- identifying opportunities within programmes of study across the curriculum which might provide a stimulus for spiritual development (see paragraph 53);
 - providing pupils with additional opportunities which enable them to reflect on their experiences, both within school and outside, in a way which develops their spiritual awareness (see paragraph 53).

Other weaknesses which the school should consider:

- Reconsider the time spent on individual subjects across the school, in conjunction with revisions to schemes of work to meet changes in the National Curriculum (see paragraphs 46 and 148).
- Ensure the governing body carries out its responsibilities in respect of health and safety (see paragraphs 58 and 73).
- Encourage greater use of the school's library (see paragraph 79).
- Improve the consistency of arrangements for setting homework (see paragraphs 30, 185 and 148)
- Increase the range of opportunities for pupils to use information and communications technology to support their work in other subjects (see paragraphs 27, 133, 185, 195 and 204).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	111
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	53

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	22	32	41	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y[] – Y[]
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	335
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	42

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y[] – Y[]
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	30
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	71

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	20

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	37
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	42

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	14	20	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	13
	Girls	17	16	16
	Total	30	29	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (93)	85 (93)	85 (93)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	13
	Girls	16	15	16
	Total	29	28	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (92)	82 (96)	85 (100)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	33	27	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	23	23
	Girls	20	17	18
	Total	41	40	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (56)	67 (55)	68 (62)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	23	24
	Girls	18	18	18
	Total	36	41	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (57)	68 (68)	70 (66)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

The above results include those for pupils in the school's Department for pupils with moderate learning difficulties.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	3
Indian	9
Pakistani	5
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	298
Any other minority ethnic group	9

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y[] – Y[]

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.8
Average class size	22.2

Education support staff: Y[] – Y[]

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	189.75

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	677076
Total expenditure	660748
Expenditure per pupil	1811
Balance brought forward from previous year	56534
Balance carried forward to next year	72862

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	333
Number of questionnaires returned	198

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	38	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	54	40	4	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	42	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	52	12	1	1
The teaching is good.	55	41	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	41	11	1	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	26	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	37	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	40	50	6	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	53	43	1	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	42	3	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	37	17	2	15

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

98. The admissions policy for the under fives is that children start school, part time, in the term of their fifth birthday. After the first term, children attend school full time. At the time of the inspection, in the reception class, there were 11 children part time, in the morning, and 7 children who were full time. The full time children spent the autumn term part time in school. In the summer term it is anticipated there will be a further intake of 10 children, part-time, who will be five during the summer term. Most of the children have had some pre school experience. The children who are now full time have made good progress and are taught in the afternoons as a small group of 7. Most of the older children have met the desirable learning outcomes in language and literacy, the mathematical area of learning, in physical development and in their personal and social development. Progress in the creative area of learning and in knowledge and understanding of the world towards the desirable learning outcomes is satisfactory. The younger children in the class, who have been in school for less than half a term, have settled well and are making satisfactory progress in all areas of learning. There is an effective induction programme. Before they start school there is the opportunity for the children to visit the school and parents are encouraged to complete a booklet to provide the school with some information about their child's prior attainment. The children are very secure in the classroom and settle quickly into the class routines.
99. The school uses a scheme recommended by the Local Education Authority to assess the children when they start school. The assessment of the 4 children in the reception class during the first half of the autumn term indicates that they were above the average, for the local area, in their social, language and mathematical development. This was a very small number of children. There are no data available for the children who started school this term. The assessment profiles and records of achievement currently used are linked to the National Curriculum programmes of study.
100. The curriculum for the under fives is satisfactory. For the children who are full time there is an emphasis on literacy and the mathematical areas of learning. Children have access to all areas of learning.

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

101. Personal and social development is good. The younger children and the older children are able to make choices and to work independently. They take turns in using and sharing resources like the headphones at the listening station and in making and decorating invitations. They are confident when demonstrating their movements to the class in physical education and are keen to act out the characters from Snow White in the 'dwarfs' cottage' role-play area in the classroom. The children are very confident in writing and trying out new words. When they attend assembly in the hall they listen attentively and are not over awed by being in a much larger group outside their own classroom. The children are always very well behaved and are kind and considerate. They are positive about their work and are eager to take part and to succeed.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

102. The progress of the older children in language and literacy is good. Most of the children are beginning to read. They enjoy books and know which books they enjoy the most, including a favourite book about volcanoes. They sound out the words in their reading books and sound out words in the same way when they are writing. The children all use capital letters and small letters to write their own name, and confidently write the names of their friends on their party invitations. They already know a good number of the high frequency words from the national literacy strategy. The younger children have made a good start at looking at books, using picture clues and joining in with phrases they have learnt by heart in the shared text 'Snow White.' They have made satisfactory progress in the short time that they have been in school.

MATHEMATICS

103. The progress of the older children in the mathematical area of learning is good. Most of the children are working beyond the desirable learning outcomes and are working towards the Level 1 in the National Curriculum. They know and understand numbers beyond 10 and can recognise and create simple patterns. They play 'guess my number' in pairs, and use the appropriate language to describe numbers on a number ladder- higher than, lower than, odd and even. In working with numbers they are able to partition numbers 1-7 into two parts and to count pennies to 39 and to make simple exchanges in the value of coins like the number of 2ps in 4p. The progress of the younger children is satisfactory. They recognise and know numbers up to ten, and can thread beads and make patterns of given numbers. They know a number of counting songs that include numbers up to 12.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

104. Progress of the older and the younger children is satisfactory. The children know about things that have happened in the past and are able to record them in drawings. They know and can name parts of the body and record their observations of the growth of a daffodil from bulb to flower. The beds made for the seven dwarfs included cutting and folding. They understand about mirrors reflecting images. In their use of information and communications technology, the children know about bar codes and scanners and are able to use the space bar and the return and enter keys on the computer controlling the images on the screen. Most of the children have met the desirable learning outcomes and the older children are working towards Level 1, Attainment Target 1 in the National Curriculum programmes of study for science.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

105. The physical development of the children is good. The children are able to use scissors and small tools with accuracy and have good co-ordination skills. They have good control of their body. In combining a series of movements to make a sequence they include running, rolling and sinking to the ground. In using apparatus the children have very good control in balancing on a bench and moving over, under, along and round the apparatus. There is a good secure outdoor play area with a good range of outdoor play equipment and wheeled toys.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

106. The children enjoy music making and make satisfactory progress towards the desirable learning outcomes. They often sing spontaneously as they did when changing from physical education. They sing a number of action and counting songs and choose percussion instruments to play an accompaniment to piano music. The 'Chinese Lion Dance,' performed by four of the children was accompanied by percussion. They know the names of a range of instruments and are able to keep a beat going. They listen carefully to music and note the changes in rhythm from fast to slow. The children express their own ideas through painting and Snow White's house. They act out the story of the Seven Dwarfs using glove puppets and the costumes in the dwarfs' cottage.

TEACHING

107. Teaching overall is satisfactory in most of the areas of learning. In a small minority of lessons the teaching is unsatisfactory. There are number of assessment strategies in place but these are not always used consistently. Targets have been set for those children who started school in September and some have been set for those who started school in January. There is some evidence of informal on-going assessment noted on labels and put into individual records. This method is not used with any consistency on a daily basis. A system is in place to record reading, a mathematics checklist and the high frequency words from the national literacy strategy. There is some confusion over the use of the National Curriculum records of achievement.
108. In language and literacy, sessions have a clear structure and intended learning outcomes, and teaching is satisfactory. Activities are planned to match the prior attainment of the children. The reading of the shared text is very good. The voice is used to good effect and there is a good dramatic interpretation of the story. The learning support adults who work alongside the pupils are well informed of the intended outcomes of the activities that they support and there is good interaction with the children. The resources used by the children are of good quality and information and communications technology is used effectively to support learning. The individual reading records are very good. The children's' progress is monitored regularly and there is good communication between home and school. Aspects of the teaching which are less satisfactory are in the marking and in lessons where the focus of the lesson is lost. This is in lessons where the teacher starts with a fun approach to learning by asking the children to spot the deliberate mistakes in her writing. When this goes on for too long the focus of the teaching of shared writing is lost and there is some confusion about the purpose of the lesson. The children's written work is not always dated and much of the marking is limited to praise.
109. Teaching in the mathematical area of learning is satisfactory with some good aspects. The most successful lessons are those where there are clearly identified learning objectives, the introductory parts of the lesson are conducted at a brisk pace and the children are clear about what they are expected to do. The use of mathematical language is good and there is a good match between the activities provided and the children's' prior learning. The support from learning support assistants is good. There is a very good relationship with the children and questions are effectively used to make the children think for themselves. In the aspects that are less satisfactory the activities planned are very prescriptive and do not allow the children to take the initiative or to investigate for themselves. This was

reflected in the activity involving exchanging coins for similar values where the values and the resources to be used were determined for the children by the teacher. There is also an over-reliance on work sheets for writing and colouring numbers.

110. The teaching of the knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory in a majority of aspects but there is an underlying weakness in a number of areas. This is in the planning of lessons where the learning objectives have not been clearly defined. This results in some low level and repetitive tasks like drawing and colouring in. The activities provided in these lessons do not build on prior knowledge or learning and do not sufficiently challenge the children.
111. Teaching for the children's' physical development is good. Lessons have a good structure and the children are encouraged to devise their own sequences of movement in a number of challenging ways. Children are invited to perform and demonstrate to the class and praise is used effectively to encourage all children to take part.
112. The teaching of the creative aspects of the curriculum is satisfactory. Lessons are planned to include practical activities and opportunities are provided within art for the children to make choices and to experiment with a range of materials. The role play areas are well thought out to link in with the shared text in literacy and the counting and matching activities associated with the seven dwarfs.
113. In response to the previous report, the curriculum provided is now balanced and all of the areas of learning are included in the planning. There is still some imbalance in the emphasis on numeracy and literacy for those children who are full time. Activities planned do take account of the prior learning of the children in most lessons and there is an appropriate match to the level that the children have reached and the time that they have been in school. Opportunities for role play are good and are used effectively to promote learning. There is considerable challenge to some of the activities planned, notably in the writing of the older children and in the physical development of all the children. There is now a new dedicated area for the under fives which has been recently refurbished and which provides a very good environment for the children. The reading resources are now good. The reading scheme books and the large picture books are in good condition and well displayed. There are headphones and tapes at the listening station. Writing, including emergent writing, is strongly encouraged. Children are frequently given the opportunity to choose from a range of activities and resources to express their own ideas. In aspects of some lessons, like mathematics, a number of activities remain over teacher directed and the children are not encouraged to investigate for themselves. Information and communications technology is used effectively to support learning in a number of the areas of learning. The outdoor play area is secure and attractive and well-resourced.
114. These are the positive responses to the major issues raised in the previous report. A considerable amount of time, money and support has been provided to bring about these improvements. Whilst considerable progress has been made the school will need to continue to support and monitor the teaching and learning of the under fives and to continue to improve the quality of the planning, the clarity of the learning objectives and the use of a consistent approach to assessment.

ENGLISH

115. English standards are good overall, and particularly strong in reading. There is a steady development of both reading and writing skills throughout Key Stage 1, and improvement continues well throughout Key Stage 2, so that by Year 7, standards are above those of many pupils of this age.
116. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are reading at an appropriate level for their age. A significant number show the capacity to read beyond the literal meaning of the text, and to read, with considerable fluency, texts which are challenging. This standard of reading is also reflected in the 1999 national tests where, when results for pupils with moderate learning difficulties are extracted, 47% of Year 2 pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in reading. Of those pupils, the majority were boys. This standard is well above the national average, and well above those schools which are similar in nature to Giffard Park. Standards in writing are less remarkable, with test outcomes above average at Level 2, but similar to the national picture at Level 3.
117. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have made good progress. They have consolidated previously taught skills, and advanced their knowledge and understanding effectively. As a consequence, standards in English are well above the national average in reading and above the national picture in writing when results for pupils with moderate learning difficulties are extracted. A feature of achievement in the 1999 tests, within the context of 77% of pupils achieving Level 4, was the high percentage of eleven year olds reaching Level 5 in reading. Both boys and girls were equally represented in that achievement. This represents a significant strength, which is confirmed by the inspection.
118. The good progress identified in earlier years, is both maintained and developed when pupils reach Key Stage 3. Standards in both reading and writing in Year 7 are good. They continue to be above those seen nationally. A significant minority of pupils is already reaching towards Level 6 in their reading, while their writing shows continued development in its accuracy, structures and purposes.
119. Throughout the school, the standards of speaking and listening are good. Pupils are attentive listeners, and confident speakers. Most pupils are able to draw upon a growing, and in some cases, an extensive vocabulary, in order to express themselves or explain a process.
120. Standards in English have improved since the last inspection. The school has moved from a position where attainment was similar to the national average, to one where standards are higher. This good progress has been cumulative, over a three-year period, and broadly reflects the national trend in improvement. The school has now set appropriately challenging targets in English, which include pupils at both key stages and of all ability levels.
121. The strength of attainment in Key Stage 1 is in reading. Effective teaching has enabled all pupils, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, to utilise a range of strategies. Pupils use contextual clues well, and understand that reading is a process aimed at reaping meaning from a text. They also have sound grammatical skills, and read with an appreciation of sentence structure. Their knowledge, and ability to manipulate phonics, are

generally good. This has taken a more focussed profile recently as a result of the schools' effective introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. By the end of the key stage, most pupils are able to segment words into their constituent syllables, and to blend them together for reading. Pupils' strength lies in segmentation by syllable, rather than by phoneme. For most, this is sufficient, but less fluent pupils need to develop the ability to distinguish individual sounds within words, and to link this strategy with ones in which they are more confident, such as the use of context. The lively and purposeful use of 'phoneme frames', during literacy hours in Key Stage 1 classes, is helping to support this aspect well. It is sharpening pupils' phonological awareness – their understanding of sounds within words – and leading them towards the correct choice of phoneme in spelling. This activity is supporting well those pupils with special educational need and those with English as an additional language. They are making good progress.

122. All pupils enjoy their reading, both independently, and with the whole class when big books are used for both enjoyment, and the teaching of specific features, such as the use of apostrophes in Year 2, or initial phoneme clusters in Year 1. They read expressively, and participate well in whole class shared reading, showing the ability to distinguish between fiction and non-fiction. They understand the differences between texts, and know that the skills of reading information texts are different from those required for stories. This strength is found across all levels of ability, and can be attributed to well-focussed teaching. Higher attaining pupils show great delight in discovering authors they have read before, and a small number are already using the Internet to find information. Lower attaining pupils also approach their reading positively, and most respond well to the challenge of difficult words.
123. Attainment in writing at Key Stage 1, is less pronounced than reading. Due attention is given to the teaching of handwriting, and pupils progress well. Handgrip and letter orientation is correct for most, and regular practice ensures that letter formation and flow is consolidated, once taught. Several pupils write with a neat, well-formed, cursive script by the time they are seven years old. Presentation of work is generally good, but there are inconsistencies, even within more able pupils' work, so that standards are not as consistently good as they might be. Whereas spelling is sound overall, there are specific weaknesses. Some of these have their roots in some pupils' inability to distinguish phonemes in particular positions in words. The most frequently occurring errors are the 'medial vowels', where many pupils are unsure of the correct choice in the middle of words. Some pupils find difficulty with the correct ending of words in the past tense. Others are unsure of when to double the consonant in the middle of words. Currently, many of these errors continue into Years 3 and 4, and occasionally, into later Key Stage 2 as well.
124. Pupils expect to do well in their writing, and are usually pleased with their efforts. This positive attitude helps, and provides a good basis upon which the school can continue to raise standards. Pupils are offered an appropriate range in their writing, and many produce stories and descriptive pieces, which are imaginative and well constructed. This is especially so for the higher attaining pupils, while lower attaining pupils are also able to construct simple sentences accurately. Most pupils can construct sentences well, and are secure in their knowledge of full stops and capital letters. More able pupils are using commas in lists fairly consistently. Less well developed is a wider range of connectives to link sentences together in interesting ways. Pupils' range of information writing is more frequently found in other subjects, where its clear purpose results in well-chosen vocabulary.

125. All pupils participate in their English lessons with enthusiasm. This is a direct outcome of good teaching and stimulating resources. They are eager to contribute, and they listen particularly well to their teachers, and often, to each other. This is a strength, which could be successfully extended by the greater inclusion of speaking and listening activities linked to the texts in use, including the use of drama which is currently under-represented.
126. Attainment in English continues to improve during the years of Key Stage 2. Pupils of all abilities recognise a wide range of genre and text-type in their reading, and know that these can be read in different ways. They are proficient in gathering and finding information, and use contents, index and glossary pages with understanding. Many pupils, especially the more able, can scan information rapidly, and skim pages to seek particular information. This is a well-developed skill for these pupils, some of whom show the ability to summarise succinctly. In their personal reading, pupils of all ability show that they have acquired a range of reading strategies, and they understand the importance of reading for meaning. As a consequence, pupils are good at correcting themselves when they make errors – ‘motioned’ for ‘mentioned’ for example. In this case a Year 6 pupil drew upon both context and her knowledge of phonics to reach the correct word. Higher attaining pupils read widely, and tackle texts as varied as the currently popular Harry Potter series, to the on-screen reading of teletext and the internet.
127. Because pupils apply themselves with concentration to their work, and because they have respect for the views of others, they are able to collaborate with their reading. A Year 5 group, for example, discussed aspects of their C. S. Lewis novel with a degree of intensity. This had been well modelled for them by their teacher.
128. All pupils read successfully at the literal level. They are well able to recount plots and storylines, and speak about the main characters and events. They can recall facts and information quickly. Most pupils are able to comment on their reading, and express preferences. They are increasingly able to justify their views and opinions as they move through the Key Stage. The last inspection, and the school's own literacy audit, confirmed that pupils' ability to read inferentially – to read ‘between the lines’- was less well developed. This is now improving, as a result of the teaching, though it still remains an aspect which many pupils find difficult.
129. Writing at Key Stage 2 has many strengths. Pupils in all four year groups have opportunities to write in a wide range of styles, and this becomes more pronounced as they move into Years 5 and 6. When the purpose is clear, pupils respond well, and much successful writing is found in subjects such as science, design and technology and history. For example, precise explanations of how musical instruments were made in Year 5, and interviews with Queen Elizabeth 1st and King Phillip of Spain, during the Armada, in Year 6. Here, the writing is sharp, persuasive, and matches well to the task in hand. More able pupils show good skills in the construction and use of complex sentences, and can, in their writing, synthesise and précis their response to texts as challenging as ‘The Tyger’ by William Blake, and ‘A Christmas Carol’ by Charles Dickens.
130. Too often, however, writing in literacy lessons focuses upon the learning and practice of technical skills, with insufficient opportunity to apply those skills in the context of continuous, independent writing. It is important that the school provides sufficient opportunity for all pupils to write with a sense of purpose and audience in mind. Too many pupils of average and below average attainment, spend the

greater proportion of their writing time on exercise based work, which, accurate though it is, is not feeding through to improved success in extended writing, partly due to a lack of opportunity.

131. Most pupils' work is well presented, and most are able to work with a neat cursive script. However the same inconsistencies as noted for Key Stage 1, appear in all years in Key Stage 2, where high standards of presentation are not always maintained. This may be in part due to the use of the general workbook. It is unclear how the 'first draft' writing in this book supports children's best efforts, nor how the process of drafting is learnt and applied. Some higher attaining pupils in Year 4 are able to use paragraphs correctly, but this process is not always continued in subsequent years. Similarly, while standards in spelling are generally good, the weaknesses identified in Key Stage 1 – medial vowel choices and consonant doubling, for example – remain as a weakness for many pupils in these later years.
132. In Year 7, attainment in reading is very good, and pupils are given more opportunity to employ their developing writing skills. Pupils read a range of challenging and thought-provoking texts, both at class and individual level. Authors with whom pupils are currently familiar include Shakespeare, Dickens, Lively, Rowling and Doherty - an eclectic choice which reflects the scope and richness of the teaching. Pupils of differing abilities respond enthusiastically to the range of reading, and show increasing competence with inferential as well as literal comprehension. The current study of 'The Ghost of Thomas Kempe' by Penelope Lively shows that pupils are able to 'get underneath the skin of the text' and explore characters and motives with a considerable degree of sophistication. This is partly aided by lively, interactive approaches, but it also builds upon the good teaching of reading from the two earlier Key Stages. All pupils are well included in the pace and challenge, regardless of the English set in which they work. The most able pupils are reading well within Level 5, and beginning to approach Level 6 of the National Curriculum.
133. In their writing, Year 7 pupils show generally good technical abilities. This is well integrated into their continuous writing, so that the consolidation of Key Stage 2 work, together with the acquisition of new knowledge, takes place within a purposeful context. Of particular merit is the character analysis work in Macbeth, and the persuasive writing of arguments regarding river pollution. Earlier work on the history and development of the English language, is also well understood. Pupils' work is nearly always presented well, and pupils of all abilities have a good command of sentence structure, and the use of subordinate clauses to extend sentences for effect. However, in Year 7, as elsewhere in the school, the application of information and communications technology within English lessons, is not well developed.
134. A strength of Year 7 pupils is their ability to communicate orally. Speaking and listening skills are well developed, and the good relationships that exist mean that pupils can particularly benefit from group discussion activities. Developing interview questions for 'Thomas Kempe' is one example of this work.
135. The teaching of English is always at least satisfactory throughout the school. However, the vast majority of teaching is good, very good, and occasionally excellent. This is a real strength. It is the major factor in the continuing rise in standards. The good teaching is characterised by features which are consistent throughout the school. These are high expectations of what pupils can achieve,

together with effective planning which identifies the objectives of lessons. Such was the case with a Year 6 lesson with a lower ability set. Here the pupils were implicitly challenged to succeed, with few concessions made to language. The use of precise vocabulary motivated pupils, and ensured learning. The best lessons move at a good pace, and link with pupils' prior learning. This was evident in a Year 2 lesson on phonics, and a Year 3 lesson on summarising pieces of information. The good lessons are well structured, and provide effective learning opportunities by employing a range of strategies for pupils to work as a whole class, within a group, and individually. This happens in Year 5 where the literacy hour is used with maximum impact. Here, the study of myths focuses on mythological language, and links reading with writing to the benefit of both. Above all, it is the enthusiasm, and the degree of subject knowledge, that marks out the highest quality teaching.

136. There are, however, several aspects of teaching which are still relatively under-developed, and improvements in these areas will ensure that all teaching reaches the level of the best. While spelling is given appropriate time and attention, too few pupils are aware of the different strategies they can use to work out a word. The teaching of spelling strategies lacks a coherent, whole-school approach. Marking is rarely done in relation to the objectives of the lesson, so that although praise is frequently given, it is unclear to pupils exactly what it is they have done well. Thirdly, and linked to marking, insufficient attention is paid to the use of assessment to both inform future teaching, as well as set individual targets for improvement. Where work is marked to objectives, as in Year 7, pupils know how to improve, but where assessment information is unused, pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in their thinking, nor is best use made of their current knowledge. Progress is consequently slowed.
137. Resources are generally of good quality, and the school has spent wisely in meeting current needs. The provision of sufficient overhead projectors has been important in ensuring whole class reading operates well. Teachers enjoy excellent relationships with their pupils in English and literacy lessons. They organise classes efficiently, and manage pupils well. Expectations of behaviour and work output, are usually of a very high order. The consistently high quality of the teaching has a direct bearing on the improving standards, and the progress pupils are making as they move through to Year 7.
138. The school has very effectively implemented the National Literacy Strategy at Key Stages 1 and 2, and awaits the imminent developments nationally at Key Stage 3. The medium term planning is good, and will gradually replace the existing scheme of work for English. This is sensible. A key reason for the successful introduction of the Strategy has been the lead given by the headteacher and the subject co-ordinators. The co-ordinators are very good practitioners in their own right, and they provide good teaching models for the whole staff. They have organised training for all colleagues, and have a clear overview of planning. While the monitoring of teaching has been part of their brief, it is, as yet, relatively under-developed.

MATHEMATICS

139. On the basis of the 1999 national tests for eleven-year-olds, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 or above was below the national average. However, the percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 was well above the national average. Similarly, percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 or above at the age of

seven was below the national average and the percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was above the national average. When figures are adjusted by extracting the results of pupils in the moderate learning difficulties unit, the performance of eleven-year-olds is above average and that of seven-year-olds is well above average. These results reflect more closely the satisfactory achievement at Key Stage 1 and good achievement found at Key Stages 2 and 3 during the inspection.

140. The school has exceeded the targets set for 1999 and test results have improved steadily since the last inspection. Pupils make sound progress at Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stages 2 and 3. Pupils' mathematical knowledge has broadened and their understanding has deepened since the school began to implement the National Numeracy Strategy over a year ago. This is already contributing to improved attainment for higher attaining pupils.
141. By the age of 7, pupils show good understanding of the value of each digit in a three-digit number. They count in steps of 2 from any two-digit number and are beginning to count in steps of 3 and 4. They develop the skills to measure accurately to the nearest centimetre. By the age of 11, pupils use effective mental strategies to divide a three-digit number by a two-digit number. They have a good understanding of the relationships between numbers and are very proficient at identifying number patterns. They use the correct mathematical language to describe what they are doing. Pupils in Year 7 understand and apply the formula used to calculate the area of circles. They use trial and improvement methods to approximate square roots.
142. Competence in numeracy is also evident in other subjects, where pupils apply the skills developed in mathematics lessons. For example, in a design technology lesson, Year 7 pupils studying packaging demonstrated their capability in data analysis.
143. Throughout the school pupils show interest and involvement in their work. Teachers provide good role models for pupils, enabling them to be well behaved, to collaborate well with each other and to share their ideas and ways of working. Pupils work quickly and accurately and complete their homework conscientiously.
144. Overall, teaching is good. It is satisfactory throughout Key Stage 1. Almost all lessons at Key Stages 2 and 3 are of good quality and there are some examples of very good teaching. Teachers set clear learning objectives that pupils understand. In line with the National Numeracy Strategy, lessons are well structured. Emphasis is placed upon interactive oral work, and teachers make good use of resources to support mental calculation. Teaching is particularly effective when teachers use their good subject knowledge to help pupils relate their current learning to the knowledge and understanding that they already possess, and where tasks are carefully sequenced to unfold a concept or to increase the challenge as the lesson proceeds.
145. In one such lesson, to teach Year 7 pupils how to use pi to calculate the area of a circle, the teacher used quick-fire questions to recall pupils' knowledge of formulae involving pi. Next, she asked pupils to recall their range of methods for calculating area and applied the grid method already known to pupils to find the approximate area of a circle. After pupils used this method to approximate the area of several circles the teacher explained how to use pi to calculate the area of a circle

accurately, and challenged pupils to express this method as a formula. To test the formula, pupils applied it to the circles they had constructed, whose approximate areas were known to them.

146. The school has replaced its scheme of work for mathematics with the National Numeracy Strategy's yearly teaching plans. This is helping to ensure all pupils, including those with special needs, receive a broad and balanced mathematics curriculum as they progress through the school. The school has benefited from intensive support from a Local Education Authority numeracy consultant. Almost all teachers have observed a demonstration lesson, helping teachers throughout the school to place appropriate emphasis on oral and mental work in their lessons.
147. While there is evidence that teachers make adjustments within their lessons to achieve a closer match to pupils' needs, they make little use of the school's existing assessment records when planning the next stages of learning. A more manageable assessment record, involving the assessment of pupils against important learning objectives, is being developed, but the school has not yet considered whether this record has the potential to inform planning.
148. Timetable arrangements allocate time for mathematics in excess of national recommendations. In practice, lessons do not extend beyond an hour, but the additional time between the end of lessons and the end of sessions is not always used productively. Pupils in Key Stages 2 and 3 are set and complete homework regularly and this effectively builds on or prepares for learning in lessons. However, procedures for setting homework for mathematics and other subjects require review to ensure it is paced appropriately throughout the week.
149. Curriculum plans make good provision for pupils' moral and social development. Mathematical games help to develop pupils' sense of fairness. Many lessons involve collaborative work and pupils are encouraged to share their calculation strategies. Too few opportunities are provided for pupils' cultural and spiritual development.
150. Overall, resources for mathematics are good. They are clearly labelled and accessible to teachers and pupils. A recent audit revealed the need to purchase resources to support mental activities and these are being used effectively throughout the school. Emphasis on whole class teaching has created the need for additional measuring equipment. The school has insufficient software to support the development of information technology within the daily mathematics lesson.
151. The mathematics co-ordinators work effectively as a team to provide strong leadership. In the last year they have attended National Numeracy Strategy courses and have disseminated the knowledge gained to all staff. They have carried out an audit of teaching and have used this to identify and address training needs. Academic progress is monitored through analysis of termly and weekly plans and this has led to modifications in practice. Pupils' written work and the ways in which it is marked and assessed by teachers, are currently under review. Monitoring and evaluation strategies have been particularly effective where their focus has been clearly defined, but these initiatives, promoted by the National Numeracy Strategy, have yet to be adopted as regular practice within the school.

SCIENCE

152. Statutory teacher assessment in 1999 showed that attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was below average and also below average in comparison with pupils from similar backgrounds. When the performance of seven year olds with moderate learning difficulties is extracted from the results, standards are close to the average for all and similar schools. While the proportion of pupils attaining Level 2, the level expected at age seven, matched the national average, the proportion achieving the higher Level 3 was slightly below average. The trend over the past three years has been inconsistent with no clear pattern shown. Standards in science were below those in English and mathematics.
153. At Key Stage 2 performance has also been erratic over the past three years. Standards in the 1999 tests for eleven year olds were below the average for all schools and also below average when compared with pupils in similar schools. When results for pupils with moderate learning difficulties are extracted, performance was above average compared with all schools and close to the average for similar schools. Although erratic, the trend has nonetheless been upwards and broadly matches the national trend. However, the performance of boys has been below average and that of girls average. In 1999 there was a significant improvement in the proportion of boys and girls achieving the higher Level 5, which was well above average.
154. Current performance of pupils in Year 2 indicates that they will achieve average standards by the end of the Key Stage. The rate of progress in learning is broadly satisfactory, with some of the more able pupils making slightly faster progress than is the case for the great majority. Pupils are given appropriate opportunities to develop their observational and practical skills through investigative work. In the reception class children observe and record the planting and subsequent growth of daffodil bulbs. They also investigate the images formed by flexible reflectors, and discover that these images are inverted by plane mirrors or distorted when the reflecting surface is bent into a curve. Older pupils in Year 2 investigate the effect of magnets on different materials and are able to conclude that only some metallic substances are attracted to magnets. Several pupils know that iron is a magnetic metal.
155. Achievement in Year 6 is also average. Analysis of pupils' work and observations in lessons indicate that progress in learning accelerates slightly in some classes towards the end of Key Stage 2. Again, good emphasis is placed on the development of investigative skills and standards in experimental work. In one such lesson, in which pupils investigated the effectiveness of different materials as thermal insulators, pupils first handled the materials then predicted which would be the more effective before undertaking their practical work. The teacher made good use of her pupils' knowledge of commonplace materials and of applying the principle of insulation in domestic situations. In another lesson, involving Year 4 pupils, emphasis on prediction, observation and interpretation ensured that these skills are developed satisfactorily and progressively throughout the school. In response to the teacher's questions pupils demonstrated a satisfactory understanding of the meaning of terms such as "soluble" and "solution" and the part which water can play as a separating agent.

156. The achievement of pupils in Year 7 is above the standard expected at this age. Pupils are making more rapid progress than in previous years within a limited range of work agreed with the school to which the great majority of pupils transfer at the age of twelve. The work in pupils' books and that seen in lessons covers Materials and Forces with increased emphasis on the further development of knowledge, understanding and practical, investigative skills. In a lesson on rocks, pupils demonstrated a good knowledge of the three main types and were able to give a satisfactory account of the formation of sedimentary and igneous rocks. Towards the end of the lesson pupils of all abilities had gained a good understanding of how sedimentary rocks can be transformed into metamorphic rock by the application of pressure and heat. Throughout the school, pupils show a good understanding of the principle of fair testing and can recognise when an experiment is not fair.
157. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in many lessons and, as a result, they make good progress with respect to their prior learning. The oldest pupils from the learning difficulties unit make particularly good progress in response to the challenges set for them.
158. Throughout the school pupils show very positive attitudes to their work in science. They listen carefully to instructions, concentrate well on their tasks, and the behaviour of all but a very small minority is consistently good. During practical work, when they work mainly in pairs, pupils work well together sharing tasks equitably with good care shown for the resources provided for their use. When given the opportunity pupils work well and independently of the teacher.
159. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and occasionally very good. None of the observed teaching was unsatisfactory. Most lessons are planned well and start promptly. Resources are readily available and the time is mainly used well. In the better lessons the pace is suitably brisk. Teachers' knowledge of the subject matter is never less than satisfactory and improves from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 3. The management of pupils is uniformly very good throughout the school, and the range of teaching strategies used to develop pupils' learning is suitably broad in most lessons. Occasionally, when the duration of lessons is short, teaching tends to be more direct but not inappropriately so. When posing questions teachers take care to ensure that a wide range of pupils is allowed to respond. During practical lessons most teachers give pupils the opportunity to work in mixed gender groups.
160. The detail and quality of lesson planning is mainly good, but with some inconsistency in the detail of learning intentions which are not always stated with sufficient clarity. The marking of pupils' work is carried out frequently, but comments made in the books of younger pupils are often cursory. An increasing amount of helpful feedback is provided as pupils pass through the school, with some questions posed to the oldest pupils which challenge their thinking. Assessment information is not used sufficiently well for the benefit of all pupils. This results in the planned work not always being closely matched to the specific needs of individuals or some groups. In most classes independence is fostered satisfactorily and this contributes to the development of pupils' investigative and practical skills. There are some good examples of the use of information and communications technology to enhance pupils' understanding. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, when studying the insulating properties of materials, remote sensing equipment was used very effectively to provide data to compare temperature loss over a given time

161. The co-ordinator is an experienced teacher who is keen to raise standards in science. There is a satisfactory policy in place and a very extensive scheme of work which assists teachers in their long and medium term planning. The scheme is based on a two year rolling programme in Key Stages 1 and 2, with good links made to topic work at Key Stage 1. Although some monitoring of teaching and learning has taken place, too little is possible at present. As a result the school lacks a clear overview of standards upon which to base further improvements.
162. Procedures for assessment are satisfactory; the statutory requirements for a core subject are met in full. On-going formative assessment procedures are satisfactory, but recording is inconsistent. Teachers' records provide good detail of coverage, but seldom provide a clear picture of the standards achieved by pupils. Better use could be made of assessment information in planning pupils' work according to their ability and prior attainment.
163. Since the previous inspection standards have remained much the same at Key Stages 1 and 2, with some significant variations from one year to the next. Standards at Key Stage 3 have improved. The progress of the more able pupils is improving as a result of greater intellectual challenge. The quality of teaching has improved.

ART

164. Attainment in art at the end of Key Stage 1 is broadly in line with expectations, although there are weaknesses in some aspects of the work. Whilst satisfactory overall, pupils show better progress in creating specific effects than in mastering the underlying skills. Pupils make good progress at Key Stage 2 and by Year 6 attainment is above national expectations. Year 7 pupils continue to make good progress.
165. At Key Stage 1, colour mixing using paint to create different shades shows clear development. However, pupils show little creativity in their work, and progress in shading observational drawings is weak. Inappropriate visual stimuli, with complex shapes, deflect pupils' attention from the effect of light on flat and curved surfaces.
166. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils use prints to good effect and demonstrate increasing understanding of the work of artists. They explore a range of paints and other media, considering their suitability for different purposes. Focused observation and analysis of colour is encouraged through concentrating pupils' attention on a detail of a painting. Pupils make use of source books to generate ideas when designing papier-mache masks.
167. Year 7 pupils develop a wide range of techniques for applying watercolour and explore a variety of brushstrokes. They combine different techniques to paint landscapes in the style of Impressionist painters. Emphasis is placed upon the skill of drawing, and pupils are helped to see the way in which it influences other aspects of art. Pencil sketches of gargoyles are used to develop clay models. In turn, these are used to develop latex moulds for plaster casts.
168. One lesson was observed in Key Stage 1 and three lessons in Key Stage 2. Year 7 lessons were not observed. Teaching is good, particularly when teachers encourage pupils to apply what they have learned by making informed choices of

media and techniques. In one Year 6 lesson, pupils were asked to describe several Gauguin landscape paintings in terms of line, tone and texture. They identified common elements in several paintings. The teacher pursued and developed pupils' ideas, focusing their attention on aspects of the paintings, before asking pupils to create their own poster colour painting in the style of Gauguin, by applying some techniques developed using watercolour in previous lessons. Whilst pupils were painting, the teacher focused attention on elements of the pupils' work which effectively captured the style of the painter. This inspired other pupils to apply similar techniques.

169. Pupils enjoy art and are keen to work. They collaborate well when sharing resources. They express their views readily, aware that their contributions will be valued.
170. Since the last inspection the co-ordinator, who has been in post for less than a year, has provided good leadership by developing a school scheme of work which has contributed to the significant improvement in skills and techniques at Key Stages 2 and 3. Sequences of work are planned which involve pupils in practising and applying these skills. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of media and have opportunities to develop and apply different techniques. However, pupils' sketchbooks are under-used throughout the school and lack consistency of purpose. In some classes, they are used as a portfolio of finished work, whilst in others they are used to plan work and to experiment with different media. The school has not yet developed monitoring and evaluation procedures to support further development in the subject.
171. The scheme of work is currently organised into a two-year cycle of half-termly blocks of lessons. The co-ordinator is aware of the need for further detail to clarify the progression in some elements of the art curriculum. Teachers have received a limited amount of training to develop knowledge of the art curriculum since the last inspection, and more is required. To support the scheme the co-ordinator is developing a reference guide to the specific skills included in the scheme and a photographic record of pupils' work. Implementation of the new scheme required a comprehensive review and purchase of art resources, which are now well organised, clearly labelled and accessible to pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

172. On the basis of lessons seen and informed by discussions with teachers and pupils, examples of retained artefacts, displays of pupils' work and a portfolio of photographs, standards at age seven, eleven and twelve broadly match what is expected. This is a significant improvement on the findings at the time of the previous inspection when standards and progress in learning in design and technology were key issues.
173. The co-ordinator responsible for the subject has revised the scheme of work and has produced a comprehensive document which is helpful to teachers, and supports their planning. With a clear focus on the development of knowledge, understanding and designing and making skills, pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 are making progress in their learning at a broadly satisfactory rate. In Year 7 there is evidence of progress beginning to accelerate.

174. Design and technology is taught within topics at Key Stages 1 and 2. In the reception class, children are learning to build large constructions using Lego. They are also learning to mark, cut and fold card to make beds for The Seven Dwarfs. In a mixed class of Year 1 and 2 pupils current work is linked to the story of The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch, in which a hungry gull steals the lighthouse keeper's food. Pupils working on a focused practical task have disassembled a range of bags, prior to designing their own which needs to keep the contents safe. In doing so they have considered the materials and fasteners needed, and designed suitable decorative finishes with which to make the bags both practical and attractive.
175. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 measure, mark and saw with satisfactory accuracy as part of a design and make project based on homes. They use a Jinx tool to join components, in order to create a basic cube or cuboid shape from which the home will be constructed. A display of percussion and stringed musical instruments made by pupils in Years 5 and 6 gives a clear indication of the progression and scope of design and make projects. The associated work in pupils' folders indicates an investigation into how a music box produces musical sounds as a prelude to design work. Subsequent to producing their finished product pupils have undertaken a critical evaluation of what they have achieved.
176. On balance, the work of pupils in Year 7 is at least satisfactory. The tasks set for pupils at this stage are increasingly challenging and make demands on skills learned in other subjects. In a food technology project pupils have undertaken a detailed analysis of biscuit packaging and presented their findings in graphical form. They have also undertaken some market research in class to find pupils' favourite biscuit fillings and coatings prior to making their own, a task which required weighing out ingredients accurately. A display of windmills shows a mixed range of skills. The best examples are of models which are assembled well, with good attention to detail in making cogs and gears which satisfactorily transform movement from one direction to another. Similar high quality workmanship shows detailed and painstaking construction of sail frames and rotating arms, although some of the assemblies rely heavily on over-generous application of glue. Where finished the standard of decoration is satisfactory.
177. At each key stage, higher attaining pupils show above average progress. In some classes, pupils with special needs undertake the same demanding tasks as other pupils, but with support. Their progress is very similar to that of the majority of pupils.
178. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their attention and concentration contribute well to their satisfactory progress at Key Stages 1 and 2 and to the rapidly improving progress observed at Key Stage 3. The quality of relationships is good; pupils co-operate well with each other and this feature serves to highlight the good quality personal development on display. During one lesson, with the teacher working outside the classroom demonstrating sawing skills, pupils involved in design work inside discussed their ideas and showed commendable respect for each other's efforts.
179. All of the teaching observed was at least satisfactory and in three of the five lessons it was good and occasionally very good. Most of the lesson planning shows good detail, but in one instance the intended learning outcomes were too vague. Good emphasis is placed on the quality of designs and the development of practical skills such as accuracy in measuring, marking and folding or cutting. Appropriate emphasis is given to the quality of decorative finish, and in a lesson involving food preparation those supervising insisted on high standards of hygiene. Similar emphasis is given to safety when pupils are engaged in activities involving sawing.

In some lessons, the planned tasks were not sufficiently well matched to pupils' prior learning and all pupils were engaged in the same work.

180. The co-ordinator, who has been given responsibility for the subject since the previous inspection, has undertaken a systematic improvement in the provision for the subject. The school's action plan has ensured that additional resources have been acquired and all the required aspects of the subject are adequately covered. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject have been improved, although there is still room for further professional development. The subject suffers from having to alternate, for lengthy periods, with art. This discontinuity is a hindrance to pupils' best progress in their learning.

GEOGRAPHY

- 181 Pupils make satisfactory progress in geography through Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, and good progress at Year 7. They have a good knowledge of places and countries of the world at different stages of development. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils learn about the local area, years three and four pupils learn about the local area and the UK and broaden their knowledge through studies of Greece and in Years 5 and 6 through studies of St Lucia. They have a satisfactory understanding of human geography, from topics such as Homes and Journeys in Years 1 and 2, Greece and Ivinghoe in Years 3 and 4 and St Lucia and Milton Keynes in Years 5 and 6. The pupils also gain a good understanding of the processes that shape the landscape, for example through their work on tectonic processes in Year 7.
- 182 They have a good knowledge of specialist geographical vocabulary, and can use it confidently. For example, pupils in Year 7 describe in detail the nature of volcanic eruptions, and the effects these have on the landscape. They have a sound grasp of elementary map and atlas skills which are developed within separate units. Pupils make the slowest progress in the development of their enquiry skills, and there are too few opportunities to pursue investigative work in all years. Pupils with special needs, also make good progress, largely as a result of very careful preparation of appropriate work and resources by their teachers.
- 183 The attitude of the pupils is good. The large majority listen carefully to explanations and instructions, and take part confidently in class discussions. The standard of behaviour and concentration is generally very good. Most of the pupils can be relied on to work sensibly, and benefit from opportunities to work either on their own or in groups. Pupils have only a limited range of opportunities to develop independence and initiative through the provision of sustained enquiry skills.
- 184 No lessons were observed at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2 the standard of teaching is sound, with one in four lessons observed being good. In the small number of lessons observed in Year 7 teaching is satisfactory or better. Most teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, and the pupils gain from their enthusiasm and commitment. A good feature of many lessons is the time spent at the beginning in discussion with the class. The teachers use this time effectively, both to explain the subject, and to give very clear instructions of the subsequent tasks. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the teacher used selected statistical data to explain the significance of population size and density, which enabled the pupils to begin to understand the impact of tourism upon a small developing country and Milton Keynes. The teacher then outlined the main pupils' activities, ensuring an understanding of the geographical terminology through a series of closely focused questions that supported yet challenged all pupils within the class.

- 185 A particular strength of many lessons is the use of a range of assignment sheets and resources, so that all pupils can work at an appropriate pace. This was particularly evident in one year seven lesson where the teacher had set challenging learning objectives for all pupils. Good subject knowledge supported the achievement of these through excellent use of precise geographical vocabulary, a range of teacher produced assignment sheets and graphical demonstration of the process of the eruption of a cone volcano. There is some use of information and communications technology, but the pupils do not have frequent opportunities to use computers, for example to analyse and present statistical data, for example in population and development studies in Years 5 and 6. The development of pupils' numeracy skills is a strength, enabling pupils to gain a deeper understanding of geographical concepts. Homework is set regularly but infrequently. Work is marked regularly, and the teacher's comments allow pupils to develop an understanding of their achievements and in some cases targets for future developments.
- 186 The subject co-ordinator provides effective leadership for Key Stage 2, but has less impact on Key Stage 1 and Year 7. Teachers work well together in year and key stage teams. This has created a very good ethos within the school, which encourages the pupils to take their work seriously.
- 187 The school has made good progress since the last inspection, particularly in raising the standards of teaching and providing a wider range of books, locality packs of photographs and other secondary sources. This has been significant in helping to sustain the standard of attainment of the pupils.

HISTORY

- 188 At age seven, attainment is in line with the standard expected for this age group and pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils use their historical knowledge to describe aspects of life in the past and describe, for example, how particular historical artefacts were used in the home. Higher ability pupils make inferences about the use of previously unknown objects, through known facts and attributes, in order to make generalisations about their use in the past. They make comparisons between the materials used to construct objects in the past with present day objects. They identify and describe particular historical events celebrated in Britain today, for example, 'Bonfire Night'. They also describe the achievements of famous people, for example, Louis Braille and Alexander Graham Bell.
- 189 At age eleven, attainment is in line with that expected for this age group and pupils make satisfactory progress. Year 4 pupils describe the differences between the lives of the Athenians and Spartans. They can name a range of Greek gods and explain the significance of ancient Greek gods and goddess to the everyday life of the Greek people.
- 190 Pupils describe and explain the changes in relationships between the Greeks and their Persian neighbour. Year 6 pupils construct timelines of the Tudor dynasty in the form of Tudor family trees, and make comparisons between life in Tudor towns with life today. They use a range of historical sources, including published texts, pictures, portraits and written sources to investigate aspects of Tudor life. Pupils' chronological skills and their interpretational skills are less well developed, although sound.

- 191 At age twelve, attainment is above the standard expected for this age group and here all pupils make rapid progress. Pupils use correct historical vocabulary to discuss aspects of life in a number of periods in the past, and make links across and between these periods. In their study of life in England during the medieval period, for example, pupils show that they understand changes brought about by the introduction of the feudal system, and appreciate the effects of this upon the lives of people at different levels within medieval society. Pupils also competently undertake historical enquiry, for example using a range of sources when investigating the effects of the Black Death in England and Europe. During this research they also demonstrated good levels of understanding when investigating the validity and reliability of a range of historical sources. Written work in history is satisfactory in quality and pupils write in a variety of different forms, including extended writing.
- 192 Lower ability pupils, and those pupils with special educational needs, make good progress. There are examples of good progress, Year 3 pupils, for example, developed their understanding of cause and consequence whilst studying the effects of the changing relationships between the Greeks and the Persians. Where work is less clearly focused on the development of skills and concepts, or where activities do not build on previous achievements, progress is slower.
- 193 Pupils respond well in lessons. They maintain their concentration well, work well in a variety of settings and, where there are opportunities, co-operate and collaborate effectively in group work.
- 194 Overall, teaching is satisfactory. Knowledge of the subject is satisfactory and lessons are usually well planned to make use of a sequence of activities. Teaching makes good use of a variety of methods, which include individual research, group work and effective questioning. Where teaching is less effective there is weak subject knowledge, and insufficient attention to the structure of the lesson plans, resulting in incidental and unplanned activities that serve to confuse less confident pupils. Individual support and oral feedback are usually well provided, and the quality of written comments on pupils' work is largely well-developed and of good quality,
- 195 The subject is effectively managed, issues for development have been identified, and there is a clear sense of direction. Resources are sufficient and well deployed. The provision of artefacts is weak, but the provision of visual sources and published texts is sound. The use of information and communications technology is under-developed. Good use of the local community as a learning resource, and the use of visitors to the school, make a significant contribution to the standards in the subject.
- 196 There has been some progress in the development of the scheme of work since the previous inspection, but more needs to be done to develop interpretational skills and enquiry-based learning.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 197 By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 and by the end of Year 7 attainment is satisfactory. In Key Stage 1, pupils quickly learn to interact positively with computers. They become confident in finding their way around the keyboard and in using a pointing device. By the end of the key stage they use word processing

programs, enter information into a simple database, confidently control a robot to move it around the classroom, and learn about the consequences of different actions through the use of adventure games. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are secure in using the provisional characteristics of word processors and art software to develop their work. They are confident in using database software to construct graphs and make decisions about the suitability of different types of graph. They are also confident in creating sets of instructions to control a screen 'turtle' and adapting these instructions to changing circumstances. They use information and communications technology systems to sense physical data and record it. They are very good in collaborating with each other in working their way through simulation programs, entering data into a spreadsheet and using it to investigate relationships. In Year 7, pupils are encouraged to use computer programs independently.

- 198 The majority of the lessons observed in the computer suite were linked with ongoing topics and lessons in other subjects. In Key Stage 1, word-processing was undertaken to develop skills in writing a factual account. In Key Stage 2, work in design and technology was enhanced through the use of a spreadsheet program and the depth of knowledge in a geography project was increased through the use of simulation program focused on rain forests. In all cases, pupils made steady progress in acquiring knowledge and developing understanding and skills, in both the subject area and their information technology capability. Computer software is also used in shared areas and in the classroom in art and science. In the Moderate Learning Difficulties Department annexe, 'Clicker' was used to enable pupils to record their work in English. In reception, consideration of bar codes and scanners in shops and supermarkets contributed successfully to the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world.
- 199 Specific lessons are allocated for information technology in the timetable for all classes, so that all pupils receive direct teaching. Most of the lessons took place in the school's well equipped computer suite, with pupils working in pairs. This enables both teachers and pupils to develop their capability and reinforce it through planned, regular use of computers. Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory. In Key Stage 2 and in Year 7 it is good. Teachers' knowledge of the programs is good. Pupils are given clear instructions which enable them to carry out their work confidently. Lesson planning is good and the targets for the lessons are communicated to pupils at the start of the lesson and referred to again in short plenary sessions at the end. Pupils were therefore aware of the progress they had made during the lessons. Direct teaching of information technology also takes place away from the computer suite, for example, where children are taught about the control of robots and program them to move around a classroom. Teachers make use of information and communications technology in the preparation of teaching materials, labels and notices.
- 200 Pupils' attitudes to their work in the computer suite are good and in many cases very good. They work with sustained concentration and carry out good collaborative work. For example, when entering data using a spreadsheet program and decision-making in simulation programs, pupils discussed alternatives, tried them out and modified their actions. Pupils are able to explain what they are doing and many are confident in independently exploring the possibilities of the programs.
- 201 The subject is managed very effectively by the co-ordinator, supported by other key staff. A very high level of support is provided for class teachers which includes technical knowledge of both software and hardware, specific training in the use of

new software, assistance in curriculum planning, and worksheets which support teachers in the use of software. The use of computers is monitored through regular examination of files, so that a profile of computer usage can be compiled. The policy and scheme of work are currently being updated, the draft forms of which show a clear and well planned vision for future development. The detailed scheme of work ensures that all strands are covered sufficiently. Recent developments have included the purchase of a scanner and a digital camera, which are now being used to enhance the presentation of work across subjects. In science, for example, digital photographs of the stages pupils undertake in an experiment are incorporated into the written element of the assignment.

- 202 There are forty computers for use by pupils, a ratio of better than 1:10. Twenty of these form a network in the computer suite, the rest are located in the three shared areas in the school and in the special needs department. Use of software is incorporated into the planning of individual programmes for pupils with special educational needs.
- 203 Since the last inspection, the school has continued to develop information technology expertise and obtain appropriate hardware and software resources. Teachers have a greater understanding of the potential of information and communication technology. This has been achieved through the support provided by the co-ordinator and the confidence they have in him to provide technical expertise, a clear understanding of the potential of the software, and support material, including worksheets, to ensure that pupils are able to make progress. The range and quantity of new resources, and detailed plans for future acquisition, have laid a firm foundation for the clearly planned future development in the subject.
- 204 There is insufficient formal monitoring of the teaching and use of information and communications technology in other areas. The co-ordinator does not have enough opportunities to contribute to the curriculum planning for both Key Stages 1 and 2 and Year 7. The potential of the school's software to support learning across the curriculum is not yet fully realised. For example, the more advanced elements of the 'Clicker' program could be used to encourage pupils to produce multi-media presentations using their own pictures, words and voices.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

- 205 Pupils are introduced to French as a first modern foreign language at the beginning of Year 7. By the time they leave the school at the age of twelve, standards in French are good, representing an improvement over the position identified at the time of the last inspection. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls at this stage of their language learning. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in relation to their prior learning. They are keen to take part in speaking and listening activities and show confidence in using newly-learned phrases and songs. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make very good progress; they show an enthusiasm for language learning which they convey successfully to other pupils. In this way, they make a positive contribution to lessons and the overall standards achieved
- 206 Pupils in both classes develop good listening skills from the start of the year and these underpin their increasingly confident speaking skills. They make good gains in assembling and actively using key phrases and new vocabulary in class-work and particularly in role-play situations. Their pronunciation is usually secure and

sometimes good, with a significant minority of pupils demonstrating high levels of skill for their age. Pupils' written language skills are generally good; they copy accurately and many show good levels of skill in their own early writing in the subject. They show confidence in tackling the more challenging texts, visual aids and language games which have been introduced, and their reading skills are often good for their age.

- 207 Teaching is consistently good or better. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, with high levels of challenge for pupils of all abilities. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and teachers' questioning is sensitively adapted to each pupil or group. This successfully encourages pupils to maintain high levels of concentration throughout the lesson. The pace of learning is also supported by a broad range of teaching methods, including group role play, short reading and written tasks, pair work, and the successful inclusion of audio-visual approaches. Lessons are well planned by the two teachers, with clear learning objectives. The teaching in both classes is good because teachers skilfully and successfully build upon pupils' emerging knowledge of the language and French culture. Teachers systematically introduce new words, key question phrases and idiomatic expressions. For example, in a role-play session, small groups of pupils constructed a simple dialogue in which they asked questions about locations and gave directions to places in an imaginary town. This provided a high level of challenge for pupils to draw on and consolidate their speaking and listening skills, and resulted in good standards in the dialogue.
- 208 The curriculum is devised in collaboration with the local secondary school, to which the majority of pupils transfer at the age of twelve, and promotes a well-balanced programme. This ensures very good preparation for a forthcoming residential visit to France, which is a focus of the work during the first two terms.
- 209 The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership and the two teachers work together effectively to evaluate the programme of teaching and learning. Teaching is monitored informally by the co-ordinator, but this is also informed by the joint teaching of specific aspects.
- 210 Since the last inspection, the good quality of teaching has been maintained. Standards of attainment and pupils' progress have improved, mainly because there is now a secure balance between speaking, listening, reading and writing activities. Assessment is secure, and provides a basis for setting in the final term. Weaknesses in the development of pupils' reading skills, due to shortcomings in provision of reading materials, have been addressed successfully. A wider, more challenging range of books, games, visual aids and other reading resources is being used, although this would benefit from further extension.

MUSIC

- 211 Standards in Music are satisfactory at both Key Stages 1 and 2. No music teaching was observed in Year 7. All pupils receive a weekly lesson of 30 minutes, and these lessons, which include pupils with moderate learning difficulties, are taught by class teachers.
- 212 At Key Stage 1, pupils listen and respond well to both taped programmes, and to the sequences of rhythms produced by groups within the class. Most are developing a 'good ear' for timbre, duration, and the dynamics of sound. They work

well in small groups, but many find it difficult, as yet, to find the appropriate vocabulary to describe musical effects. Their response to the efforts of others is very positive. This helps all pupils to feel valued, and contributes, in no small measure, to their personal development.

- 213 Pupils in Key Stage 1 sing tunefully, and their repertoire of learnt songs is growing. This repertoire is not only developing their musical ability, it is also helping to improve their vocabulary, and a sense of rhythm in words which is transferred to their reading and writing. They handle instruments carefully, and work with concentration on a range of mainly non-tuned instruments. They are beginning to distinguish the different sounds within the orchestra.
- 214 At Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress. Participation in singing with taped programmes is generally enthusiastic, for both boys and girls. In Year 3, they are able to extend the range of group composition begun in earlier years, and throughout the Key Stage, their listening and appraising skills are carefully developed. Simple sound sequences produced in the early part of the Key Stage on non-tuned instruments, are extended by Year 5 to include a range of both tuned and non-tuned instruments.
- 215 All pupils have opportunities to sing, either in whole school assemblies or in smaller gatherings. The quality of singing in the school is good, and the range of songs sung wide ranging, including songs and music from different cultures.
- 216 The teaching of music is satisfactory or better. Class teachers provide clear instructions, and manage classes well, using a range of techniques, including games, especially in Key Stage 1. The teaching motivates pupils, and encourages each one to do their best. Several teachers play instruments themselves, and where this is the case, the quality of teaching is enhanced. Whenever difficulties arise, such as in Year 5 where an individual pupil found sensing rhythmic patterns difficult, teachers are quick to support.
- 217 The music curriculum is underpinned well by a very comprehensive scheme of work, devised by the present and previous subject co-ordinator. This scheme provides effective progression and continuity for the National Curriculum, as well as good support for the non-specialist teacher of music.
- 218 A range of extra-curricular opportunities effectively augments the music curriculum. The choir is open to pupils by audition, and individual tuition on brass, woodwind, violin and cello is currently enabling over thirty-five pupils to learn an instrument. These groups occasionally play ensemble pieces to the school, and to the pupils' parents. Concerts at Christmas, and other occasions, give all pupils the opportunity to perform before an audience, as well as provide a tangible service to the community.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 219 Aspects of physical education covered during the inspection included dance, games, gymnastics and swimming. The rate of progress in the development of games skills of pupils at Key Stage 1 and at lower Key Stage 2 is good, but slows towards the end of the key stage. Progress at Key Stage 2 is good in gymnastics and dance and very good in swimming in Year 4. The progress made in dance by pupils in Year 7 is excellent.

- 220 At Key Stages 1 and 2 effective learning takes place in most games and gymnastics lessons because pupils are allowed adequate opportunity to practise basic skills. Good emphasis is placed on throwing, catching and passing a ball or developing sequences of movement and balance. As a result, performance improves. Swimming is undertaken by pupils in Year 4 and, as a result of very good coaching, progress is very good and half of the year group can already swim the twenty five metre standard expected by the end of Key Stage 2. Slightly more than three quarters of the pupils in Year 6 can now swim a minimum of this distance.
- 221 As a result of some high quality teaching, standards in dance are good at Key Stage 2 and excellent at Key Stage 3. In a Year 3 dance lesson, pupils interpreted the theme music from the film "Chariots of Fire". This they did with sensitivity to reflect the movement of the Olympic flame flickering in a fickle wind, and complemented each other's movements in a closely syncopated manner. Older pupils in Year 7 responded very well to some inspired teaching and made substantial gains in developing dance sequences, which were interesting visually and choreographed with strong emphasis on technical accuracy and excellent timing. The progress of all but a few pupils with special needs who have dysfunctional co-ordination is similar to that shown by the vast majority.
- 222 The ethos of physical education lessons is one of enjoyment; most pupils are keen to do well. In one lesson, pupils in a mixed year class at Key Stage 1 entered the hall and immediately commenced their own very energetic warm-up programme, independent of the teacher. Such was their enthusiasm and physical effort that their breathing and pulse rates quickly reached the limits of their capability. After a short rest they responded in the same positive way to the challenging exercises set for them. When working in pairs or small groups in dance and gymnastics, pupils discuss and plan their performances collaboratively. They consider each other's ideas with respect and value particularly good performances, occasionally with outbursts of spontaneous applause.
- 223 On balance, the quality of teaching is good with some very good and one excellent lesson seen. Appropriate emphasis is given to warming up and cooling down at the start and end of lessons. Pupils are very well managed and high expectations are set in most lessons. In all lessons there is an effective relationship with pupils which is both encouraging and supportive. Humour is often used to good effect. Planned tasks provide increasingly demanding challenges for pupils at different stages. Time is used well, with ample opportunity provided in which pupils can plan, practise and consolidate existing skills. Good use is made for evaluative purposes of pupils who demonstrate high standards from which observers are able to develop and refine their own performances. Pupils have opportunities to work with others of the same or opposite gender.
- 224 The co-ordinator is newly-appointed to the role and, at present, does not have the opportunity to monitor the work of other teachers or pupils. Nonetheless, she is making a valuable contribution to the subject and is beginning to have an impact on standards and the progress which pupils make. The physical education programme covers all the required elements. With assistance from other members of staff, a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities is provided for pupils at lunchtime and after school. These are open to boys and girls alike and attendance figures show a satisfactory balance for most activities.

- 225 The school benefits from good provision for physical education. Pupils enjoy the use of a well appointed hall for indoor work and a large, grassed playing field and hard surface playing area outdoors. Resources amply meet the needs of the age range in the school.
- 226 Since the previous report there has been an improvement in standards and the rate of progress at Key Stages 2 and 3. Resources have been improved and the quality of teaching has risen substantially.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 227 Pupils' progress is satisfactory and attainment is in line with the expectations of the agreed syllabus in Buckinghamshire at the age of seven, eleven and twelve.
- 228 At the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have a sound knowledge of Christianity and other world faiths. They use appropriate vocabulary to describe religious traditions, symbols and artefacts. Their awareness of beliefs and values, expressed through care, friendship, trust and respect is good, and pupils confidently discuss their personal views on these aspects.
- 229 Pupils are aware that they are important individuals and that their actions not only affect themselves but also others, for example when they discuss the concept of charitable donations. They understand that giving to less fortunate people makes them feel good themselves and also helps the people they have given to. They reflect on different ways of providing help including money, clothing, food, and through personal actions.
- 230 By the age of eleven, pupils have some understanding of the symbolic importance of a range of religious writings including the Bible, the Torah and the Qu'ran. They are also able to explain why these special books are so important to specific faiths in that they contain codes of behaviour and rules for living. They identify the personal qualities attributed to 'Special People', including religious leaders. They understand the link between spiritual motivation to personal actions and discuss the effects of these actions on particular groups of people.
- 231 By the age of twelve, pupils are able to describe a Buddhist monk's monastic way of life and are beginning to explain how his lifestyle is a direct expression of his beliefs. Through carefully planned discussions they are able to link their own behaviour and beliefs to their actions and desires, and through this identify why a Buddhist believes that people suffer in life because of greed. Pupils' oral knowledge and understanding is good, but the recording of their work is relatively weak at Year 7, where written work is not given sufficient status.
- 232 Pupils' attitudes to their learning are good. Pupils are attentive and eager to make personal contributions to whole class discussions. They make reflective responses to issues raised and listen to the views of others with consideration and respect.
- 233 Teaching overall is good. Good teaching features detailed objectives, appropriate pace and clearly explained tasks. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and their ability to concentrate, and pupils are fully engaged in interesting activities. There is evidence of skilful links to pupils' work in other subjects, for example in history lessons when pupils discuss how religious beliefs can lead to certain actions. Good explanations are given to enhance pupils'

understanding of religious rituals, as for example when describing the reading of the Qu'ran. During the inspection good use of sensitive questioning enabled all pupils to make significant contributions to whole class discussions.

- 234 The scheme of work has recently been redrafted at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, and coverage of the locally agreed syllabus is satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator has received recent and relevant in-service training to support this work. However, monitoring and assessment procedures are weak, and the subject co-ordinator does not have a clear view of teaching and learning at Key Stage 1 and Year 7. Resources, including the quality and quantity of religious artefacts and secondary sources are good. Insufficient use is made of visits to places of worship within the local area, although visiting speakers regularly make a good contribution to assemblies.
- 235 The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The provision of religious artefacts is now particularly good. This has been significant in helping to sustain the standard of attainment of the pupils.