

INSPECTION REPORT

THE JOHN HAMPDEN SCHOOL

Wendover, Aylesbury

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110293

Headteacher: Mrs L Alexander

Reporting inspector: Adrian Simm
21138

Dates of inspection: 12th – 16th March 2001

Inspection number: 192532

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant School
School category:	Community School
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Wharf Road Wendover Nr Aylesbury Bucks
Postcode:	HP22 6HF
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Peter Dean
Date of previous inspection:	3 rd March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21138	Adrian Simm	Registered inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Geography History	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9052	Helen Barter	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?
19386	Trevor Watts	Team inspector	English Art Physical Education Religious Education English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

23010	Loretta Watson	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music Foundation Stage Curriculum Special Educational Needs Equal Opportunities	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The John Hampden School is a co-educational community school for pupils aged between four and seven years. It serves the village of Wendover and surrounding smaller communities. The school is of average size and currently educates 276 pupils in nine classes, 133 boys and 143 girls. Of these, 52 are part-time and attend the pre-school class on either mornings or afternoons; 47 are reception-age pupils with 26 of these pupils currently part-time. The school is popular and over-subscribed. Approximately three per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. One per cent of pupils comes from homes where the first language is not English. A very small percentage is from Indian, black or other European cultural heritages. About 11 per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. Whilst none of these has a statement of Special Educational Need, two pupils' needs are being considered for this by the Local Education Authority. This is lower than other schools. Generally four year olds have attended pre-school provision. Attainment of pupils on entry is variable but average overall.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. By the time pupils leave the school at the age of seven, standards are regularly very high in comparison with schools nationally and high in comparison with schools with a similar intake of pupils. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good. The high standards achieved are as a result of the very good leadership of the school that encourages high quality teaching. The school receives average funding and ensures that pupils who have average attainment generally on entry to the school achieve well above average standards by the time they leave. Both higher and lower attainers achieve effectively. As a result, the school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Achieves very high standards of work with pupils, particularly in English.
- Provides high quality teaching overall with very good teaching and learning in English and in the Reception classes. Teaching encourages all pupils to achieve their best.
- Excels at taking steps to improve what it does based upon thorough analysis of its work. This is because the school is so very well led and managed.
- Ensures relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are generally very good. This is part of the school's strength in promoting very good behaviour, attitudes and personal development. Pupils' enthusiasm for school shows in everything they do.
- Cares for pupils extremely well and is very conscious of promoting pupils' wellbeing.
- Develops a very good partnership with parents. This makes a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' achievement.
- Provides effective and exciting learning opportunities and enriches the curriculum by very good links with the community.

What could be improved

- The John Hampden School is very effective. It has many strengths and no significant weaknesses.

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 March 1997 and shows very good improvement. Significant improvements have been made to the school site such as the new Information and Communications Technology suite and library, outdoor learning opportunities for the under fives and phase one of the Millennium Garden. Teaching has improved and pupils' standards are now high across a broader range of subjects. High standards in English and mathematics have been maintained. The school has achieved 'Investors in People' (IIP) status which has led to much better communication and understanding between everyone connected with the school. At the time of the last inspection, a small number of pupils frequently arrived late for the start of the school day. Despite the school's attempts to improve punctuality, a small number of pupils still arrive at school late, which interrupts lessons.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	C	A	A	C
Writing	C	A	A	A
Mathematics	D	A	A	B

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The results of national assessments taken by the seven-year old pupils in the Year 2000 show that their reading, writing and mathematical skills were well above the national average. Overall, this has been the same picture for the last four years apart from in a dip in 1998. In comparison with similar schools in the Year 2000, writing was also well above average, mathematics was above average and reading was broadly in line with pupils of the same age. In comparison with the pupils' attainment on entry to the Reception, this shows good progress for pupils of all abilities. The performance of the girls is slightly in advance of that of the boys. This is being monitored closely by the school. For the year 1999/2000, the school set appropriate targets for pupils to achieve in literacy and numeracy based upon their knowledge of the pupils' standards. These targets were exceeded in writing and mathematics and only just missed in reading. The school is putting much effort into raising pupils' attainment in English and mathematics and has made good use of additional support and lunchtime groups to target pupils who, with an extra boost, could achieve better.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	There is a happy atmosphere in the school and pupils are very positive about their lessons and the activities provided for them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Overall, pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is very good. Pupils are courteous, trustworthy and polite.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils get on well with each other and with adults and are making very good progress in their personal development.
Attendance	Pupils' attendance is good and there is no unauthorised absence.

Pupils have very good levels of initiative and personal responsibility. They are learning to give and accept constructive criticism when they work as 'response partners'. They are developing good levels of independent thought and are confident when contributing their own views to discussions. There is a very small number of older pupils in the school who have difficulty controlling their own behaviour and, on occasions, this disrupts the lesson. Other pupils are not led by this behaviour and wait patiently for the teacher to deal with these incidences. Whilst most pupils arrive at school on time, a small number of pupils are late and this interrupts the start of lessons. This was also noted at the last inspection and is of continuing concern to the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	Very 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 an obvious strength of the school. During the inspection, it was satisfactory or better in all lessons. Eighty four per cent of teaching was good or better and 45 per cent was very good or better. Whilst the quality of teaching is generally good across the school, it is consistently best for the pupils in the Reception. During the inspection, very good teaching was characterised by secure subject knowledge, knowledge of pupils' learning needs, and the quality of relationships built up with pupils. This helped all pupils, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, to make progress and become more confident learners. In lessons that were good or better, teachers provided varied activities geared to exactly what they wanted the pupils to learn. Pupils were generally clear about this both in their learning and behaviour. On the occasions when lessons were satisfactory rather than good or better such as in a numeracy lesson, the planned lesson was not fully completed. The opening 'warm-up' session so enthused the pupils that this element over-ran leaving insufficient time for the full main activity and plenary session. On other occasions, the teacher did not always have the full attention of the children when explaining what to do next. This slowed the learning, and as some pupils were unclear of what was expected of them, the teacher had to go through the instructions again. On occasions, agreed school strategies for supporting a small minority of pupils with behavioural difficulties were not fully successful which resulted in pupils becoming restless or misbehaving and limiting the learning taking place for them and also, at times, for others. Throughout the school, teachers use a combination of whole-class, group and individual

teaching methods appropriately providing opportunities for pupils to work co-operatively, in pairs or small groups. Boys and girls are given equal attention. Overall, the teaching of English is very good and mathematics is good throughout the school. The teachers use effectively the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum meets statutory requirements and gives pupils a broad experience of all the subjects. It provides challenge for pupils of all attainment levels. The school offers a very good range of activities outside of lessons, including at lunchtime. Most parents appreciate these activities for their children.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs make good progress on work designed especially for them.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	This is good. Much additional support is provided for pupils who speak little or no English when they arrive in school. One-to-one support is arranged in classes, especially in the early months after arrival.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Staff have high expectations of pupils' personal development and act as good role models. This ensures that pupils develop a very mature understanding of their moral and social responsibilities. Very good provision is made for spiritual development and for pupils to appreciate cultural traditions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good procedures are in place for assessing and monitoring pupils' work and progress in English and mathematics, the results of which are used consistently to help plan for the next stage of learning and raise standards. Pupils' welfare is looked after very well.

The school has very effective links with parents, which have a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning and the life of the school. The school plans to develop its assessment procedures for science and information and communication technology to bring them in line with the detailed assessment for English and mathematics. It recognises that it needs to further develop the assessment of the non-core subjects so that teachers have a clearer picture of a pupil's strengths and weaknesses and so that this can be reported more fully to parents. The school has a well-developed and effective procedure for assessing the attainment and progress made by pupils with special educational needs. The co-ordinator works closely with class teachers to ensure Individual Educational Plans are focussed and targets are achievable.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	This is very good and ensures an exceptionally clear educational direction for the school. Key staff have worked very hard to stabilise the school by introducing nursery provision to compensate for Year 3 pupils who no longer attend the school after Local Authority re-organisation.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Overall, governors are extremely effective in carrying out their responsibilities although details of pupils' absence rates are missing from the school prospectus and information about the next election of parent governors is not clearly set out in the Governors' Annual Report to parents. Governors have an excellent impression of the school's strengths and areas for development. They set targets for improvement and to raise standards. They monitor these targets and work very hard to ensure they are achieved.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a very good approach to self-evaluation. It uses a range of techniques to monitor and analyse data. The results of monitoring are built into school planning. This is extensive and detailed.
The strategic use of resources	During the financial year 1999/2000, the school reduced its budget surplus from £78,977 to £59,075. Governors were trying hard to find the right balance between resourcing day-to-day developments and saving for building the new ICT suite and library which is now in place. The school now has a very small projected surplus of approximately £350. However, the finance committee is very aware of some flexibility which they have built into the projected budget for next year and also make strategic use of the school's own private fund which offers additional opportunities for funding priorities should the need arise.

Overall, the adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is good. The school looks at data and compares its standards with other schools. It has high expectations and is setting itself goals to achieve in a broad range of areas such as pupils' attainment in comparison with other schools and the timekeeping of a small minority of pupils, which is still an issue from the last inspection. It has already set its performance management targets for all teachers including the head teacher. The school measures itself in other ways such as by questionnaires to parents. The head teacher, governors and staff recognise what is working and what else needs to be done. They have the drive and commitment to develop further and the planning is in place to support this.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The good teaching in the school.• The ease with which the school will respond to questions or problems.• The very good way in which the school is led and managed.• The way in which pupils are expected to achieve their best.• The good behaviour in the school.• The good progress pupils make in their work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ease with which some parents can find out how their children are getting on.

The inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by the parents. Also, inspectors judge that the school offers a good range of opportunities for parents to find out about their children's progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. There is a wide range of attainment by four-year-olds when they start school. Initial school assessments show that many children have poorly developed skills in speaking and listening and personal independence. They achieve well in the nursery and make good progress in all areas of development. In the Reception, pupils progress very well. Many pupils exceed the nationally expected learning targets by the time they are five years of age, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development and in their mathematical and physical development. Children with special educational needs are well supported in their learning; they make good progress towards their targets in the Foundation Stage and participate fully in all activities.

2. The results of national assessments taken by the seven-year-old pupils in the Year 2000 show that their reading, writing and mathematical skills were well above the national average. Overall, this has been the same picture for the last four years apart from in a dip in 1998. In comparison with similar schools in the Year 2000, writing was also well above average, mathematics was above average and reading was broadly in line with pupils of the same age. In comparison with the pupils' attainment on entry to the Reception, this shows that pupils of all abilities achieve well. In general, the performance of the girls is slightly in advance of that of the boys. For the year 1999/2000, the school set appropriate targets for pupils to achieve in literacy and numeracy based upon their knowledge of the pupils' standards. These targets were exceeded in writing and mathematics and just missed in reading. The school is putting much effort into raising pupils' attainment in English and mathematics and has made good use of additional support and lunchtime groups to target pupils who with an extra boost, could achieve better.

3. Inspection evidence reveals that in English as pupils start at school, some do not have clear speech. They do not know how to relate to other children, hold a conversation and have little understanding of what instructions are. By the time they leave school, they mainly listen attentively to what they are told and have a good understanding of what is being said such as in discussions, when a story is being read or when a teacher is giving instructions. From a limited range of words when they start at school, pupils develop a good vocabulary across the subjects they study. They use the words they hear in their own conversations and in class discussions. Few children starting at the school are able to read. Before long, with all of the additional support that they receive, even the lower attainers begin to read simple texts. Whilst they have difficulty with some words, they try hard and develop ways of building up words such as sounding them out or thinking about what has happened in their story that might give a clue about the next word. As they become more proficient their reading becomes less "mechanical" and more fluent. Higher attainers read with good expression from a variety of different books such as funny stories, sad ones or exciting ones. They become confident and expressive as they become "free readers" and explore many different kinds of book. Many children read at home, giving them good practice and expanding the range of what they read. Some children have their favourite authors, and can name several of their favourite books. Pupils begin with a satisfactory level of writing skills, with many of them being able to make meaningful marks on the paper, and some form letters clearly. By the time they leave the school at the age of seven years, they are mainly good at writing. Pupils begin to write in a cursive, or "joined-up" style in the first year, and many become proficient at this. Higher attainers' handwriting becomes neat, small, consistently shaped, and easily readable. They begin to develop their own style as they become more skilled at writing. Lower attainers improve very well, from little or no writing, to being able to form letters that are

readable, if not always well formed and neat. Higher attainers are becoming quite imaginative in their stories. They write their own books and illustrate them, perhaps including a finger puppet with the book to help to retell the story. Pupils learn to spell very well for the most part. Higher attainers spell correctly words such as "hairdresser", "whereabouts" and "yawning" in regular tests, but some are inconsistent when it comes to writing their stories and other work. Pupils are beginning to use correct punctuation, with all pupils able to use capital letters and full stops correctly in exercises, and the higher attainers consistently write their stories with good punctuation and sound grammar. They use speech marks, question marks and exclamation marks well in their writing.

4. In mathematics, during their reception year, all pupils count to 20 and most, if slowly, to 70. They position numbers accurately from one to ten on a blank number line and understand the concept of 'bigger than ten'. By the age of six, pupils demonstrate increasing knowledge and understanding of basic number facts. They understand place value of tens and units, and how to add and subtract 10 with increasing accuracy and speed. They are very clear about odd and even numbers to 20 and many work out numbers well beyond because they understand the importance of the 'unit' number in this concept. One pupil explains that 1000 is even because its achieved by multiplying two even numbers such as 100×10 . By the age of seven, pupils complete simple multiplication and division sums, recognise angles such as a right-angle, know quickly all number bonds to 20 and have a developing grasp of lines of symmetry and reflection for some quite complicated shapes and pattern sequences. In their work pupils are successfully applying these methods to investigating and solving simple problems.

5. In science, during the Reception year, pupils explain that the sky changes from blue to orange or red when the sun is setting. They correctly sort pictures into categories such as animals, toys, fruits and tools and identify a variety of materials such as wood, brick and metal. Children correctly name the main parts of a flower and use appropriate terms such as soft and smooth when describing their texture. By the age of seven years, they understand the meaning of a 'fair' test and make sensible predictions when investigating the effects of heating or cooling different substances such as butter or ice. They understand that some substances are more absorbent than others. Pupils correctly label the main parts of the human body and know that we have five senses. They understand that people change as they grow older and illustrate these changes well. They know that living things eat, breathe, grow and reproduce and confidently justify their decisions when categorising examples of both living and non-living things. Pupils also produce charts that show materials, which will bend, stretch or twist and label them appropriately.

6. In all other subjects standards are good and higher than seen in the majority of schools. Pupils are learning very well and making good progress. The school has put much effort into introducing the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, and to improving ICT standards, although other subjects have not been priorities for development since the last inspection. As reported after the last inspection, most pupils in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 who have special educational needs, make good progress towards their targets. These targets include development of their literacy and numeracy skills and also address behavioural difficulties when appropriate. A few pupils with behavioural difficulties are currently making limited progress and the school is seeking additional support in order to improve this.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Since the last inspection, pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour have continued to be very good. There is a happy atmosphere in the school and pupils are very positive about their lessons and the activities provided for them. Pupils get on well with each other and with adults and are making very good progress in their personal development. Overall, this is a very strong aspect of the school's standards and it has a significantly beneficial impact on the quality of pupils' learning and the progress that they make.

8. Pupils' attendance at school is good, being above the national average and with no unauthorised absence. This means that there is very little disruption to their learning. However, there are a number of pupils who are late for school each day and this interrupts the start of lessons. This was also noted at the last inspection and is of continuing concern to the school.

9. Parents say that the standard of behaviour in the school is good. They are pleased that pupils are well mannered and friendly. They appreciate the positive atmosphere of the school, which they say helps their children to learn to get along with others. Nearly all parents feel that the school helps their child to be mature and responsible and most say that their children enjoy coming to school.

10. Throughout the school, there is a positive atmosphere. Children who are under five in the Foundation Stage are settling well to school life. They behave well in the classroom and the playground, they are keen to put up their hands to answer questions, for example, at story time, and they listen well to each other. In lessons, pupils are willing, pay attention and show interest in their work. They are keen to be involved in everything that is going on and are not afraid to make mistakes. They are very happy to answer questions and to contribute to discussions. Pupils have good research skills and are excited when finding out information and sharing it with others. They show confidence in discussing their work in pairs and small groups and when talking about their work to visitors. When pupils are given challenging work, they apply themselves well and are motivated to complete their tasks. Pupils are interested and involved in all subjects of the curriculum and are enthusiastic about extra activities such as taking part in the choir and orchestra at lunchtimes. The very good enthusiasm and interest that pupils show in all aspects of school life is reflected in the quality of their learning and how well they achieve.

11. Pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is very good. Pupils are courteous, trustworthy and polite. They answer positively when questions are asked and listen to each other's points of view. They respect school property and look after their own well. Pupils know what is expected of them and learn well. They move around the classroom and settle to work at their tables without any fuss. They behave well when sitting in a small space on the carpet and are quiet and sensible when divided into two groups to work on computers or choose books in the library. When pupils lose interest or start to chatter, teachers work hard to keep them on task, and pupils usually continue to behave well. However, there is a very small number of older pupils in the school who have difficulty controlling their own behaviour and, on occasions, this disrupts the lesson. They seek attention and interrupt the teacher. Other pupils are not led by this behaviour and wait patiently for the teacher to deal with these incidences. The majority of pupils behave very well and are able to sustain high levels of quiet concentration throughout the lesson. There has been one fixed period exclusion in the past year and the pupil has now left the school. However, most pupils with special educational needs are attentive and respond well to the support provided for them. They have a very positive attitude towards activities in which they are involved. They work hard to achieve their targets. They have a very good relationship with each other and with staff.

12. In the playground and around the school, most pupils behave very well. They enjoy playing together with equipment such as small balls and skipping ropes or on the climbing frames. Although there are some small upsets, there is very little anti-social behaviour or bullying. They line up quickly when asked to and move around the building sensibly so that they do not disturb other classes that are working. Pupils' behaviour is particularly good at lunchtimes when they eat in their classrooms. There is very little mess and pupils are calm and sociable. This is particularly significant in the 'octagon' where over 60 pupils all have their lunch together.

13. The relationships that pupils have with each other and with their teachers are very good. They show a good deal of respect towards adults working in the school and have a very good rapport with them; for example, pupils in Year 1 respond very positively to parent helpers and volunteers during their weekly activities afternoon. The positive relationships in the school motivate and encourage pupils and make a good contribution to their personal development. Pupils get on very well with each other and have no difficulty in working individually, in groups or in pairs. They share resources well and co-operate and help one another; for example, when working together on the computer, sharing the responsibility to record their findings in science or researching artefacts in history. They listen well to each other and respect the values and beliefs of others.

14. Pupils are developing very good levels of initiative and personal responsibility. They are learning to give and accept constructive criticism when they work as 'response partners'. They are developing good levels of independent thought and are confident when contributing their own views to discussions. Pupils understand that a few pupils have difficulty in controlling their behaviour and are very willing when asked to help them in the playground. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility around the school. They are sensible when taking registers to the office, will deliver messages to other classrooms and independently collect and tidy resources without being asked. The school has recently introduced a 'friendship bench' to help pupils who may feel that they do not have friend to play with. Those pupils who act as 'befrienders' take their role seriously and quickly include others in their games.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching is an obvious strength of the school. During the inspection, it was satisfactory or better in all lessons. Eighty four per cent of teaching was good or better and 45 per cent very good or better. Although the quality of teaching is generally good or better across the school, it is consistently best for the pupils in the Reception. Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection when there was a small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching and only 17 per cent of teaching was very good.

16. During the inspection, very good teaching was characterised by secure subject knowledge, knowledge of pupils' learning needs, and the quality of relationships built up with pupils. As a result, lessons are planned accordingly, enabling pupils to make progress and become more confident learners. In lessons that were good or better, teachers used a range of ways of providing varied activities geared to exactly what they wanted the pupils to learn. Pupils were generally clear about this both in their learning and behaviour.

17. The teaching of children under five was good or better in all lessons observed and 57 per cent was very good or better in the Reception classes. The curriculum is well balanced and provides appropriate learning opportunities for the age group. Careful planning and assessment by the Early Years staff results in a clearly structured approach and a caring, secure atmosphere with a positive learning environment. Teachers form very good relationships with pupils and have well-established routines so pupils move happily between

activities. In the nursery class lesson about The Post Office, the co-ordinator used a range of picture-postcards and her voice and facial expressions to such good effect, creating an air of excitement, which enthralled pupils, ensuring their concentration and enjoyment in activities.

18. At Year 1, the quality of teaching was good or better in 95 per cent of lessons and very good or better in 62 per cent. In the best lessons, teachers differentiated activities to ensure that learning opportunities were provided for all levels of ability. In a history lesson, pupils were enthused by the teachers' own enthusiasm and knowledge, and the exciting artefacts from the school's 'museum'. Excellent knowledge of how the pupils would react to this type of lesson helped the teacher to ask questions of individual pupils in a way that extended their learning whatever their current knowledge, but without giving them any answers. Pupils were so at ease with their teacher and class-mates that they were confident enough to offer ideas without fear of 'failure' and as a result, achieved very well. Teaching that was effective set clear and high expectations, which ensured that pupils had no misunderstandings of the tasks and were able to learn more successfully. This was evident in a design and technology lesson in which pupils were encouraged to work out both individually and, at times, in pairs, how they could improve where they punched a hole in cut-out shapes so that they could be joined by a treasury tag to another one. The pupils were very clear from the start about what was expected and the teacher checked their understanding continuously. Her understanding of how pupils think and react to this type of activity was so good that she anticipated many of their difficulties. These were then supported gently by discussion and suggestions but without taking the pupils' choice away from them in working out how and what they needed to do to succeed. As a result, pupils solved and overcame their difficulties and were keen to try new ideas. Approximately 60 Year 1 pupils are based in the area known as the 'octagon'. Teachers use this space and linked annexes excellently. Effective organisation and teamwork ensure that the potential for noise and disturbance is eliminated. Pupils benefit from the shared expertise of the staff and the social demands of using flexibly such a large area with so many others.

19. At Year 2, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons. Sixty six per cent of lessons were good or better and 30 per cent very good or better. Teachers recognise the importance of a positive beginning and end to lessons. In an English lesson where the pupils were expected to improve their knowledge of constructing poems, the teacher set very clear objectives that helped the pupils to understand the purpose of the lesson. Effective questioning and prompts elicited good responses from pupils about different characteristics of poems, whilst the plenary was used well to prepare for the next lesson. The best teachers motivated and engaged the pupils through their own enthusiasm and strong subject knowledge. This was the case in a history lesson where the teacher's use of a time line display and sufficiently detailed knowledge of Victorian times focussed the whole class so well and triggered memories about the life and times of Florence Nightingale. Some pupils could express themselves clearly but others, who struggled a little to put their thoughts into words, were encouraged gently and given time and encouragement both by the teacher and other pupils. The teacher's knowledge of the subject and of each pupils' own knowledge meant that individual pupils were stretched very well in their thinking although at different levels of difficulty. The teacher used her voice, body language and a video about Florence's life so well that the pupils were able to appreciate the mood, atmosphere and hardship of the times. On the occasions when lessons were satisfactory rather than good or better, such as in a numeracy lesson, the planned lesson was not fully achieved. The opening 'warm-up' session so enthused the pupils that this element over-ran leaving insufficient time for the full main activity and plenary session. This also left little time to ensure that pupils fully understood what was expected of them in their homework. Also, in a physical education lesson, the teacher relied too much on working through a page of instructions, and did not always have the full attention of the children when she was explaining what to do next. This slowed the learning and, as some pupils were unclear of what was expected of them, the

teacher had to go through the instructions again. On occasions, agreed school strategies for supporting a small minority of pupils with behavioural difficulties were not fully successful which resulted in pupils becoming restless or misbehaving and limiting the learning taking place for them and also, at times, for others.

20. Throughout the school, teachers use a combination of whole-class, group and individual teaching methods appropriately providing opportunities for pupils to work co-operatively, in pairs or small groups. Boys and girls are given equal attention. A strength of teaching is that all staff working with a particular year group plan together to try to ensure a consistency for all pupils in all subjects in that year.

21. Overall, the teaching of English is very good and mathematics is good throughout the school. The teachers use effectively the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. They use the national planning frameworks well to support the delivery of interesting and often challenging lessons. Throughout their day to day work with pupils, teachers assess pupils' knowledge and understanding, and give pupils immediate feedback and praise. Misconceptions or difficulties are either handled immediately or followed up in the next lesson. Pupils are involved frequently in evaluating their own work.

22. The quality of the displays throughout the school is good and co-ordinated to provide an effective learning environment and a clear record of pupils' success in a range of subject areas. Homework is a regular feature throughout the school, largely related to English and mathematics, although some tasks are linked to current topics. Homework is liked and well supported by most families. It is appropriate in amount although some families would like to see more and others, less.

23. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are good, they have clear targets, detailing success criteria, strategies and resources. The effective use of support staff and the provision of differentiated activities are consistent throughout the school. Staff employed to support particular pupils are clear about what is expected of them and liaise regularly with class teachers.

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

24. The curriculum is very good. The school prioritises the amount of time it gives to different subjects and in general, gets the balance right. The curriculum was considered to be satisfactory in the last inspection report, and the improvement since then has been very good. All the subjects of the National Curriculum are taught, and there is a very good focus on the core subjects of English and mathematics. The length of taught time, at more than 24 hours each week, is sufficient to deliver all of the subjects. The overall balance between the different subjects is good, with appropriate amounts of time being allocated, for instance, to the creative subjects such as art and music. The time given to religious education is a little short, and this often limits the subject to discussions about each topic, with little time for any written work. New developments, such as the computer suite, allow information technology to be taught as a separate subject to a whole class at once. The school spends much time considering and reconsidering the balance of the curriculum with changes to the curriculum being dependent on how pupils have progressed in the preceding year.

25. The balance within each subject is also very good. All subjects meet the requirements of the National Curriculum very well, with each aspect being taught with suitable focus. In science, the approach is investigative, for instance; and in design and technology the school stresses the importance of both making and designing things. In English, each area, such as handwriting, spelling, reading, speaking and listening, receives good attention in turn,

depending on the school's regular analysis of standards. Many pupils have additional support for some areas of their learning, such as reading, and this adjusts positively the balance of their individual curriculum a little. The school does everything it can, however, to make sure that these pupils do not miss out on the same lessons each week if they are withdrawn from the main class activity. The new curriculum guidelines issued by the government's Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) are being trialled or adapted in many subjects, such as physical education and religious education. Sex education and drugs awareness are discussed in sensitive ways when occasions arise. Each subject is planned well, and is well managed by a co-ordinator. Their planning of what will be taught in the longer term is mainly very good.

26. There is satisfactory provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (P.S.H.E.). At the moment, it largely takes the form of setting an overall example to pupils on behaviour, taking opportunities to discuss matters that may be in the news, for example, and dealing with situations as they occur, perhaps with whole-class discussions, or in small groups. The school has well-advanced plans to develop this aspect of the curriculum based upon advice from the Local Education Authority, looking carefully at what is happening now, and preparing a syllabus of what can be taught in structured ways. This fits well both with government's intentions regarding the introduction of "citizenship", and the school's own plans to become a "Healthy School". For example, it has plans for having escorted walks to school, rather than children coming by car all of the time. The previous report considered this provision to be good, but more is expected now, and the school is responding to this expectation very well.

27. The school's curriculum is very well enhanced by some events that add to the originality and variety of the whole educational experience in the school. These include the "Europe week" that is held each year, with each class celebrating the culture of a different European country, including the traditional dress, food, geography, and as far as possible, some of the language. Another event that enriches the curriculum is the annual residential week for pupils in their final year. This is an unusually adventurous and exciting provision for such young children, and it has great benefits in terms of social and personal development for all who join in. Children who do not join in with the week away take part in a parallel week of different activities in school. Part of the school's usual timetable for each class is an activity afternoon each week during which pupils can take part in one of a selection of different activities such as clay work, art, drama, computers, design and technology, cooking, sewing and music. Children take part in each one, in a rota system. These sessions are very well focused and organised. They add much to the richness and variety of the weekly learning experience and owe much to the willing efforts of highly valued parents and other volunteers.

28. The National Literacy Strategy is very well established in the school, and, in teaching to its guidelines, teachers have been very effective in maintaining high standards in English throughout the school. This is a new development since the last report. Teachers analyse the results of annual tests to see where the emphasis should be in the following year, and they change the emphasis of their teaching accordingly. This results in a flexible, and very well focused, strategy for teaching language skills. Many pupils receive additional classroom support during each literacy lesson as part of the focused teaching. Also, children's use of English is encouraged through other subjects; in religious education, for instance, much of the teaching is founded on good discussions that encourage pupils to think, analyse and express opinions. In physical education they learn to listen carefully to instructions, and to follow them. In other subjects such as science, history and geography, there is more support for pupils' writing and reading skills.

29. The National Numeracy Strategy is well established. It is also a new development

since the last inspection. Teachers follow the guidelines well, which is resulting in good standards of learning in mathematics. Mathematics skills are broadened by their application in other subjects to some extent, but teachers do not always make the same kind of opportunities to bring number skills into lessons, as they do to create so many opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills.

30. The range and extent of extra curricular activities that the school provides is very good. This is a good improvement on the provision at the time of the last inspection, when the provision was considered to be good. There have been many visits out of school to places such as the local library when there is an author holding a tuition week, to an environmental studies centre and to the local church. Unfortunately these trips are becoming fewer because of the cost of transport. Instead, the school concentrates well on bringing visitors into the school in order to enrich pupils' learning. These include an author or a musician coming into school for a day's workshop and at other times, a theatre group or orchestra. Pupils have access to a range of activities outside of lesson time. These vary from time to time but often include the orchestra, choir, recorder club, folk dancing, craft and maths clubs, the "Wise Owl" bookshop and a selection of physical education activities arranged by the school with other providers such as gymnastics, swimming, football and short tennis.

31. The school has good links with the local community, especially in the form of volunteers who come in to help both to run the activity afternoons and with regular reading support in classes. Children raise funds on a regular basis for local and national charities such as a cancer fund and an organisation that provides dogs for hearing impaired people. Senior citizens come into school for events such as the Christmas Nativity, and for the May Day celebrations; and the school choir has given performances at a local nursing home for elderly people. Pupils have had trips into the community as part of their geography lessons, for instance, and have interviewed members of the public as part of a survey that they conducted. An international company is involved in sponsoring plans for alterations to the outside play areas.

32. The school has developed good links with other educational institutions, including frequent meetings with other infant schools in the area to discuss matters of mutual interest and concern. Links with the nearby junior school are underdeveloped, but they include some active liaison over particular subjects, and with the transfer of pupils from one school to the other. The school acts as a training centre for nursery nurse students, and it provides a placement for work experience students from several nearby secondary schools. There are also positive links with several playgroups that some children go to before they come to The John Hampden School.

33. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual development, through lessons such as drama and role play in English sessions; through creative art and the displays of children's work; and through assemblies which include very well-focused periods of reflection on wider things in life. It is obvious in the excitement in children's faces as they watch snails moving around in a little container in the classroom or when they wait breathlessly to see what "Bartholomew the Badger" has brought back with him from his travels. He returned from Ecuador during the inspection. This has developed very well since the last inspection, when this provision was considered to be satisfactory.

34. The provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development has remained very good. In moral development, children are taught right from wrong through stories in assemblies; through the organisation of playground games at the midday break; in religious education lessons where the whole point of a lesson may be what can be learned from the story in moral and social terms. The pupils, negotiate and agree upon the rules for each class. This helps to gain their co-operation, as well as seeing the importance of some rules,

and the reasons for them. Similarly in physical education, much of the learning is about listening to instructions and following them, not just for the sake of it, but for the safety aspects. The "friendship bench" in the playground is a successful initiative that encourages children to care for each other. Sometimes when there are incidents of poor behaviour, teachers will have a "circle time" with a class to go over the rights and wrongs of the matter, and talk it over with the children.

35. What the school does to ensure pupils' social development is very good. Pupils are well encouraged to share books, computers, paints and pencils in lessons; many lessons are organised so that pupils work together in pairs and groups. In physical education pupils play and exercise in pairs and teams; and in art, for instance, pairs of pupils are expected to act as a "critical friend" to each other in appraising their work and suggesting improvements in constructive but kind ways. Assemblies often have a theme such as "Families" that encourages children to think of the different kinds of families and groups that they belong to, and that other children and people may belong to. An assembly about Dr. Barnardo's children, and how his "family" began, was a particularly good illustration of how families can be different, but how we all belong to one in some way.

36. The provision for cultural development is very good. Pupils learn about their local English heritage through geography lessons and from visits into the local area, including the church and the village centre. Their awareness of other cultures is very good; it is approached through assemblies and religious education, looking at many festivals and important events in different cultures and religions, from harvest, Christmas and Easter to Chinese New Year, Divali, and the Jewish festival of Hanukkah. Lessons in art and music add to pupils' awareness of the creative aspects of other cultures. Pupils' knowledge of other countries is added to through geography lessons, the travels of Bartholomew the Badger, the European week, and the occasional trip to France.

37. The provision that the school makes for pupils for whom English is an additional language is good. A lot of additional support is provided for individuals who speak little or no English when they arrive in school. The school is very aware that new pupils can feel very isolated, and it goes to a lot of trouble to arrange additional teaching and one-to-one support in classes, especially in the early months after arrival. Good personal links are made with parents to help children's understanding, integration and participation in school life. This sometimes includes discussing matters with parents individually if they cannot read letters sent home in English, and even sitting in a class with the children to make translations in the early settling-in period. The school funds this support out of its own resources. The progress that these pupils make is good, both in learning the English language in the first place, and then in learning about the other subjects of the curriculum. They quickly become as proficient in their understanding of English as they are in their home language.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained the caring atmosphere in which pupils are secure and happy. Staff care very well for pupils because they know them well and the school is a close community where pupils and adults have very good relationships. There are very good expectations and procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' behaviour and for supporting their personal development. There are strengthened procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' attainment and progress and for using the information gained to provide pupils with very good educational support and guidance.

39. Parents appreciate the pastoral care that is provided for their children which means that their children are happy, confident and ready for the next stage of their education. Some parents commented particularly about the way in which the school treats each child as an

individual so that they make very good academic, social and personal progress. Inspectors agree that there is a very caring and welcoming atmosphere in the school which makes pupils feel secure and helps them to learn.

40. There are very good arrangements for ensuring that pupils and staff work in a safe and secure place. Regular checks of the premises and assessments of potential risk are carried out by members of the governing body, head teacher and caretaker. The school is closely monitoring two specific areas relating to the playground surface and the state of the wall at the front of the school. There are suitable arrangements in place for regular fire drills and checks of electrical and physical education equipment. The kiln for 'firing' the pupils' pottery was serviced during the inspection and has been taken out of action pending its replacement. The premises are kept clean and well maintained by the caretaker and his staff and any necessary repairs are carried out quickly.

41. All staff care well for pupils who hurt themselves or who are unwell during the school day. The support assistant, who has overall responsibility for pupils' welfare, ensures that the school follows clear procedures for dealing with any individual medical needs. All staff, including midday staff, are trained in first aid and there is good continuity of support and care over the break and lunchtime periods. All staff have a clear understanding of the need to report any concerns directly to the head teacher, who is responsible for child protection. The school is very clear about its responsibilities towards any children who are 'looked after' by adults other than their natural parents.

42. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Registers are completed correctly and are regularly monitored by teachers and the head teacher. The school has high expectations that pupils will attend school regularly and on time and that parents will report any absences. As a result there are no unauthorised absences and attendance is good. However, in spite of repeated reminders to parents, there is still a problem with punctuality. The school is aware of the on-going problem and hopes that its recently introduced arrangements for late pupils to enter school via the main visitor entrance will make clear to parents at what time pupils should be in school.

43. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' behaviour. All adults working in the school have clear and consistent expectations of pupils' behaviour and motivate them to work well. As a result, pupils know what is expected of them and there is rarely any need to remind them of the class and 'golden rules', which are clearly displayed around the school. Pupils are praised for their attitudes towards others and their efforts at personal improvement. They are involved in negotiating class rules and this raises their self-esteem and contributes to the happy and positive atmosphere throughout the school. Teachers provide very good role models in their attitudes towards pupils and each other, and pupils clearly follow their example. The school has identified that there are a few older pupils who have particular difficulties in controlling their behaviour. It has sought the advice of external advisers in the management of this behaviour and the consistency with which the identified strategies are being used is helping some pupils to overcome their difficulties. However, this is less successful for a few others who continue to disrupt lessons. The school recognises that staff may need to undertake additional training in order to help them deal more consistently with the behaviour of these individual pupils.

44. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and using the information gained to plan the curriculum are very good. Since the last inspection, the school has improved the use that it makes of testing in English and mathematics to identify where pupils have specific difficulties and to adjust its plans accordingly. Detailed analysis of national tests, regular tests in reading, spelling and mathematics and trends amongst different groups of pupils such as boys and girls means that the school is able to set clear

targets for year groups, groups of pupils within classes and individual targets for pupils. As a result, pupils continue to achieve well. Teachers keep detailed record books for all work undertaken in each subject and regularly evaluate their lesson plans to identify any areas where pupils have not made the progress expected. The tracking sheet helps teachers to follow the progress that has been made by pupils from entry into the school until the time that they leave and to identify where pupils' progress may be slowing.

45. The school now plans to develop its assessment procedures for science and information and communication technology to bring them in line with the detailed assessment for English and mathematics. It recognises that it needs to further develop the assessment of the non-core subjects so that teachers have a clearer picture of a pupil's strengths and weaknesses in all areas of the National Curriculum and so that this can be reported more fully to parents. Assessment in history and geography has been identified as the next area to be developed once the school has received assessment criteria from the local authority. The assessment co-ordinator leads this area of the school's work very efficiently and works well with staff to ensure that all assessment procedures are effective in planning for pupils' academic support and guidance.

46. The school has recently introduced an informal register of gifted and talented pupils and has begun to set appropriate targets for them. As the procedure is very new, there was insufficient evidence during the inspection on which to make a judgement regarding its effectiveness. The early, effective identification of individual needs enables pupils in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 to learn quickly to overcome difficulties experienced in developing basic literacy and numeracy skills such as reading, spelling and numerical operations. Most pupils make good progress developing their social skills.

47. Through its policy of positive praise and the work it does to promote pupils' self-esteem, the school helps pupils to mature and act responsibly. There are very good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development from the time that they start school in the nursery or reception classes to when they move on to junior school. The knowledge that staff have of pupils and the use that they make of this to help them develop and mature is a strength of the school. The school is very quick to identify where pupils may be having difficulties - sometimes only temporary - in their learning, behaviour or social development and ensures that additional support is identified where necessary so that pupils are helped to improve. It involves parents very well in these strategies and, as a result, many pupils quickly overcome their problems and continue to make very good progress in their personal development. Very good use is made of strategies such as happy and sad faces, stickers and achievement certificates to encourage pupils to improve in their attitudes, work and behaviour. Teachers monitor these awards carefully to ensure that, over time, all pupils are encouraged and rewarded for improvements they have made.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. Since the last inspection, the school has strengthened its partnership with parents and there are now very effective links that have a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning and the life of the school. Parents have very positive views of the school and are very supportive of the standards that the school achieves and the work that it does with their children to help them achieve well.

49. In the questionnaires, parents showed appreciation of;

- the quality of teaching and management in the school that is helping their children to make good progress,
- the expectations that the school has for their children's work, and
- the fact that they feel comfortable approaching the school with any questions or problems.

At the meeting with the registered inspector, parents were very positive about the open nature of the school, which enables them to talk to staff about their concerns. Parents feel that their children achieve well in all subjects of the curriculum, regardless of their ability and say that their children are confident, happy and enthusiastic when they leave the school. Inspectors support parents' positive views about the very good links that the school has with parents.

50. Some parents were critical of the school's provision for homework. However, comments ranged from those who felt that pupils did not get enough to those who felt that their children had too much work to do at home. The inspection team judges that the provision for homework is good in that it supports children's learning at home and finds that the school is sensitive to the differing views of parents.

51. Overall, the quality of information provided for parents is good. Regular newsletters are informative, well presented and encourage parents to be actively involved in school activities and in supporting their children's learning at school and home. Pupils' reports are detailed and they clearly identify what pupils know, understand and can do in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. However, the information given about pupils' progress in the non-core subjects could be further improved so that there is consistency of quality within the report. The school recognises that this will occur when assessment procedures for the non-core subjects are developed further. Pupils and parents contribute to reports and their comments make a good addition to the reporting of pupils' academic progress and personal development. There are very good arrangements in place for parents to meet regularly with teachers. However, the school is very keen that parents make frequent informal contact with teachers and staff are very willing to see parents at the end of the school day. The school is pro-active in involving parents as soon as there are any concerns about a pupil's work, behaviour or social development and works closely with them to support any improvements that need to be made. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to be involved in the review of their children's targets and are kept well informed about their children's progress. Their concerns and comments are valued by the co-ordinator who offers parents regular 'pop-in' sessions which have been very successful.

52. The school has very good relationships with parents and involves them as much as possible in the life of the school. It makes a good commitment to the development of this partnership in its home-school agreement, which has been signed by most parents. It is keen to gauge the opinions of parents and seeks their views about the development of the school through its own questionnaires. Parents are encouraged to help in the classroom and there is now an established group of parents who offer regular and valuable support for activities such as reading, library and helping with activities such as sewing and cooking. Parents give very good support to concerts, plays and extra-curricular activities and there is very good attendance at any meetings held at school to explain developments such as the literacy strategy and target setting. Most parents give good support to their children's learning at home and school. They regularly hear their children read and help their children to find resources and artefacts linked to work being done in school. The school receives very good support from the Friends of The John Hampden School and benefits from its activities and events in terms of financial support for the purchase of resources and also of the provision of

social activities for families in the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The school is very effective and is very well led and managed. It has set for itself clear and appropriate aims and values that are met in all aspects of its work. In the time since the age range of pupils attending the school was altered, the head teacher, key staff and governors have worked very hard to stabilise the school by introducing nursery provision to compensate for Year 3 pupils no longer attending the school. They have been very successful in this. The school has improved very well since the last inspection. In addition to the nursery provision, the school has,

- introduced successfully the national strategies for English and mathematics
- completed a 'new-build' project to give the pupils a purpose-built information and communications technology (ICT) suite and a library
- completed the first part of a millennium garden project
- successfully achieved 'Investors in People' (IIP) status which has led to much better communication and understanding between everyone connected with the school.
- introduced consultation procedures as part of IIP which are now part of the school's normal approaches. As such, staff, governors, parents and pupils all contribute to the priorities for the school's improvement plan.
- improved staff's skills in using ICT in a broad range of subjects.
- retained high standards or improved them in all subjects

54. The head teacher is leading and managing this process excellently and all other staff with management responsibilities are playing their full part within the time scales that have been allocated to them so far. The support of pupils with additional learning difficulties is given appropriate priority and this is reflected in the good allocation from school budget for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). The special educational needs co-ordinator ensures day to day requirements are met. The school has developed strategies to improve opportunities for a small minority of pupils with more challenging behavioural difficulties and is aware that these are not always successful. They are working hard to improve these.

55. The school enjoys the support of a hard working governing body that has a strong relationship with the staff, pupils and parents. Their contribution to the school is excellent. Governors visit the school frequently. At times this is in a monitoring role such as for literacy, numeracy or special educational needs (SEN); at other times to monitor the day-to-day financial control of the school, which they do very closely. They seek comparisons and more detailed quotations when carrying out major purchases. Although the school has not benefited from a full audit of its budget in the last four years, recommendations of the previous audit were considered and generally implemented by the school. The school is expecting another audit shortly. Governors have a range of relevant sub-committees, which meet regularly and report back to the main body. All of this work helps them to gain an excellent impression of the school's strengths and areas ready for development. Overall, they are extremely effective in carrying out their responsibilities although details of pupils' absence rates are missing from the school prospectus and information about the next election of parent governors is not clearly set out in the Governors' Annual Report to parents.

56. The school brought forward a surplus of £78,977 from the financial year 1998/1999 and by the end of the following financial year, this had reduced to £59,075. At approximately 20 per cent of its full year's budget, this was extremely high. Governors understand fully that the school's income was for the benefit of pupils in the school at the time and were trying hard to find the right balance between resourcing day-to-day developments and saving for

building the new ICT suite and library which is now in place. This has taken all of the school's reserves of money leaving a projected surplus of approximately £350 to help fund any unforeseen circumstances. However, the finance committee is very aware of some flexibility which they have built into the projected budget for next year and also make strategic use of the school's own private fund which offers additional opportunities for funding priorities should the need arise.

57. Teachers' planning for lessons is monitored closely by the head teacher and subject co-ordinators. This ensures that agreed areas of learning are covered and planned for appropriately. Since the last inspection, the school has prioritised development in literacy and numeracy in line with national strategies, and in ICT as a key issue for development from their last inspection. In this respect, all staff have been monitored teaching. The school has plans for other subject co-ordinators to be more fully involved and this will happen in those subjects that become the next focus of the school's improvement plan. Subsequent discussions with those staff observed helped to raise awareness of individual strengths and how teaching can be improved. This is working well, particularly for trainee teachers who receive very good induction and support as they settle into the school's ways of working. Induction is also good for other staff new to the school whether they are permanent or teaching at the school just for a while. However, the monitoring of teaching does not yet use sufficiently an approach that focuses on, for example, a particular aspect of teaching or on making comparisons across year groups to see if staff development can be offered to raise standards even higher.

58. Teaching and support staff are deployed effectively and the school has a good mix of subject trained and experienced staff. Pupils with special educational needs are given appropriate support. The accommodation is good and used well to provide a range of opportunities in English and mathematics and for a broad range of practical work in science, art and design, music, design and technology and physical education. This lends itself to pupils being given opportunities to work in groups and more independently. Currently, the school is unable to provide wheel chair access. The quality and quantity of resources to meet the demands of the curriculum are good overall, with ICT and history resources being very good. This allows teachers to develop more interesting and successful lessons when resources can be chosen to match exactly what is needed.

59. The school looks at data and compares its standards with other schools. It has high expectations and is setting itself goals to achieve in a broad range of areas such as pupils' attainment in comparison with other schools and the timekeeping of a small minority of pupils, which is still an issue from the last inspection. It has already set its performance management targets for all teachers including the head teacher. The school measures itself in other ways such as by questionnaires to parents. The head teacher, governors and staff recognise what is working and what else needs to be done. They have the drive and commitment to develop further and the planning is in place to support this. The school applies the principles of best value very well.

60. The school has achieved very good improvement since the last inspection with an income to expend on pupils' learning that was similar to most other schools. Whilst some of that income remained unspent for some time, it has now provided very good ICT/library provision and as such, the school currently provides very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

There are no key issues for the school to address but, in the context of its many strengths, the following minor points for improvement should be considered as the basis for an action plan.

- (1) Ensure all staff are trained more fully in ways of dealing with the challenging behaviour of a small minority of pupils. * (Paragraphs 11, 19, 111 and 135)
- (2) Increase the consistency of good or better teaching across the school by having a particular focus for improvement each time teaching is monitored.
(Paragraph 57)
- (3) Ensure that the very good approaches to assessment used in English and mathematics are built consistently into other subjects as they are reviewed. *
(Paragraphs 44, 45, 106, 113, 117, 123, 132 and 141)
- (4) Continue to improve the timekeeping of a small minority of pupils so that all pupils start lessons on time in the morning. * (Paragraph 8)

* These issues are already included in the school's planning.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	62
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	49

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
13	32	39	16			

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	210
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		30

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6.5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.5
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	39	44	83

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	32	36	38
	Girls	44	44	44
	Total	76	80	82
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (94)	96 (100)	99 (95)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	35	36	37
	Girls	42	44	44
	Total	77	80	81
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (95)	96 (97)	98 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	1
Indian	1
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	173
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.1
Average class size	26.25

Education support staff: YR - Y2

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	119.5

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	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	371507
Total expenditure	391409
Expenditure per pupil	1739
Balance brought forward from previous year	78977
Balance carried forward to next year	59075

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	276
Number of questionnaires returned	135

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	37	5	1	
My child is making good progress in school.	58	39	2		1
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	43	1		3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	53	6	1	3
The teaching is good.	71	27	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	51	9	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	25	1	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	33	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	46	46	5	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	72	26	0	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	41	1	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	52	5	1	11

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

61. Children attend the nursery part-time for either the morning or afternoon session. On entry to the nursery, the attainment of a number of pupils is below that expected of pupils of this age, particularly in their personal and social skills and in their speaking and listening skills. Children make good progress during their time in the nursery. Attainment is in line with national standards by the time they transfer to the reception classes. The work of the nursery is supervised and co-ordinated well by a qualified nursery nurse.

62. Children in the reception classes make good progress towards all the early learning goals and standards are above those expected of children of similar ages. This rate of progress is better than that reported at the last inspection.

63. The curriculum for the foundation stage is very good. It gives children of all abilities a very good opportunity to learn in a supportive, caring environment. Good curriculum planning provides a cohesive curriculum, which includes all the early learning goals for the foundation stage. The work has an emphasis on learning through purposeful play and exploration developing very positive attitudes. Planning indicates a regular focus on literacy and numeracy skills. Assessments are detailed and successes are regularly entered on the children's records. Children's progress is carefully monitored and the information is used to guide teachers' future planning.

Personal, social and emotional development

64. By the time they have completed the Foundation Stage, most children exceed national expectations in their personal, social and emotional development.

65. The majority of children are eager to come to the nursery and enjoy play activities. This positive attitude continues to develop very well in the reception classes. The children are very willing to talk to each other. They play very well together and rarely need reminding to take turns. Most children respond promptly and confidently to instructions and questions and often initiate conversations. The children are content and secure. All children sustain concentration for significant periods of time both when their work is directed and when they independently choose their activities. Most children move with enthusiasm and confidence to use all the facilities that are available to them. They make independent choices about which areas of learning they would like to experience. They sensibly and carefully tidy up their activities at the ends of sessions when requested. They take pride in what they achieve. They know they must wash their hands after painting and sensibly mop the floor when water is spilt. Without being told and without assistance they put on their coats when going outside. Before going home, they check for themselves that they have all their belongings. The children demonstrate a very caring attitude towards each other, picking up forgotten or dropped gloves and bags and ensuring they are returned to their owners.

66. The quality of teaching and learning in personal, social and emotional skills is very good. Staff encourage children to make independent choices and to develop relationships and sensitivity towards others. There are good opportunities planned for pupils to learn to concentrate or to persevere with an adult directed activity, for example, when matching numbers to objects, recognise words with the same initial sound and studying the pictures on postcards. These high standards reflect the findings of the previous inspection.

Communication, language and literacy

67. By the time they have completed the Foundation Stage, children reach the national expectations in this area of learning.

68. Younger children sit quietly and listen with enthusiasm when stories are read to them. They accurately recall and correctly sequence events in familiar stories such as the Three Little Pigs and respond well to questions about the stories. They know the initial sounds of their own names. Older children are very keen to read. Many recognise simple words such as 'in', 'out' and, when reading together with the teacher their use of intonation demonstrates their good understanding of written words. Children know the letters of the alphabet and most form these correctly. Many children achieve the class target of writing on a line. Children successfully use their knowledge to type out the alphabet in upper and lower case on the class computers. Children recognise the title of a book and some understand the meaning of 'author'. Many can correctly write their own names. Their standard of copy writing is good. Children regularly take books home to share with their families. The reading skills of most children are developing well. The good standards reported after the previous inspection have been maintained.

69. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and all teachers have high expectations. The reading areas in classrooms are attractive and inviting and children are regularly encouraged to spend time looking at and choosing books. There are also quiet areas where children can sit and practise their writing skills, which they do with great enthusiasm and concentration. When sharing books with the children, teachers encourage them to identify familiar letters and blends and emphasise the correct use of capital letters and full stops. Correct letter formation is consistently reinforced enabling children to make very good progress.

Mathematical development

70. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the majority of children's attainment is above national expectations.

71. Children enjoy counting activities and most children accurately count to twenty. Many children can count beyond this figure and some correctly calculate the number of children present for the register when asked to take away the number of absent children from the number in the class. Many children correctly write numbers to ten. They understand 'more than' and 'less than' and, when matching objects to numbers, they mentally calculate how many objects to remove if they have too many. Children know the days of the week and many correctly name yesterday and tomorrow. They are beginning to gain an understanding of time and can correctly sequence events in their day using terms such as before, after, next, morning, afternoon and evening. Children correctly use 'larger' and 'smaller' when comparing the sizes of teddy bears. When playing with water and sand children demonstrate a good understanding of full, half full and empty. They sensibly suggest counting how many cups can be filled from two containers they are comparing in order to determine which container holds more.

72. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Children are given opportunities to think and observe carefully, for example when counting pictures on number cards, ordering pictures of daily activities or discussing how to make longer or shorter pathways using a variety of apparatus. When taking turns in games, children are encouraged to use terms such as 'next' or 'one more'. Teachers reinforce children's knowledge of number very well and extend their understanding of capacity by asking them to estimate before investigating a range of containers. Opportunities to play with a good selection of jigsaws enable children to

develop their understanding of shape and space. The stimulating classrooms and well-organised resources ensure that children make very good progress in developing their mathematical knowledge, understanding and skills.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

73. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children's knowledge and understanding of the world is above nationally expected levels.

74. Children know that postcards are sent from different places and countries around the world and recognise that scenes showing long sandy beaches and palm trees would not be sent from anywhere in England. They confidently explain that the sky changes from blue to orange or red when the sun is setting. Children willingly discuss places they have visited on holiday. They correctly sort pictures into categories such as animals, toys, fruits and tools. Children understand the function of bridges and the need for them to be strong. They can identify a variety of materials such as wood, brick and metal and explain why some designs are more effective than others. They know that there must be enough room under a bridge to allow boats, trains or cars to pass beneath. When colouring pictures, children use their knowledge to select colours sensibly. For example they colour post boxes red, cat's eyes green and bears brown. When making sandcastles, children demonstrate their understanding of materials by confidently explaining that water must first be added to the sand in order to enable them to make their castles. Children correctly name the main parts of a flower and use appropriate terms such as soft and smooth when describing their texture. They know that the colours of petals appear lighter when the sun shines on them.

75. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Children are given a very wide range of experiences, which enables them to make very good progress developing their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Activities are well planned and stimulating and resources are always readily available. Children are encouraged to use their initiative when selecting materials and to work independently once tasks have been carefully explained. Children respond extremely well to this approach and work sensibly either individually or in small groups for significant periods of time. They persevere and only seek adult help after first trying to solve problems themselves or asking for advice from other children. Children are also encouraged to evaluate their own work and that of others. This provides them with opportunities to justify their choices and activities and hence gain confidence in themselves and their own ability.

Physical development

76. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the majority of children reach levels of attainment in their physical development which are above those expected nationally.

77. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant improvement in outdoor provision for children in the foundation stage. In the nursery, outside play is part of the timetable each day and children are eager to join in with this activity. This organisation ensures plenty of time for the children to develop their physical skills. Children use apparatus confidently. They demonstrate good control and balance when riding scooters and tricycles and when using the slide. Children's throwing and catching skills are satisfactory. They demonstrate better eye-hand co-ordination when chasing and catching hoops. Children willingly share all apparatus both outdoors and in the hall. They use equipment imaginatively making a variety of pathways along which they have to travel. They move carefully and with skill so as not to disturb the path they have designed. Older children also show a good awareness of space and each other as they balance small apparatus on different parts of their body while moving around the hall. They make good progress throwing and catching

balls, rings and bean bags and know that some pieces of equipment are more difficult than others to roll or balance. Children also make good progress while learning to move smoothly from one part of their bodies to another while pretending to be different animals such as a lion, camel or crab. They think carefully about all their movements and learn quickly by watching their teachers and peers.

78. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Activities are varied and stimulating and all staff support children's development well. Adults encourage children to think about ways in which they can improve their skills. The children always respond very positively and persevere for significant periods of time. Good use is made of the outdoor area and additional structured physical education lessons each week further meet the needs of the children and enable them to develop their physical skills effectively.

Creative development

79. By the time they have completed the Foundation Stage, children are broadly in line with national expectations.

80. There is a good range of creative materials available in the nursery and reception classes. Children know the names of colours and some know how to mix colours, for example red and yellow to make orange, yellow and blue to make green. They work with care and pride when finger-painting and happily discuss their patterns. Children are beginning to develop a sense of proportion and produce recognisable pictures of people, caravans, boats and trees and use appropriate colours to complete their work. Children are developing their observational skills and produce some good pictures of Paddington Bear in a Beefeater's costume. No observations were made of children playing percussion instruments although they sing well and enjoy regular opportunities to sing songs and rhymes together.

81. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Evidence shows that teaching is focused sufficiently on developing skills with different media and tools. All activities give children good experiences and plenty of opportunities for them to talk about their work and thereby extend their vocabulary.

ENGLISH

82. Pupils' attainments are good. They are attaining at or above national expectations in all aspects of English. Their progress and achievements are very good, and they compare well with similar schools. Overall, the girls generally perform a little better than the boys in reading and writing, but all are attaining well, and many pupils, both boys and girls, are achieving at levels well above what might be expected.

83. When pupils start at school, some do not have clear speech or know how to relate to other children. Some do not know how to hold a conversation or have little understanding how to react properly to being asked to do something. By the time they leave school, they mainly listen attentively to what they are told, and they have good understanding of what is being said, whether in discussions, when a story is being read or when a teacher is giving instructions. This aspect is helped very well through lessons such as drama, and even in physical education, where listening to instructions and following them are so important. Other lessons, such as religious education, have a good focus on developing speaking, thinking and reasoning skills and contribute well to pupils' language development.

84. With a limited range of words when they come to school, pupils develop a good vocabulary across the subjects they study. They repeat the words they hear, mostly accurately, in their own conversations and in class discussions. They speak clearly, generally in good sentences, and are mainly confident in speaking aloud in front of an audience such as to the rest of the class, or even the whole school.

85. Pupils read very well. Some children new to the school do not read at all, but they soon make very good progress, and before long, with all of the additional support that they receive, even the lower attaining children begin to read simple texts. They have difficulty with many words, but they try hard, and develop strategies of how to build up words. These include sounding them out, following the words with a finger, looking for clues in the pictures, or thinking about what has happened already that might give a clue about the next word. As they become more proficient, pupils understand more of what they are reading, and begin to enjoy many of the things they read, including a range of stories, poems and factual books. Their reading becomes less "mechanical" and more fluent, with the higher attainers reading with good expression from a variety of different books such as funny stories, sad ones and exciting ones. They become confident and expressive as they become "free readers", and explore many different kinds of book, monitored by staff to ensure that they are still reading well and frequently, and what level they have reached. In their general reading, for instance, pupils correctly read and pronounce words such as "outrageous" and "neighbourhood", and have a good idea what they mean. Many children read at home, giving them good practice and expanding the range of what they read. Sometimes, even the higher attaining children cannot recall what they have read on the previous page, or the week before, but, for the most part, they read well and understand what the different characters are doing, and why they are doing it. They are beginning to find their own books in the library, and are learning how to find books on particular subjects. Some children have their favourite authors, and can name several of their favourite books.

86. Pupils begin with a satisfactory level of writing skills, with many of them being able to make meaningful marks on the paper, and some can form letters clearly. By the time they leave the school at the age of seven years, they are mainly good at writing. All pupils make very good progress, and the higher attainers achieve well above national expectations in the annual tests. Pupils begin to write in a cursive, or "joined-up" style in the first year, and many pupils become proficient at this. The more able children's handwriting becomes neat, small, consistently shaped, and easily readable. They begin to develop their own style as they become more skilled at writing. Less co-ordinated pupils improve very well, from little or no writing, to being able to form letters that are readable, if not well formed and neat. This is due to the concentrated teaching that takes place, with consistent practice and marking of pupils' work. In other lessons, such as science, history and geography, pupils' writing skills are broadened and practised as part of their general work. The high quality of the writing is also due to the frequent use of writing for wider purposes within English lessons, such as stories, letters, poems, and news reports. Higher attainers become quite imaginative in their stories. All pupils learn to write their own books, and to illustrate them, perhaps including a finger puppet with the book to help to retell the story. Their books include title pages, and the names of the author and illustrator (themselves). Pupils' writing skills are broadened well by the wide use of writing in other subjects, such as science or geography. Also, through some good, though limited, use of the computers to make "best" copies of the early drafts of their work, and to experiment with the print styles and colours, as well as including pictures and a border around their work. Pupils learn to spell very well for the most part. Higher attainers spell words such as "hairdresser", "whereabouts" and "yawning" in regular tests, but some are inconsistent when it comes to transferring this knowledge to writing their stories or to other work. Pupils are beginning to use correct punctuation, with all pupils able to use capital letters and full stops correctly in exercises, and the more able children consistently write their stories with good punctuation and sound grammar. They use speech marks, question marks

and exclamation marks well in their writing. There is a short list of his or her writing targets in the front of each pupil's writing book. These are well understood by the pupils, and they contribute very well to pupils' improvements, especially as teachers consistently mark pupils work with good references to the individual targets. The targets for groups of pupils are also displayed on the walls, as additional reminders.

87. The teaching and learning during the inspection was very good in all of the lessons observed. Children's learning in lessons, their long-term progress, and teachers' plans and records all indicate that the teaching is generally very good all of the time. Most lessons are planned very well according to the guidelines of the National Literacy Strategy, and teachers are thoroughly familiar with the methods and strategies of teaching in this way. They plan their lessons very well, usually planning the same lesson for each class in the top year. At Year 1, the children are divided into two major ability groups for literacy, with two teachers taking the larger group, and one the smaller group, with some support staff assistance. In almost all classes, teachers have the full attention of the pupils, although a few pupils do not pay full attention on occasion, and teachers need to be more aware of this at times. Pupils learn well in the lessons, developing their reading skills through shared reading of "big books", with teachers being very good at getting pupils to think about the people in the stories, and their actions and motives. Teachers encourage children very well to suggest reasons for certain things such as the meaning of different words and why some words might be in capital letters or italics. In a very well planned lesson, for instance, the teacher reviewed what the pupils already knew about different forms of poetry. She then used a "big book" to study how poetry was made up. Pupils studied the different ways of making rhymes and the different rhythms that a poem might have. One poem "Miss Mary Mac, Mac, Mac" was used particularly well to illustrate the "beat" in a poem. The children understood this very well, and could tap and clap the rhythm well. The lesson proceeded with some good work on words that contain "er", "ir" and "ur", with the children being divided into groups for different levels of work. The resources, including, some worksheets, were well used, and many children used computers to work on their spelling of the selected words. The whole lesson was run at a good pace, with challenging work for the pupils, pushing them to think hard, and with good relationships between staff and pupils. Another lesson in Year 1, whilst equally good, was totally different. The pupils learned about the differences between describing people's appearances and their personalities, with the teacher using "big books" about a monster ("Not now Bernard") and "The Pizza Princess" to illustrate the differences, and to make the learning more interesting and memorable. The lesson was very well structured, and was very challenging. It included differentiated work that challenged each group appropriately, using computers to write sentences, and worksheets to make up words. The work with letter combinations such as "sl", "sm", "sq", and "sp" was very good, and some pupils even knew that these were called "consonant clusters." With almost sixty children learning together in the octagon, this lesson was very well organised by the lead teacher who had the able support of another teacher and a support assistant.

88. The leadership and management of English are excellent. The co-ordinator has a very clear view of the subject.

- The teaching is observed and monitored regularly in a focused way.
- The National Literacy Strategy is in place and used very effectively.
- All staff have undertaken extensive training either in school or on external courses.
- It is ensured that there is always a support assistant in literacy lessons to help the learning of lower attainers.
- There is very good assessment of how well pupils are progressing in each of the areas of the subject, ranging from the Standard Assessment Tasks each summer and national comparisons, to termly reading and writing tests, and

weekly spelling tests.

89. The information that is gained is used very well to set new targets for all of the pupils together, such as that 96 per cent of pupils should achieve a certain level in reading in the annual tests. The tests are also used very well in altering what will be taught and how it will be taught, for instance, to raise the standard of reading by providing additional support and withdrawal sessions, or by having very specific targets for writing. These targets are displayed in the fronts of pupils' books, and on the walls of each classroom. The co-ordinator produces a clear plan each year for how the subject is to be developed, including learning resources, which are already very good. They include a very good range of books of all kinds, such as a well-differentiated and organised reading scheme, fiction and non-fiction books, reference books, poetry books, "big books" for literacy sessions and tabletop activities to help learning. All classes have white boards, flip charts and access to overhead projectors to help the teaching, especially in literacy lessons. This year's subject plan, for example, includes having more of a focus on drama as an aid to pupils' speaking and listening skills. Some good use is made of visitors to the school, such as having a book week, a book fair, a writing workshop or a poetry day. A member of the governing body is actively involved in helping with reading, and with the subject's development overall in the school. Computers are used well in support of some lessons, through spelling, writing and reading, and this aspect is also being approached this year, with a view to expanding their use.

90. English makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is seen in the pride that pupils take in their work, by the way they talk about the characters in the books they read and the reasons they give for them acting as they do. Pupils are encouraged to work together, in groups, in drama lessons, or at the computers and given every opportunity to read books, such as traditional English tales, or stories from other cultures.

91. There has been a very good improvement since the last inspection, when English was already considered to be good. The National Literacy Strategy is fully in place now; teaching is monitored regularly, and there is a very focused method of teaching specific skills such as the development of particular reading and writing skills. The setting of targets for individual children, for groups of children, and for all children together, is also a major improvement since the last inspection. This subject is a major strength of the school.

MATHEMATICS

92. Standards are good and developing. The results of the tests for seven-year olds in 2000 show that pupils' attainment was well above the national average for all schools and above average in comparison with similar schools. For the year 1999/2000, the school set a challenging target for 98 per cent of pupils to reach National Curriculum level 2 or higher and this was exceeded with 99 per cent of pupils attaining this level. Achievement is very good for all pupils including higher attainers and those with special educational needs. Standards dipped in 1998 but have improved again steadily since then. Teachers' own assessments point to pupils' attainment in using and applying their mathematical knowledge being slightly weaker than other areas of knowledge but even here, it is still above average in comparison with other schools nationally.

93. Evidence from the current inspection shows that changes to the teaching of mathematics following the introduction of the Numeracy Strategy are all having a positive effect on the standards achieved by both boys and girls. These changes include analysing national assessment data and establishing attainment targets at the end of Year 2.

94. During their reception year, all pupils count to 20 and most, if slowly, to 70. They position numbers accurately from one to ten on a blank number line and understand the concept of 'bigger than ten'. By the age of six, pupils demonstrate increasing knowledge and understanding of basic number facts. They understand place value of tens and units, and how to add and subtract 10 with increasing accuracy and speed. They are very clear about odd and even numbers to 20 and many work out numbers well beyond because they understand the importance of the 'unit' number in this concept. One pupil explains that 1000 is even because its achieved by multiplying two even numbers such as 100×10 . By the age of seven, pupils complete simple multiplication and division sums, recognise angles such as a right-angle, know quickly all number bonds to 20 and have a developing grasp of lines of symmetry and reflection for some quite complicated shapes and pattern sequences. In their work pupils are successfully applying these methods to investigating and solving simple problems.

95. During the inspection, teaching and learning was at least satisfactory in all lessons. It was good or better in all lessons at Year 1 and in 50 per cent at Year 2. The overall standard of teaching and learning was good with some very good examples seen in both year groups during the inspection. Here, strategies for stimulating pupils' interest and enthusiasm were very well planned. A 'flap-jack' approach was used to practise number bonds and number fans used by pupils to give answers to quick-fire mental sums, which gave teachers at a glance effective information as to how well pupils were understanding their work. At times, pupils confused the tens and units numbers in their answers but they were given time to reflect and self-correct which worked very well. The build-up of teachers' knowledge about pupils' understanding gained from this type of activity allows teachers to direct specific questions at individual pupils to double check on learning. This approach is used very well by all staff. Teachers use the three-part lesson approach of the National Numeracy Strategy. All lessons start with a very clear introduction so that pupils are sure what is expected of them. The mental warm-up activities are used very well to get pupils 'thinking'. On occasions during the inspection at Year 2, these activities so enthused the pupils that they over-ran leaving insufficient time for a full main activity and plenary session. This also left little time to ensure that pupils fully understood what was expected of them in their homework. However, when operated fully, lessons were very well planned and managed to ensure that all pupils were fully stretched. The time allowed lower attainers to succeed in the first work set for them and to move onto more difficult work whilst higher attainers were set the task of working in pairs to check each others' work as an extra strand in helping their own understanding. They make good use of opportunities to use ICT when appropriate such as reinforcing knowledge of the properties of shapes. A strength of the subject is that all staff working with a particular year group plan together to try to ensure a consistency for all pupils in that year.

96. The mathematics curriculum has a good structure with a good balance between the teaching of facts and knowledge, and the opportunities for pupils to use investigative skills. There is good application of mathematics in other subjects such as time lines in history, sequencing patterns in design and technology and the use of 'key' codes in geography. Throughout school pupils enjoy mathematics and they respond well to the challenge of their lessons. They generally listen attentively to their teachers and they try hard to make sure they understand what their teachers are explaining. They respond with enjoyment to the first part of each lesson where they are expected to think quickly in response to mental arithmetic questions, and they take pride in their work in the second part of the lesson when they show their skills and knowledge in independent work. On occasions at Year 2, the behaviour of a minority of pupils with more challenging learning difficulties unsettle some other pupils for short periods and this can slow the lesson for a short while.

97. There is very good co-ordination of the subject, which has led to good improvement in mathematics since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has led the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, which is now integrated well into school practices. She monitors,

- teachers' planning to ensure it meets expectations and is appropriate for all pupils.
- teaching to evaluate how effectively agreed approaches are being used in practice.
- samples of pupils' work and teachers' termly assessments to see what progress pupils are making in their work.

98. The national assessment results are analysed to see if any areas of work are weaker than others and as such, need targeting to ensure that school's targets for the subject are met or exceeded. One such evaluation pointed to extra work being needed on 'money' and 'time'. This approach is just one example of how the school is striving to raise standards even more.

SCIENCE

99. Standards of attainment are above average for seven year olds at the end of Key Stage 1. This is similar to the findings at the last inspection. In 2000, the attainment of pupils by the age of seven, based on teacher assessment, was above the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 was close to the national average. In moderating these assessments with other schools, staff consider now that their approach to marking has been overly strict.

100. During the Reception year, pupils explain that the sky changes from blue to orange or red when the sun is setting. They correctly sort pictures into categories such as animals, toys, fruits and tools and identify a variety of materials such as wood, brick and metal. Children correctly name the main parts of a flower and use appropriate terms such as soft and smooth when describing their texture. By the age of seven, pupils have made good progress and achieved well. They understand the meaning of fair testing and make sensible predictions when investigating the effects of heating or cooling different substances such as butter or ice. They also investigate and describe what happens when water is put on a range of materials such as foil, felt, paper and wood. They understand that some substances are more absorbent than others. Pupils correctly label the main parts of the human body and know that we have five senses. They understand that people change as they grow older and illustrate these changes well. Pupils know that new plants grow from seeds and that water and light are essential for healthy growth. They produce clear, labelled pictures of the effects of the absence of these necessities. Pupils also record well the growth of healthy plants over time. Pupils confidently describe the differences between living and non-living things. They know that living things eat, breathe, grow and reproduce and confidently justify their decisions when categorising examples of both living and non-living things. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the properties of a wide range of materials and correctly sort them accordingly. They use terms such as hard, soft, heavy, light, transparent and opaque to justify their sets. Pupils also produce charts, which show materials that will bend, stretch or twist and label them appropriately. Pupils have a good understanding of the concept of force and draw pictures indicating the direction of the force being applied and its effect on an object. They know how an electric circuit works and produce diagrams indicating the component parts. All pupils approach science with great interest and enthusiasm. They listen very attentively and are keen to express their own ideas and views. They work extremely well within groups and willingly share resources, always treating them with great care and respect. Pupils learn quickly and retain information well.

101. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject and plan carefully to ensure pupils experience all aspects of the curriculum. Careful use of assessment enables pupils to extend their knowledge, understanding and skills when re-visiting concepts as they move up the school. Teachers encourage pupils to use correct terminology from an early age and pupils make good progress as they build on their previous experiences. Pupils' explanations become more sophisticated and their diagrams and charts become more mature and detailed. They learn how to consider a greater number of factors when investigating the world around them. Teachers know their pupils well and challenge them to justify their ideas and responses according to their ability. Activities are stimulating and enable all pupils of all abilities to participate and achieve. Resources are readily available and pupils are encouraged to use their initiative when gathering and organising the materials they need. As a result, pupils learn quickly to work both independently and co-operatively.

102. There is a detailed scheme of work in place and the school has a good range of resources. Pupils' performances have been analysed. Teachers now focus more carefully on specific areas of the curriculum where, in the past, pupils have performed less well, for example, when learning about materials and their properties. High attaining pupils now have targets, which challenge them more appropriately and additional help is provided for pupils with less well-developed writing skills. The co-ordinator works closely with teachers, offering support for planning and assessing pupils' progress and all staff are committed to raising standards.

ART AND DESIGN

103. Pupils are attaining at least in line with National Expectations throughout the school, and most pupils are attaining above this level by the time they leave at the age of seven. Their achievements are good and they make good progress. Selections of their work are displayed at an exhibition at a local high school each year. Both higher and lower attainers progress in their work and achieve well.

104. Pupils' high standards are seen across a wide range of materials, techniques and tools. When they begin in the school, most pupils have little idea of how to mix colour to obtain a particular effect, but they quickly learn how to do this with watercolours, crayons and oil pastels. They draw and paint many things from life, including flowers and leaves, desktop collections and puppets. Their work creating portraits in the styles of other artists such as Renoir, da Vinci and van Gogh is good. They accompany this with different styles of portraits of themselves, from pencil cameos to pictures of themselves dancing, or dressed in different uniforms and kits, such as for judo, rugby, the Beavers, or pony riding. This develops, on occasions, to full-size paintings of themselves. Some of the work is very well developed from practice notes in their sketch books, which are used well for trying out different patterns and textures, sketches of natural or man-made forms and which often contain notes about the different materials used. Pupils learn to use different materials such as pastels, felt tip pens, chalk and charcoal. With few skills in folding or cutting paper when they begin, pupils become good at making collages and basic paper sculptures. They make three-dimensional pictures using card, different kinds of paper, fabrics and clay. Some tissue paper daffodils, for example, are effectively created and displayed. Clay faces complete with detailed features and hair, and mounted on patterned flat dishes, are very well done. Pupils have made tartan-style patterns using strips of interwoven paper, or different fabrics threaded between wool pastels as well as using watercolours or crayons.

105. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers praise children well for their good work, and are good at getting children to work in pairs, appraising each other's work and suggesting improvements. In a particularly good lesson, for instance, the teacher began with

a good summary of previous work about portraits in pencil and watercolours, reinforced this well with what they had already learned in previous lessons, and set the scene for the next stage of learning. Pupils looked at the shape of the face, and then went on to using oil pastels to create a portrait of themselves. Children used mirrors to see themselves, tried out the colours using a test paper, and made good attempts to merge the colours in together to get skin and hair tones. It was very challenging work, but the children rose to the occasion, and tried very hard. The children learned a lot from their experimentation, and produced some easily recognisable pictures by the end of the lesson. Occasionally, teachers are not too clear in their instructions to the class, and when children are not fully attentive, they become unsure of what they have to do. As a result, time is wasted in re-explaining to each group of pupils, and so the learning is not as good as it might otherwise have been. Support staff are generally used well in helping individuals and groups of children with their work.

106. The leadership and management of art are good. The co-ordinator has a clear view of the subject as a whole, and has undertaken additional training. She has passed on much of this knowledge and skills to other staff, leading to their good focus on skills such as colour mixing and working in different styles. There is a good plan for how the subject will be taught over the long term, and this leads to good planning within each year group for what will be taught each term. The resources for art are good, with many different materials, different media in which to work, and different tools to work with. The accommodation is also good, with a separate art room available, although all teachers do not use it, as it is fairly small. It is good, however, for the group activities in the well-organised and well-taught activity afternoons, when pupils choose between a range of activities, including art and clay work. The co-ordinator assesses children's work informally, and discusses standards and planning with teachers. There is no formal assessment of what each pupil has learned in each module or each term. A simple scheme to do this would help to guide planning for the future, and give improved information to parents.

107. Art makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; most pupils take a great deal of pride in their work, especially when it is so well displayed around the school, and some of it is displayed at a local exhibition each year. Pupils work well together, share equipment, act as critical friends in appraising each other's work, and paint in the style of artists from other countries, times and cultures. The school has done well to maintain and improve its high standards in art since the last report.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

108. Pupils' standards in design and technology are good and in advance of those seen in many schools. Pupils' achievement in both designing and making are good and this progresses well for both higher and lower attaining pupils as they move through the school.

109. Pupils start in Year 1 with a range of skills. They have variable success at cutting out, gluing and making models with tactile materials. During Year 1, pupils learn, practise and improve their skills. During the inspection, they drew around triangular shapes with good skill and practised using a hole punch to make holes in the corners of the triangles. Pupils decided which holes they had made most successfully and therefore, which were the better holes to use for joining a sequence of triangles together using treasury tags. They improved on this by cutting pictures of people from magazines and, after using the hole punch with reasonable accuracy, they used split pins to give their pictures moving limbs. Pupils use these skills to good effect in making their own Red Riding Hood story book with 'moving' pictures. These are for younger pupils in the school to use. They evaluate the strengths of their designs and discuss any alterations needed with their teacher. The clarity of their designs matches their good making skills.

110. In Year 2, during the inspection, pupils were mid way through a project on designing and making a 'model' coat of many colours for Joseph. Pupils understood how to design a four-colour repeating pattern and had practised this using appropriate computer software. They transferred their designs to fabric and chose from a range of alternative ways for joining the seams of their coats. Some who chose to sew their seams rather than glue or staple them initially struggled with this technique but developed their skills quickly. By the age of seven, pupils have experienced and can select from a range of materials and methods of joining them. They know what they want to make and its purpose. Clear plans show the ideal finished product with appropriate labels. With adult help, pupils reflect on and modify their designs as the work proceeds, and the completed products are evaluated. The quality of finished articles is good for pupils of this age.

111. During the inspection, teaching and learning was good overall. It ranged from satisfactory to excellent and was strongest in Year 1. There is steady development in the subject through the school. At Year 1, teachers are concerned to equip pupils with the necessary skills in both making and designing. They discuss the techniques to be practised in great detail with the pupils and this leaves pupils in no doubt over what they have to do and how they can succeed. In one lesson, pupils were encouraged to work out both individually and at times, in pairs, how they could improve where they punched a hole in a shape so that it could be joined by a treasury tag to another one. The teacher checked their understanding continuously. Her understanding of how pupils think and react to this type of activity was so good that she anticipated many of their difficulties. These were supported gently by discussion and suggestions but without taking the pupils' choice away from them in working out how and what they needed to do to succeed. As a result, pupils solved and overcame their difficulties and were keen to try new ideas. They want to succeed and are proud of their efforts, which are frequently praised by their teachers. At Year 2, teachers review work at the start of lessons to help pupils recall important pointers from previous lessons. During the inspection, this was to remind pupils of the different styles of joining fabric that they had tried and evaluated previously. As part of a series of lessons, most pupils were clear and got on independently. On occasions, some pupils joined all of the seams of their coats leaving nowhere for the arms and head. Teachers were generally on hand to lead a re-evaluation of this and to improve the design. On an occasion when teaching was satisfactory rather than good or better, a small number of pupils missed part of the opening discussion because they were not fully listening or focussed by the teacher. As such, their resultant attempts at making their fabric coat needed much adult support. It took some time for the teacher to help everyone. This led to concentration being lost at times by some. However, overall, pupils' curiosity is aroused so that they are enthusiastic to show their own ideas. They concentrate well, discuss issues with partners and work well. In those lessons seen during the inspection, teachers at Year 2 did not encourage pupils' making skills to the same extent as in Year 1.

112. The subject has not been the focus of school improvement planning since the last inspection. However, progress has been made in updating the subject policy and scheme of work, which is now based upon the QCA guidance. As such, this gives pupils a good range of activities to sample. This guidance also includes advice on risk assessments of activities that the school is carrying out such as gaining information from parents about dietary issues during food tasting sessions. Effective use is made of numeracy skills when measuring and marking out items and much-improved links are made with information and communication technology in the use of design planning. Satisfactory progress has been made in improving the provision since the last inspection.

113. Whilst planning is monitored by the subject co-ordinator to ensure that the curriculum is covered appropriately, and completed modules are evaluated regarding what pupils' know, understand and do at Year 2, such assessment and evaluation is not yet carried out in Year

1. As such, the school is not yet building fully on pupil's strengths and weaknesses as they move through the school. Also, the monitoring of teaching by the co-ordinator as a way to further improving provision in design and technology is not yet planned for. Where it has been introduced in the core subjects of literacy, numeracy and ICT, it is working very well and the school has plans of introducing this into design and technology in the future. Resources, whilst adequate in general terms, and easily accessible have not been checked recently for completeness. Nor are they 'packaged' in a way that makes them ready for the teaching of each module of work, thus providing the teachers with more time to concentrate on their planning rather than making the resources. However, the co-ordinator is not yet scheduled to sort out these issues.

GEOGRAPHY

114. Owing to inspection timetabling, only two lessons were observed in geography; one in each year group. However, from this, from samples of pupils' work and their assessments recorded at Year 2, there is sufficient evidence to judge that pupils' standards are good by the age of seven. Higher and lower attainers achieve well in their learning and make good progress. Pupils start in Year 1 knowing that postcards are sent from different places and countries around the world. They recognise that scenes showing long sandy beaches and palm trees would not be sent from anywhere in England. During Year 1, they identify the differences between a hot and cold climate and recognise and discuss the types of clothing required in each. They respond to questions about places and the environment by studying their own school and its surroundings, and by learning more about their own village. They research, sketch and write about their favourite features offering good reasons for their decisions. They are comparing this currently with Ecuador and remember much detail such as knowing the word 'canopy' for the covered tree line in the rain forest.

115. By the end of Year 2 pupils draw upon a range of skills to compare and contrast Wendover with the Island of Struay. They use appropriate geographical vocabulary to research the differences in both physical and human features. They compare transport, buildings and employment issues very well. In a lesson observed during the inspection, pupils worked in three separate groups depending on ability. Some pupils designed simple posters attracting tourists to the island. This showed their understanding of map-work and how to represent features such as beaches, mountains and the coastline as well as particular buildings such as the post office and houses. Other pupils took this a step further and designed a brochure to attract holidaymakers. Pupils used their literacy skills very well in this with one comment including 'and come back to your comfortable cottage after a tiring day out'. Higher attainers wrote postcards 'home' about their 'stay on the island' and referred to books as a source of information for their messages.

116. In the two lessons observed during the inspection, teaching and learning was good at Year 2 and excellent at Year 1. At Year 1, 'Bartholomew Badger' had just returned from Ecuador with his suitcase full of clothes for a hot country and a variety of other items such as food and insect repellent. The atmosphere created by the 'rain forest' display and Bartholomew's exploits could not have focussed the pupils more on their learning. The range of resources in the suitcase, excitement in the teacher's tone of voice and a careful build-up of knowledge through a question and answer session offered pupils not just new knowledge but also the opportunity to use the knowledge they had to draw comparisons. Pupils were encouraged to name different birds from the rain forests, and when an incorrect answer was given, the teacher gently reminded everyone of their previous work and helped the pupil to self-correct. At Year 2, strategies set out in individual behaviour plans are used well for ensuring that some pupils with more challenging behavioural difficulties learn equally as well as all other pupils. In the lesson inspected, the pupils were keen to work in groups at their own levels. Good preparation for this session over previous weeks resulted in pupils having

the knowledge and the confidence to talk, write and draw the key geographical features of the Island of Struay. A strength of teaching is that clear learning objectives are shared with pupils and evaluated at the end of lessons. The most effective teaching had a solid understanding of pupils' individual needs. Teachers provided a range of differentiated activities, balancing whole class, group and individual teaching methods. As a result pupils worked conscientiously and made good progress in lessons. Lively and enthusiastic teaching sustained pupils' interest, whilst the good relationships established with pupils giving immediate praise and feedback, developed pupils' confidence to answer question and to undertake their work. Good use is made of opportunities to use ICT and one example of this was in using a program to explore the characteristics of an island.

117. Since the last inspection, geography has not been a priority for development in the school, although the school has worked hard to incorporate the recommended guidelines of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) into its programme of work. The subject co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning to ensure that the pupils get a good spread of experience. Teachers assess very well pupils' work in lessons. However, the recording of formal assessment to help teachers recognise if pupils are achieving and at what level, whilst part of normal practice in Year 2, has only just been fully introduced across the school during the week of the inspection.

118. The subject promotes literacy and numeracy well. Pupils are confident to use geographical vocabulary and are able to use different methods to record their findings such as graphs and keys. The pupils benefit from teachers having available or providing good resources that really interest them and 'fire' their enthusiasm. The subject co-ordinator is very active in a liaison group with other schools that helps to provide regular opportunities for sharing ideas about how the humanities (geography and history) can be developed further. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

HISTORY

119. Owing to inspection timetabling, only two lessons were observed in history; one in each year group. However, from this, from samples of pupils' work and their assessments recorded at Year 2, there is sufficient evidence to judge that standards are good by the age of seven. Higher and lower attainers achieve well in their learning and make good progress. As pupils move through the school, they are given a series of worthwhile experiences. They develop their understanding of chronology and of differences between their own lives and those of people in the past.

120. In Year 1, pupils know about how people lived in the past. They achieve well and good work comes from comparing the toys children played with in the past, with those of the present. The pupils learn for example that many of the toys from the past were made from wood, cloth and metal. Today, many are constructed from plastic and they require batteries to operate them. In one lesson during the inspection, pupils worked in groups to investigate different items from the past. They discussed together and then reported back to the whole class their ideas about the age, weight, name and use of different artefacts. Pupils used their design and technology knowledge to consider pivot points and levers in trying to work out the use of an old pair of curling tongues. Although not quite correct on this occasion, their ideas were praiseworthy and they learned much about the process of telling the age of artefacts.

121. By the age of seven pupils achieve well, and make good progress to attain standards higher than expected for pupils of this age. Pupils' attainment is good in comparison with that of other seven year-olds. Pupils know about a range of famous people between 1800 and 1910 such as Alexander Graham Bell, George Stephenson, Grace Darling and Queen Victoria. The focus during the inspection was on Florence Nightingale. Pupils have a broad

knowledge about her early life, her family and why she became a famous nurse. They study the 'hardness' of the times in which she lived and the value of her life in relation to the events unfolding in the Crimean War. They sat and watched a video intently, which helped them to make comparisons between the past and now. This was the third out of five lessons on the topic and pupils used their prior knowledge in sensible and serious discussion.

122. Only two lessons were observed. Teaching and learning was excellent at both Years 1 and 2. Teachers planned their lessons from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority documents. The themes covered in planning are appropriate to the demands of the National Curriculum and provide pupils with a good range of interesting topics to stimulate their enthusiasm. At Year 1, pupils were enthused by the teachers' own enthusiasm and knowledge, and the exciting artefacts from the school's 'museum'. Excellent knowledge of how the pupils would react to this type of lesson helped the teacher to ask questions of the pupils in a way that extended their learning but without giving them any answers. The ease with which the pupils moved from a class discussion, into their practical investigative groups and back again into a class discussion for a reporting back session, meant there was not a second of time wasted. Pupils were so at ease with their teacher and class-mates that they were confident enough to offer ideas without fear of 'failure'. Everyone's ideas were accepted. At Year 2, the same relationship exists between teacher and pupils and between pupils. The teacher used the 'timeline' on the wall to remind pupils about their previous lessons. This focussed them well and triggered memories about the life and times of Florence Nightingale. Some pupils could express themselves clearly but others who struggled a little to put their thoughts into words were encouraged gently and given time and encouragement both by the teacher and other pupils. The teacher's knowledge of the subject and of each pupils' own knowledge meant that individual pupils were stretched very well in their thinking although at different levels of difficulty.

123. History is co-ordinated by the same subject leader as geography and in the same way, history has not been a priority for development since the last inspection. The subject co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning to ensure that the pupils get a good spread of experience. Teachers assess very well pupils' work in lessons. However, the recording of formal assessment to help teachers recognise if pupils are achieving and at what level, whilst part of normal practice in Year 2, has only just been fully introduced across the school during the week of the inspection. The pupils benefit from the excellent collection of resources housed in the school's museum and from time to time, pupils experience life in the past through their Victorian Week. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

124. Standards in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) are above national expectations and have improved significantly since the last inspection.

125. During their early time in the Nursery, pupils learn to use the 'mouse' to click on icons and operate simple programs with adult help. As they reach the age of seven, they have developed simple word processing skills. They enter text, for example, facts about famous people, poems, descriptions of their own homes and properties of three-dimensional shapes. Pupils know how to use the space bar to create a space between words, the return key to insert line breaks and the shift key to type capital letters. They know how to use the backspace key to correct mistakes. Pupils are becoming familiar with a simple graphing program. They enter data about favourite fruits and a car colour survey and know that the information presented on the block and pie graphs can be used to answer different types of question. When designing a page of labelled two-dimensional shapes, pupils confidently use a mouse to move shapes and labels around the screen and to drag unwanted items to the waste bin. Pupils know how to save and print their work. As part of a design and technology

project, pupils very successfully used a graphic package to design original and repeated patterns for Joseph's 'Technicoloured' Dream Coat. Pupils learn how to program a 'Roamer' and some are able to give correct instructions for it to move around a square or rectangle. Without a second thought, pupils use a tape recorder to record their own stories and music. Given the development in their skills from when they started in school, pupils achieve well.

126. Pupils enjoy the very good range of resources and put effort into their learning. They show that they are able to work independently and when working in pairs they help each other and take turns sensibly. In the whole class teaching sessions they are attentive and watch carefully when the teacher demonstrates a procedure.

127. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have a good understanding of the skills to be taught and plan very appropriate activities for the pupils. They make good use of opportunities to use ICT within other areas of the curriculum, for example; in literacy to emphasise the correct use of punctuation, in numeracy to reinforce knowledge of properties of shapes and in geography to explore the characteristics of an island. Teachers have worked hard to improve their own skills and this has had a positive impact on the overall quality of teaching and learning. The sessions are well organised and teachers make good use of demonstration to help pupils understand the task and to find their way around the different computer programs. Teachers regularly check pupils' progress and offer constructive advice. Lessons are well planned and learning objectives are clear. Work is appropriately matched to pupils' previous experience and enables pupils to learn quickly and make good progress in developing their knowledge and skills.

128. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of her role and has provided the staff with valuable training, which has raised their confidence and improved their knowledge and skills. Greater access to the Internet is planned for when pupils are ready. A newly created 'Wendover website' will also be accessible to pupils in the near future. The school has worked very hard to raise standards of attainment and levels of provision since the last inspection.

MUSIC

129. Standards in music are above national standards. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

130. Pupils of all ages sing tunefully and with enthusiasm. They control their singing well, reflecting the mood and meaning of the lyrics and demonstrating a good understanding of tempo and dynamics. Pupils in Year 2 play the recorder very well and confidently read music, noting the number of beats in a bar and flat or sharp notes occurring in individual pieces of music. Pupils in the orchestra understand terms such as vibrato and staccato and respond to these instructions as they play. They keep their parts well when the teacher plays the treble recorder or piano to accompany them. Recordings made by pupils in Years 1 and 2 provide evidence of competent playing of untuned instruments. The younger pupils choose carefully the instruments they use to provide background music to a story read by one of the class. Year 2 pupils use a good range of percussion instruments to play their own compositions to accompany stories they have written themselves. Their choices are very appropriate and complement the stories very well. Pupils regularly listen to a variety of orchestral pieces and can identify instrument families such as string, wind and brass. Pupils enjoy listening to and making music and consistently, in school and at home, work hard to improve their performances. They appreciate each other's efforts and take pride in their achievements.

131. The quality of teaching and learning is good and teachers use their own talents very

well to broaden and enrich pupils' experiences. Activities are challenging and stimulating, encouraging pupils to persevere until they are satisfied with their own performances. Pupils are encouraged to listen carefully, enabling them to develop a greater understanding of pitch and a good sense of rhythm. Lessons are well planned and teachers maintain pupils' interest by questioning them effectively and changing activities frequently. Pupils remain focused throughout and make good progress within lessons and as they move up the school.

132. Teachers are currently trialling the QCA scheme, which will be reviewed at the end of the year. They observe pupils' progress carefully and note strengths and difficulties. A consistent form of assessment is to be developed in the near future. Individual talents are promoted and pupils are given opportunities to perform for a variety of audiences, including parents, senior citizens and residents of a local nursing home. The school is well resourced for music appreciation and for practical music making. Pupils also benefit significantly from enjoying performances given by visiting musicians and participating in activities such as music workshops and dancing associated with cultures from around Europe.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. Pupils' attainments in physical education are at least in line with national expectations and for most children they are above. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress and achieve at a level that is good for their abilities.

134. Pupils are active and mobile; many are agile and fit, and the great majority derive a lot of pleasure from their activities. They develop skills well in a range of activities in games, dance and gymnastics. From a start of being quite uncoordinated, and not having a clear idea of basic games skills, they learn to pass balls of different sizes to each other in different ways. Many can do this accurately, kicking, throwing, bouncing a ball to a partner, and controlling it when it is returned. They work with quoits, hoops, bats and balls in a number of games, including football, rounders and short tennis. They are beginning to understand the rules of the games and the ideas of competition and working together as a team. In dance, they are learning well, from being completely unused to moving in time to music when they begin school. As an example, in one very good lesson that was only the second in a series, the pupils managed to do a barn dance to the tune of "76 Trombones", with several different movements in a sequence. All children learned very well, and were moving together by the end of the lesson, quite well synchronised, and they were enjoying the experience. Their gymnastics skills are also good. Pupils run, jump, hop and skip well. They jump from the height of a metre, safely and carefully. They can put together a sequence of movements and keep their balance through a series of movements. They move in a variety of ways over the floor, mats and apparatus, including vaults, benches, climbing frames and the ropes. Some pupils, both boys and girls, are adventurous, imaginative and confident in their physical activities. Pupils understand that there is a need to have a warm-up when a session starts, and a cool-down at the end. They follow instructions well in the main, and they act in a safe manner.

135. The teaching and learning of physical education is good. During the inspection, they ranged from satisfactory to excellent. Teachers plan their lessons well, although they often rely too much on working directly from the pages of a commercial scheme during a lesson. They generally establish good order among the pupils, and ensure that all children are listening to instructions. Where the teaching is at its best, in a gymnastics lesson, for instance, the teacher had good knowledge of the subject and the particular lesson. The warm-up was good and invigorating, and the teacher used a game well to establish instant responses from the children when she gave an instruction. As the pupils began to take part in a series of exercises, the teacher praised good performances, and had some pupils demonstrating good practice well to the rest of the class. The pupils put a large range of large

apparatus out quickly and carefully, and then used the equipment in well-controlled and challenging ways. The teacher kept very good control of the situation, and kept up an excellent pace of learning, with pupils enjoying the session very much, being co-operative, and well exercised. The end activity, with proper relaxation and muscle clenching, was very appropriate. In lessons that were satisfactory, the teachers relied too much on working through a page of instructions, and did not always have the full attention of the children when they were explaining what to do next. This slowed the learning, as pupils did not know what to do next, and the teacher had to go through the instructions again. Many sessions are too short to develop the theme of the lesson properly, and do not allow sufficient time for getting changed before the session, the warm-up activity, a good length of main activity, and then a cool-down activity before getting changed again.

136. Physical education makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development through the pride and pleasure that pupils take in their activities. Their social and moral sense is well helped by sharing apparatus and working together in pairs and in teams.

137. The leadership and management of physical education are good, even though the co-ordinator is part-time. The co-ordinator has a clear view of standards across the school, and how the subject is developing. The long term planning of what will be taught is good, and is being further developed as national schemes are adapted into the school's existing syllabus. All teaching staff have had training in how to teach gymnastics and games, and training for dance is expected soon. Outside facilities for play are also being developed. There are no teacher-led clubs out of school, but the school acts as a centre, or "pipeline" for many activities such as football, swimming, short tennis and gymnastics run by other people, clubs and schools. Although the reports that go to parents each year are sound, there is little formal assessment of how well pupils are progressing during each year. The resources for physical education are good, with a good range and quality of small and large indoor equipment, and some items for outside use. The accommodation is satisfactory, with a hall that is of adequate size, well equipped, and with storage space. Outside, there are two hard playing surfaces, and the school has access to adjacent playing fields and athletics areas when required.

138. The school has done well to maintain and improve its standards since the last inspection. Standards of achievement have risen well, from a satisfactory level previously. Still, however, the lessons are too short, as noted in the last report.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

139. Pupils have a good level of attainment. They make good progress and achieve well. With only a simple idea of what religion is about when they enter the school, pupils learn well in the long term, and make good progress in learning about other religions as well as Christianity. They become familiar with many of the most popular stories from the Bible. They learn about the religions themselves, and the different festivals, customs, modes of dress and beliefs of, for example, Judaism, Hinduism and Sikhism, along with Christmas and Easter from the Christian calendar. Perhaps more importantly, they begin to understand the lessons that can be learned from the religions and the stories associated with them. They learn to make moral judgements, discussing why people in the stories acted as they did, and if it was good or bad, sociable or unsociable. In this way, their religious education makes a very good contribution to pupils' social and moral development, as well as their spiritual and cultural development.

140. Overall, the teaching of religious education is good. During the inspection, lessons were satisfactory or good. The teaching is strongly based on storytelling, and looking at books, artefacts and pictures. The teachers and children discuss them and consider them

sensibly. This contributes well to pupils' speaking and listening skills. The lessons are often quite short, and this does not allow time for children to put their thoughts on paper in written or drawing work. Even so, they do learn the moral aspects well in their discussions, and this is very valuable. The lessons are planned well, although some teachers do not always have a thorough knowledge of the subject. They use a good range of resources in appropriate ways, particularly in stimulating discussions of the issues that are raised. Children enjoy the lessons and take them seriously. They learn well because the teachers focus very well on the basic knowledge and moral lessons, as well as the content of the stories themselves. In one good lesson about the Jewish faith, for instance, the teacher told a story about Matthias and the festival of Hanukkah. The story was well told, and the children were very interested, and contributed their own ideas in the discussion that followed. The resources included pictures of a menorah (candlestick with many branches), but the teacher was not able to answer some of the children's broader questions. She kept very good, but warm, discipline, and the children learned a lot about a major Jewish custom, as well as some important moral and spiritual issues. Assemblies add much to pupils' learning of religious knowledge, as well as moral and spiritual concepts, especially through Old Testament stories and stories about Jesus.

141. The leadership and management of this subject are good. The co-ordinator has a clear and realistic view of the subject and is well organised, She has had additional training, and has taken advice from the Local Education Authority on how to develop the teaching and learning. A new plan of what should be taught is being trialled this year, and the co-ordinator feels that it has brought new life into the teaching. It complies with the agreed syllabus for religious education. The co-ordinator oversees the overall planning for the subject, and supports teachers in planning lessons each term. The subject has not been a priority for development recently. As such, the quality of teaching in this subject has not been the focus of monitoring and assessment of how well pupils are developing in their knowledge and awareness is not fully in place. This is, however, an especially difficult subject in which to do this. The resources for learning are extensive and good, and there has been a visit to a local church to support learning. The amount of time given to religious education is rather low, and this led to some rather hurried lessons during the inspection.

142. At the time of the last inspection, this subject was considered to be good, and it still is, overall. As such, the subject has developed satisfactorily since the last inspection. Developments with the subject policy, the syllabus and the resources have enabled the school to maintain a good standard, particularly in pupils' learning moral lessons from the religious ones that they have studied.