

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ELSTOW LOWER SCHOOL**

Elstow, Bedford

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109448

Headteacher: Mrs Carol A Watson

Reporting inspector: Peter Brock  
17969

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> January 2001

Inspection number: 193594

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

|                              |                                  |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Type of school:              | First School                     |
| School category:             | Foundation                       |
| Age range of pupils:         | 4 to 9                           |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed                            |
| School address:              | High Street<br>Elstow<br>Bedford |
| Postcode:                    | MK42 9XP                         |
| Telephone number:            | 01234 302300                     |
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| Appropriate authority:       | The Governing Body               |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Mr Colin Pearson                 |
| Date of previous inspection: | 21 <sup>st</sup> April 1997      |

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members             |                      | Subject responsibilities  | Aspect responsibilities   |
|--------------------------|----------------------|---|---|
| Peter Brock<br>17969     | Registered inspector | Mathematics<br>Information and communication technology<br>Art and design<br>Physical education<br>Equal opportunities<br>English as an additional language | How high are standards?<br>How well are pupils taught?<br>How well is the school led and managed?   |
| Ronald Elam<br>9092      | Lay inspector        |   | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development<br>How well does the school care for its pupils?<br>How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| Carole Jarvis<br>27276   | Team inspector       | English<br>History<br>Religious education<br>Foundation Stage   | How good are curricular and other opportunities?  |
| Michael Roussel<br>22157 | Team inspector       | Science<br>Design and technology<br>Geography<br>Music<br>Special educational needs   |   |

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Inspection Quality Division  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Elstow Lower School is situated at the north end of a long established village on the edge of Bedford town. Although very few pupils live in the village, the school has strong ties with the Abbey Church, the Parish Council and the elderly residents of Bunyan's Mead. The buildings are in four separate areas of the grounds and the oldest dates back to Victorian times. There are 211 children on roll - 112 boys and 99 girls. There were 28 children under six in the reception class at the time of the inspection. Assessment data shows that attainment of children on entry is below average overall. The majority of children come from a mixture of social housing and local authority rented accommodation, all within a designated social priority area. Thirty two per cent of children are on the special education needs register and this is higher than the national average. Four of these have a statement of special educational need. Eleven per cent of children come from minority ethnic groups where English is an additional language. This is higher than in most schools. The numbers of children who have the right to take up free school meals is approximately 46 per cent, which is higher than the national average. The school is part of the Bedford Education Action Zone - an initiative to help certain schools raise standards.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The school is effective in providing a satisfactory level of education. Although children enter with standards that are below average, they make steady progress with their learning in most subjects as a direct result of the satisfactory quality of teaching and the good management by the headteacher. Standards in English, mathematics and science are below average by the time children are seven and nine years of age. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

The leadership of the headteacher is good.  
Teachers use effective methods to manage children.  
Children are taught to have positive attitudes towards others and their behaviour is good.  
Provision for children with special educational needs is very good.  
Provision for children's personal, moral and social development is good.  
The partnership with most parents is positive.

#### **What could be improved**

Standards in English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology.  
The overall quality of teachers' planning in some subjects to support children of all abilities.  
Longer term planning in science and all foundation subjects.  
Further development of the roles of the deputy headteacher and co-ordinators.  
Aspects of the responsibilities of the governing body.  
Attendance and punctuality of some children.  
The arrangement for parking of cars at the school entrance.

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

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

The school has made satisfactory progress with improvements in most areas of concern since the last inspection. It has increased the number and quality of computers in the school but has not made sure that they are used sufficiently on a regular basis. It has improved the quality and standards of pupils' experiences in design and technology, but has more to do yet. Governors have been very successful in removing the deficit budget and now have the school on a secure financial footing. The school has been very effective in ensuring that pupils with special educational needs receive more effective support but it has been less successful in refining schemes of work to make sure there will be a match between individual pupils' needs and planned tasks. Teachers have not yet paid sufficient attention to improving the quality of pupils' ability to learn on their own, especially at Key Stage 2. The school has continued to find ways to improve the quality of parental involvement in pupils' education but there is still room for improvement in this area.

## 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         | D             | E    | D    | B               |
| Writing         | E*            | E    | E    | D               |
| Mathematics     | D             | E    | D    | C               |

| Key                |   |
|--------------------|---|
| well above average | A |
| above average      | B |
| average            | C |
| below average      | D |
| well below average | E |

The information in the above chart shows that, in the 2000 national tests for seven year olds, the school has achieved below average standards in reading and mathematics and well below average in writing. However, compared with similar schools, it is above average in reading, average in mathematics and below average in writing. Although standards are not high enough yet, the trend over the past three years has been variable but, overall, has tended to climb in line with the national average. For example, although writing is still weak, in 1998, standards were in the lowest five per cent nationally but have since moved in a positive direction. The current level of attainment for children at seven and nine years of age is below average in all three areas. However, the positive comparison with similar schools reflects the secure teaching although there remain weaknesses in planning and subsequent expectations of what pupils can achieve in some subjects. Although the quality of teaching is good for children under six, attainment is below average by the end of the Foundation Stage. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is below average because children lack confidence in computer skills and have a limited understanding of the use of ICT in the wider world. Attainment in religious education is at a level expected for children when they leave the school at nine. The school sets realistic targets for improvement overall.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect                                 | Comment   |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school                | These are positive. Children respond well to their teachers and enjoy coming to school.                         |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | This is good. Children behave sensibly both in class and around the school.                                     |
| Personal development and relationships | Children's personal development is good and their relationships with each other and with other adults are good. |
| Attendance                             | Rates are below average and, therefore, unsatisfactory.   |

The overall quality of children's relationships and behaviour is a strong feature of this school. Children are good at caring for each other and are polite and pleasant to others. However, the unsatisfactory level of attendance is unacceptable because some children are educationally disadvantaged by their parents' inability to ensure that they attend every day unless they are ill.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils:  | aged up to 6 years | aged 6-7 years | aged 7-9 years |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Lessons seen overall | Good               | Satisfactory   | Satisfactory   |

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 and learning is satisfactory overall and has a positive impact on the quality of children's learning in most subjects. Teachers meet the needs of children with special educational needs and with English as an additional language very well. In the reception classes, positive teamwork and very good relationships ensure children enjoy their learning and achieve well. Throughout the school, teachers have a secure knowledge of National Curriculum subjects although, in ICT, there are weaknesses in the subject knowledge of some teachers. Teachers' planning for English and mathematics is effective but, in some subjects, it is unsatisfactory. They make secure use of a range of teaching methods, particularly in literacy and numeracy hours, and their management of children is strong. The quality of teaching is similar to that of the last inspection but with fewer unsatisfactory lessons seen. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of all lessons seen. In 38 per cent it was good or better and, in six per cent, it was very good. In four per cent of lessons seen, teaching was unsatisfactory.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect   | Comment  |
|--|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum  | The curriculum is adequately broad, balanced and relevant but there are particular weaknesses in the planned progression of learning for science.  |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs  | This is very good. The school takes full advantage of all available expertise and additional finance provided by its inclusion in the Education Action Zone.                                       |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language                                  | This is good. Children receive positive support from learning support assistants and a visiting specialist teacher, and they achieve well.   |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development | This is very good for children's social development and good for their moral development. It is satisfactory for their spiritual and cultural growth.  |
| How well the school cares for its pupils   | The school provides a secure level of support overall but current arrangements for depositing and collecting children are dangerous and allow for the possibility of a serious accident occurring. |

The school works successfully in partnership with parents. It creates good links with them and their contribution to their children's learning is satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory information about what is happening throughout the year although written reports do not provide sufficient information for parents about levels or about what children can do to improve their work.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect   | Comment  |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher provides strong leadership and she has a clear vision of how she expects the school to continue to develop. She is firmly supported by a new deputy who is making good progress with the settling in process. Subject co-ordinators vary in the level of understanding of what their job involves.   |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities             | Governors do this properly overall. They are positive in their involvement and guidance and provide strong support for the headteacher. They are involved with school life and understand its strengths and weaknesses. Some of their documentation requires further attention and they have yet to resolve the potentially dangerous situation in the car park. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                       | The school, especially the headteacher, is clear about how well it is doing and, through regular evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, knows what has to be done next to improve the quality of education.   |
| The strategic use of resources                                   | The school makes appropriate use of its resources. It uses them sensibly.  |

The school has enough suitably qualified and experienced teaching and support staff but the accommodation is unsatisfactory. The range and quality of learning resources are satisfactory overall and the school's procedures for ensuring that it gets best value for money are satisfactory.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most  | What parents would like to see improved  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>▪ Teachers help children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>▪ Children like school and make progress.</li> <li>▪ Behaviour is good, as are attitudes.</li> <li>▪ Homework is about right.</li> <li>▪ Teaching is good.</li> <li>▪ Children are expected to work hard.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Information about how children are getting on.</li> <li>▪ Closer working relationships with parents.</li> <li>▪ Range of activities outside of lessons.</li> <li>▪ More able children could progress faster.</li> </ul> |

The inspection team agrees with most of the positive views of parents. It agrees that the school is well led and managed by the headteacher but considers that some subject co-ordinators are not yet clear about the nature of their role. It agrees with the positive views that parents hold about teaching but notes that there are weaknesses in planning in some subjects. The team considers that working relationships with parents and the range of activities outside of lessons are both appropriate. However, it does agree that more information could be provided in reports on how children are getting on and that higher attaining children could achieve more in some subjects.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The school's tests on entry show that it admits children from across the full range of attainment although there are few higher attaining pupils. However, when they start full time education, most pupils are below average for their age. Attainment is at a level expected in children's personal, social and emotional development but below in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development.
2. Standards of attainment are below the national average in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science by the time that pupils are seven years of age and by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 4. Based on a system of allocated points, the teacher assessments and test results for the Year 2 pupils in 2000 indicate that the attainment of pupils in that year in reading and mathematics was below average and well below average in writing. However, these results indicate that attainment, when compared with the levels reached by pupils in similar schools, is above average in reading, average in mathematics and below average in writing. These are encouraging results and the trend over the past two years has been for them to improve compared with the national pattern. This is a direct result of a combination of the focus on literacy and numeracy and the development of teachers' expertise and attitudes towards teaching these subjects. The progress that pupils make with their learning in English and mathematics is better than in science. The main reason for this is that English and mathematics have detailed planning in place that ensures pupils develop their learning in a steady and continuous way. The same cannot be said for science.
3. Compared with the last report, standards in English, mathematics and science appear to have dropped with reference to test results. However, it is important to note that the criteria for interpreting test results have changed and that the quality of teaching seen during the inspection week indicates that secure progress is being made in most subjects although there are various weaknesses still to be addressed. Overall, progress over time has been satisfactory, particularly over recent years. However, the exception is the unsatisfactory progress of the higher attaining pupils in science as a direct result of the level of teachers' expectations in planning.
4. Pupils' attainment in ICT has not improved since the last inspection and remains at a level below that expected when pupils are seven and when they leave the school at the end of Year 4. There are three main reasons for the unsatisfactory level of attainment in this subject. Until very recently, insufficient planning for the direct teaching of ICT meant that specific skills were not introduced or extended; and pupils do not have regular experience on computers to enable them to develop their skills and to use these to support their work in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils' attainment in religious education meets the requirements of the local syllabus and this is similar to the level obtained during the last inspection. Attainment in geography is below the level expected by the time pupils leave at nine but it is above in music. Attainment in all other subjects is at the level expected for pupils of this age.
5. The school sets realistic targets for improvement in English and mathematics overall. These are appropriate for the level of ability of all pupils. They are developed after careful analysis of the levels of attainment that pupils reach within each year group.
6. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress with their learning overall. They learn to follow instructions carefully, to share equipment sensibly, to work hard and listen to what is being said. Children gain in their confidence to speak in front of others and handle books carefully although they show little interest in reading and are reluctant to talk about their books

to others because of their lack of confidence and past experiences. They learn to count with simple numbers but have difficulty joining in with number songs and rhymes. Children know about the names of young animals and begin to understand the concept of growth. They learn to make simple models from a variety of materials but their experiences on computers are limited. They learn to balance and climb, to ride and push large toys, to kick balls and to develop reasonable levels of skills for children of their age.

7. By seven and nine years of age, pupils make satisfactory progress with their learning in English, mathematics, art and design, design and technology, history, physical education and religious education but progress in science, geography and ICT is unsatisfactory. In music, progress is good.
8. In English, pupils increase their ability to speak with confidence and to listen carefully to their teachers and to each other although their vocabulary remains limited. Within this limitation, they are able to discuss their ideas for poems to express how they feel about them. Pupils learn a range of strategies to help them with unknown words and begin to read with increasing expression and fluency. However, their ability to develop and use research skills in the library is unsatisfactory. They learn to write in a variety of styles but their vocabulary lacks breadth that means that their writing is often unimaginative, and variable in its use of correct punctuation. The quality of pupils' handwriting and general presentation of work is inconsistent and often unsatisfactory.
9. By the time they leave the school at nine, pupils' ability to calculate numbers in their head quickly and effectively is unsatisfactory. They understand place value and know how to round numbers up or down to the nearest ten. Higher attaining pupils know how to solve the missing parts of equations and most pupils tell the time correctly and understand the relationship between hours, minutes and seconds. However, for most pupils, solving problems in different ways on their own continues to present them with difficulties.
10. In science, pupils make their best progress with the biological aspects of science. They understand the basic essentials for growth and know how to classify living things into groups according to specific characteristics. They know what is involved with a fair test but they are limited in their experience and ability to investigate independently and to record their results effectively.
11. The school places an appropriate emphasis on the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in specific English and mathematics lessons and through associated development in other subjects of the curriculum. Examples are seen in the development of new vocabulary in design and technology lessons about vehicles and in the use of descriptive words in history when explaining similarities and differences between houses of now and in the past.
12. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. These are kept in teachers' planning files and are reviewed regularly. Pupils with English as an additional language and pupils from minority ethnic groups also make good progress with their learning because particular notice and action is taken to ensure that their individual and specific needs are suitably addressed. There are no significant differences in attainment of boys and girls overall although, in some subjects, the progress of higher attaining pupils is not as good as it could be. All pupils have equal opportunities to participate in all subjects of the curriculum.

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

13. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, personal development and relationships with each other and adults are strengths of the school and make a good contribution towards promoting their attainment and progress. This is an improvement since the last inspection. It also reflects the widespread views of parents. Parents state that their children enjoy school. The attendance rate and the punctuality of a number of pupils are unsatisfactory although the attendance rate has improved in the current school year.
14. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes towards learning are good. This includes those of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. They concentrate well, show interest in what they are doing and are eager to answer teachers' questions although their vocabulary is not extensive. A good example of this enthusiasm was seen in a Year 2 literacy lesson where pupils were enjoying the story of the Little Red Hen. Years 1 and 2 pupils show great enjoyment during music lessons as they rehearse different styles of singing. Pupils in the reception class work hard and they are encouraged by the teacher's effective use of praise and the good relationships between them overall. Pupils settle quickly to group work in lessons and maintain their interest even when not being directly supported by adults in the classroom.
15. Pupils behave well in lessons. They are open, well mannered, polite to adults and to each other, courteous and welcoming to visitors. Most pupils move around the school in an orderly way when supervised. They wait patiently for other classes when going to and from their rooms at the beginning and end of the day and for assemblies. They show respect for property, for example when using computers and they take care collecting and putting away instruments during music lessons. No bullying occurred during the inspection and the school has appropriate procedures to deal with any aggressive behaviour that may take place. The school did not exclude any pupils last year.
16. Relationships between pupils and adults are good and contribute to the quality of work in lessons. Pupils get on well with each other when playing games at break and lunch times. In class, the youngest pupils learn to get on together when sitting close together on the carpet. Generally, they are prepared to take turns putting up their hands to answer questions. Pupils co-operate well in physical education lessons and in other lessons like science in Years 1 and 2 where they work together to make electrical circuits. Boys and girls and pupils from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds work together very well when doing group work in the classroom and when playing at break and lunch times. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, integrate well with other pupils. There are good relationships within the school and pupils mix happily together during playtimes. Overall, pupils are sensitive to the needs of those who have special problems to overcome.
17. Pupils' personal development is also good. Older pupils show they understand the feelings of others as seen in a meeting of the school council where they suggested having a 'friendship bench' in the playground where any child feeling lonely would know that a member of the school council would come and sit with them. Some pupils begin to use their initiative in lessons such as science but, overall, they do not make very good progress with their ability to develop independence with their learning. This is partly because teachers give them too much guidance. Pupils have various opportunities to take on responsibility. As well as the school council, there are various tasks around the classroom, including taking registers to the office. Pupils also gain an understanding of some of the events of the wider world as they collect for various charities during the year.
18. Overall, attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory and limit the attainment and progress of a number of pupils. Attendance last year, at 93 per cent, was well below the national average and similar to the level at the time of the previous inspection. However various initiatives that the school has introduced have resulted in an improvement to over 94 per cent in the autumn term just prior to the current inspection. This figure relates to pupils aged over five. For

children aged under six in the reception class, last term's figure was very poor, at 85 per cent. This figure can be explained only in part by the higher incidence of illness amongst very young children. Unauthorised absence has reduced over the past three years and, in the recent autumn term, was similar to the level expected nationally. Pupils are generally keen to come to school and punctuality has improved since the last inspection. Nevertheless 20 or 30 pupils continue to arrive late in the morning although registration takes place promptly at the start of each day.

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

19. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with a considerable number of strengths and some weaknesses. As a result, pupils make satisfactory progress in both key stages. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of all lessons seen. In 38 per cent it was good or better and, in six per cent, it was very good. In four per cent of lessons seen, teaching was unsatisfactory. This quality of teaching is similar to that of the last inspection but with fewer unsatisfactory lessons seen. Teachers have improved the management of their lessons so that pupils do not sit for too long and lose interest.
20. The quality of teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is good overall and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Positive teamwork and very good relationships ensure children enjoy their learning and achieve well. Teachers focus on the development of children's personal, social and emotional development very effectively and this has a positive effect upon pupils' learning. The nursery nurse works in both classrooms effectively supporting children, particularly in group activities like retelling the story of Goldilocks with puppets. Other classroom assistants support children with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language, well and enable them to make good progress in their learning. Teachers have adapted their planning for children in the Foundation Stage to cover all the areas of learning. This is sound overall, but there is little or no planning for outdoor play or some free choice activities. When these activities do not link with other areas of learning, or have their own specific targets to be achieved, they do not extend children's learning enough. Teachers regularly assess children's achievements and build up a detailed profile for each child. A wide range of interesting resources used in whole- class sessions motivates the children and encourages them to learn.
21. Teachers encourage children to talk about what they do and this helps to develop confidence. They provide a wide range of stimulating resources that help to keep children busy and interested in what they are doing. They do not provide pupils with sufficient regular opportunities to develop their skills on the computer or with other communication devices and this detracts from the overall range of children's experiences.
22. Most of the teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the requirements for the National Curriculum subjects is satisfactory in all subjects although, in ICT and design and technology, the application of their knowledge to help pupils with their learning is variable across the school. As a result, the progress that pupils make in ICT is unsatisfactory and that of pupils in design and technology is lessened. Teaching of literacy and numeracy, and the progress that pupils make with their learning in these aspects, is also satisfactory. Teachers have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the technical aspects of their subjects and this supports the learning that pupils achieve. A good example of this was seen in a literacy lesson on traditional stories in a Years 1 and 2 class. Here the teacher reinforced particular language skills effectively to help pupils build their self-confidence in their ability to read.
23. The effectiveness of teachers' planning is variable across the key stages. In the Foundation Stage, it is satisfactory overall except for outdoor and independent play activities. In Key Stages 1 and 2 the quality varies from subject to subject. In English and mathematics, it is good because planning over time ensures that pupils make steady progress with their learning and planning in the short term distinguishes between pupils of different abilities. As a result, in

these subjects, pupils make steady progress with their learning and, in some cases, good progress as with pupils with special educational needs. In a number of other subjects, planning is unsatisfactory because either teachers do not follow a clear developmental programme of learning as in science, or they fail to plan for pupils of different levels of ability. When this happens, as in a lesson seen in a Years 3 and 4 class on the use of e-mails with the new laptop computers, no account was taken of the fact that some pupils are more advanced in their computer knowledge than others. At times like these, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are unsatisfactory. As a result, higher attaining pupils do not make as much progress as they are capable of. Teachers vary in the standards of handwriting and presentation of work that they find acceptable and this detracts from the overall consistency of standards throughout the school.

24. Teachers make secure use of a range of methods of organisation and teaching techniques to help pupils learn effectively. They use a mixture of approaches that include whole-class, group and individual teaching. Where teaching is good, as in a mathematics lesson on understanding multiplication in a Year 4 class, teachers make clear to pupils what they expect them to learn by the end of the lesson. As a result, the quality of pupils' learning is enhanced because they know exactly what they are expected to achieve. Most teachers make sound use of tried and tested questioning techniques as a way of furthering pupils' learning. A good example of this was observed in literacy lesson with Year 2. By skilled and directed questioning, the teacher encouraged pupils to retell the story of the Little Red Hen and to explain particular features of the book. Some teachers use humour successfully to support their teaching approach, as in a Year 1 class, and others make good use of revision to ensure that pupils understand what has been taught in earlier lessons before they move on to new learning experiences. However, teachers do not place sufficient attention on the development of pupils' independent learning skills as with methods of investigation and personal problem solving in mathematics and science.
25. All teachers manage pupils successfully and this is a strong aspect of their teaching. This is because they are firm but also perceived to be fair by pupils. As a result, most pupils behave and respond positively to others and to their work. On occasions when pupils do not react in a reasonable manner, teachers respond quickly and professionally to ensure that the minimum of disruption occurs and lessons return to normal as soon as possible. The school's system of personal targets for individual pupils helps teachers and pupils to manage class and playground routines successfully. Occasionally teachers detract from the quality of their teaching by speaking too loudly to pupils or by letting pupils speak when class instruction is in progress. Such occasions, however, are the exception rather than the rule.
26. Teachers' use of resources is secure. The main exception to this has been in the lack of regular use of computers to help pupils with their learning. As a result, pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding of computer techniques to help them in their work and in their daily lives are limited. However, since the recent arrival of new computer hardware, teachers are beginning to take advantage of this facility and this weak area appears set to develop in a positive way.
27. Most lessons move at a reasonable pace to ensure that pupils make the most of the time available. However, in a Years 3 and 4 physical education session where the pace was fast the pupils increased their ball handling and team game skills considerably during the course of the lesson.
28. The quality of teachers' daily assessment of pupils' work is secure when they make verbal comments to pupils during lessons. All teachers make positive and constructive comments that help pupils to increase their learning. Some, but not all, do this with their written marking so pupils know what to do next to improve their work. Good examples of positive marking were seen in Year 4 and in a Year 3 and 4 class.
29. Teachers keep secure and informative records of pupils' achievement in English and mathematics and follow an agreed school format to achieve this. In other subjects, systems of

recording are variable and, generally, not up to the same standard. As a result, they are of limited value in providing appropriate information that will support future learning and are unsatisfactory. The quality and quantity of homework set is appropriate for pupils of this age.

30. There is a very good whole-school commitment to the inclusion and integration of pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic groups. This situation has improved considerably since the last inspection. Teachers are anxious to ensure that these pupils make good progress in lessons and are successful. The number of learning support assistants has been increased significantly to provide support for teachers and pupils. Most teachers make sure that this extra help is deployed to help pupils with their work in the most effective ways. Staff use patient explanation well to put teaching points across, particularly when they are emphasising basic skills. Teamwork between teachers and support staff creates good learning conditions that ensure pupils feel confident, valued and make good progress as a result. Pupils with statements of educational needs are supported by very committed special educational needs support assistants. Very good full-time support from a specialist source is provided for a pupil who is registered as blind. As a result, this pupil has many opportunities for independent learning and integrates effectively into the mainstream classroom. To support his learning he is being taught Braille and is following a Braille reading scheme. Furthermore, signs in raised Braille letters are used to identify objects and other pupils within the room. A teacher from the Minority Achievement Support Service visits for two days per week and works with pupils who have English as an additional language, one of whom is a refugee. A teacher from the Traveller Education Service visits each week to support three pupils.

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

31. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the interests and aptitudes of the pupils. It covers all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education with an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy. The school has addressed the weaknesses of balance in ICT and design and technology since the previous inspection. Teachers plan using guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and have improved resources to ensure coverage of all the knowledge, skills and understanding required. Full use of the new planning systems for these subjects are still in the early stages of development and require further work. Weaknesses in the breadth of the geography curriculum remain since the last inspection. Time taken to move from different buildings to the ICT room or the library reduces the time available for these areas of the curriculum and contributes to lower standards.
32. All subjects have policies and schemes of work of varying degrees of detail. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies form the basis for English and mathematics. Other subjects include guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The effectiveness of planning systems for other subjects of the curriculum is variable. They are weak in science, geography, ICT and physical education. A further layer of planning to produce a 'topic picture' is unnecessary as teachers plan all subjects individually.
33. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The school has implemented the new requirements for children in this stage and teachers and the nursery nurse have satisfactory knowledge of the early learning goals. A strong emphasis is placed on promoting children's personal, social and emotional development and ensures they become confident and learn classroom routines quickly. Planning covers all areas of learning and ensures that most children make good progress in their learning. Lesson plans focus clearly on what children are to learn and whole-class activities support all areas of learning effectively.
34. The curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, is very good overall. Individual educational programmes for pupils are directly linked to the outcomes of assessment and highlight targets to be achieved. Planning of



work for each pupil is the responsibility of the class teacher and specific work in literacy and numeracy is prepared to ensure that the pupils' particular needs are met in lessons.

35. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies effectively. Teachers have become more confident as a result and this contributes to the steady but overall improvements in standards, particularly in reading and mathematics. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and opportunities to learn and make progress in these subjects. The curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language is very good.
36. The satisfactory range of after-school activities contributes soundly to pupils' curricular opportunities. The Showstoppers Club helps build pupils' confidence and self-esteem and enhances the curriculum for English, music and physical education very effectively. Pupils attending the choir achieve a high quality of singing and gain confidence through singing in public. Other opportunities to attend football training sessions run by Peterborough Football Club and to experience theatre groups and visiting musicians, support the curriculum overall.
37. The school has good links with the community and partner institutions. As part of the Bedford Education Action Zone, the school has links with a wide range of local businesses, the police and De Montfort University. It joins with 15 other schools to improve the curriculum overall and to provide more opportunities to raise standards. Staff from different schools meet to develop curricular areas, which improves provision in school. Visits to the local church enhance pupils' learning in religious education. Pupils entertain local residents at Bunyan's Mead, compete in the Bedford Festival of Music and join other schools for concerts. Links with middle schools enable pupils to make a smooth transition to their next school.
38. The school makes a good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. A carefully planned programme of lessons and opportunities for pupils to discuss relevant issues during group times, contributes to pupils' good attitudes to school. Staff value each individual and help them understand school rules and acceptable ways of conducting themselves. Parents are pleased with what the school does and feel that they establish good values for all pupils. The newly introduced school council provides pupils with opportunities to contribute further to school life. The school is part of the Healthy Schools Project, which promotes a healthy lifestyle and ensures pupils learn about the dangers of drug misuse and sex education. No smoking signs around the school site highlight the healthy school project to parents and visitors.
39. The provision for encouraging the social development of the pupils is very good. The school values its members and encourages pupils to integrate well both at work and at play. In the classroom there are opportunities to work together in pairs or groups and pupils are encouraged, and are willing, to undertake various tasks appropriate for their age such as getting resources and tidying up at the end of the lesson. Midday supervisors encourage politeness and patience at dinner times by ensuring pupils wait their turn to collect their meal and to be told they can leave the table to clear away when they have finished. Pupils' awareness of people outside the school community is developed in history and geography lessons as well as through involvement with collections for charity. Various after-school activities provide opportunities for pupils of different ages to work together.
40. The school's approach to pupils' moral development is good. Teachers focus on clear values and pupils respond positively to the expectations of high standards of behaviour and acceptable conduct. This approach leads to pupils developing a clear awareness of the difference between right and wrong. They are generally self-disciplined and, by their actions, help to create an orderly school. Staff are good role models and their positive approach is evident in the way they deal with pupils. All teachers follow a consistent approach when they explain to pupils how they are expected to behave.

41. The opportunities for pupils to gain insight into values and beliefs in order to further their spiritual awareness are satisfactory. These develop both from the daily act of collective worship and from religious education lessons. In particular, the syllabus covers Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism. Their awareness is enhanced by the services held in the Abbey in the village. Pupils do have opportunities to appreciate the exciting nature of the world around them as with pupils in the reception class trying out porridge for the first time. However, the school does not always plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to reflect upon their own feelings.
42. The provision for cultural development is also satisfactory. Pupils start to understand their own cultural background from nursery rhymes, stories, music and studying the Tudors and the Anglo-Saxons. They also visit museums and art galleries. Painting and music help them to develop a greater awareness of beautiful things and ideas. Celebrating festivals such as Diwali and the Chinese New Year helps to provide an understanding of other cultures around the world. Nevertheless the opportunities to understand the diversity of multi-cultural British society are limited.

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

43. All members of staff show appropriate concern for the needs of the pupils and provide good role models to encourage their development. The care they provide is good. This is similar to the last inspection. Parents are pleased with the level of support in the school. They see it as a caring community where staff are approachable if there are any problems. Procedures for encouraging attendance and behaviour are very good and have improved since the previous inspection. The monitoring of pupils' attainment and personal development is satisfactory. Nevertheless, the car park presents a serious health and safety hazard at the start and end of the day. The school reminds parents to exercise care when bringing and collecting their children. However the mix of pupils and vehicles in a restricted space is dangerous. Governors identified the problem last year but action taken to date has not solved it.
44. Overall, the school has satisfactory procedures for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of the pupils. The headteacher is the designated officer for child protection and the school follows local procedures. Staff have received guidance on how to deal with any situations that may arise and know who to report to in the school if necessary. Provision for first aid is appropriate with two fully qualified members of staff available for emergencies. The school keeps records of any treatment given and sends letters or makes telephone calls home to parents if necessary. Contractors check the fire extinguishers and electrical items each year and the physical education equipment more often. Governors regularly tour the school to identify any problems. Teachers ensure that pupils are made aware of health and safety issues during lessons such as science, physical education and design and technology. A health and safety policy is in place though it makes no reference to risk assessment.
45. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development make a satisfactory contribution to raising pupils' achievement. There is a satisfactory range of procedures in place for assessing pupils' academic attainment and progress in English and mathematics but, in other subjects, systems of recording are variable and, generally are unsatisfactory. The school makes a careful analysis of assessment information gained soon after pupils first come to school and the results of national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 are used to help set individual targets for achievement. The headteacher assesses reading of pupils in each year twice per year. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 take the optional tests for English and mathematics. These results are analysed and are used to guide long and medium-term curricular planning, and to identify areas of weakness in teaching and learning in the core subjects. Assessment results also help the school to identify particular needs for additional support and to guide teachers with their planning of the curriculum. However, there is a particular weakness in marking pupils work. There is a marking policy, recently reviewed in November 2000, with the procedures for marking agreed by all staff, but inconsistently applied across the school.

46. The monitoring of progress of pupils' personal development is good though less structured than for academic progress. It relies mainly on the teachers' knowledge of the individual pupils. Teachers' records start with an assessment of the pupils' personal qualities when they start school and are added to each year or more frequently as necessary. The school encourages pupils to recognise the positive attitudes and caring for others in various ways. The reception class has a 'we are special' board and class teachers throughout the school award stickers for effort. Pupils have personal targets to achieve such as learning to listen carefully, putting up hands or working quietly. The hall displays highlight star pupils and the performance of the teams to which each pupil belongs. The school's approach to quiet discussion time helps pupils to learn to listen to others and to be tolerant of other points of view.
47. The school is committed to the inclusion and integration of pupils with special educational needs in all school activities. This includes pupils with English as an additional language. There are good levels of adult support provided to enable the school to achieve these aims. Pastoral care is a high priority within the school and its success is clearly seen through the confident way in which these pupils become happy members of the school community.
48. Procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour are very good. Discussions with pupils showed that they have a good understanding of how to behave and the behaviour policy is followed consistently throughout the school. The school promotes particularly good behaviour in the same way as positive attitudes. Though the parents could not recall any instances of bullying or racism, the school takes appropriate action if any occurs.
49. Overall the procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance and punctuality are very good and have resulted in an improvement in recent months. The award of Education Action Zone status has resulted in the provision of additional resources including staff from the Education Welfare Service. The school uses its newsletters and the meetings for new parents to remind parents of the need for regular attendance and the importance of arriving on time. Any unexplained absence results in the secretary either telephoning home during the morning of the first day or a visit from the education welfare assistant. The school awards certificates to pupils with no absence or lateness in a term. The keenness of the pupils to come to school, and the positive relationships with parents, result in good punctuality for the great majority of pupils. The computerised registration system enables the school to produce statistics though the facilities are not yet fully utilised. Punctuality is monitored consistently with appropriate records kept in the office of pupils who arrive more than 15 minutes after the start of the day.

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

50. In their responses to the questionnaire and at the meeting with the inspectors parents showed that they are generally very pleased with all that the school does. The inspection team supports many of their positive comments that show an improvement since the time of the last inspection. Children like coming to school and make progress from the level of support they receive. The school expects them to work hard and helps them to become mature and responsible. Inspectors agree with parents who consider that their children receive the right amount of homework to do at home and parents do feel comfortable about approaching the school with any questions they may wish to ask. Some are concerned about the range of activities outside lessons but the inspection team considered that the provision of clubs and activities is appropriate. A few parents also feel the school does not work closely with them though the inspectors conclude that the school provides good opportunities for parents to meet teachers and that the school encourages parents to become involved. A few parents also feel they are not well informed about the progress of their children, though the majority, who responded to the questionnaire, are satisfied with the information received. Inspectors consider the availability of information is appropriate but note that end of year reports do not provide sufficient information for parents.
51. The school has established satisfactory links with the parents and these contacts are effective. The headteacher sends formal newsletters home twice a term outlining various

activities that pupils are involved in as well as, for example, encouraging good attendance. There are also many others referring to more specific matters. In particular, class teachers provide information at the beginning of the year on homework and what parents can do to help. Every morning and afternoon provides a very good opportunity for parents to see the teachers. They are in the playground at the beginning of the day and stand by the classroom doors when parents deliver or collect their children. Inspectors saw many conversations taking place and it is apparent that parents feel that they are very welcome to come into the school. Each class invites parents to an open afternoon in the autumn term to see their children at work. The one formally timetabled meeting takes place in the spring term. The annual report on progress is sent home in the summer term. The quality of this written information provided depends on the class teacher. The reception class report, for example, provides a reasonable summary for each subject area. Nevertheless it is poor in some of the other classes, being very brief and providing only a general comment or referring to attitudes rather than the skills and understanding acquired. Reports also do not provide any guidance on how pupils may improve. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are appropriately involved in the setting and review of their individual education plans.

52. Parents' involvement with the school makes a satisfactory contribution to its work and to the attainment of the pupils. Pupils are happy in school and work hard and are keen to learn. These attitudes reflect the extent to which parents encourage their children to respect the school and education process. The meeting for new parents and other meetings on numeracy and literacy explain how they can help at home. Written material includes government publications and class letters on helping with homework. Pupils take home reading books every day and some of the reading records seen include useful comments by parents as well as guidance from teachers. Parents of reception children are satisfied with the information pack that the school provides but would like more opportunities to visit the school before and after their child starts. The Parent Staff Association is very supportive arranging both fund raising and social events including ones for the benefit of the pupils. Some parents come to help in the classroom on a regular basis and many more are willing to help on trips away from school.
53. Parents of children with special educational needs, and those with children who have English as an additional language, are informed as early as possible if there is cause for concern in their child's learning and kept up to date about their progress in school. The school's policy is that parents should sign individual education programmes although it is the teachers' responsibility to see that this is done. There is an informative leaflet on special needs that is given to parents when their child has been identified for educational support. Any concerns the parent may have relating to their child's development are investigated and parents are encouraged to speak to teachers about these.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The leadership and management of the school is satisfactory overall but the leadership of the headteacher is strong. She has a clear vision of the direction that she expects the school to take to ensure a quality education for all pupils. She is a firm and caring leader with a good level of professional knowledge and expertise. She has used these attributes effectively to develop and mould team attitudes and values so that, now, the majority of the teaching staff share her understanding of what all pupils can achieve.
55. A deputy headteacher has been appointed recently and shares the same vision as the headteacher for the future development of the school. The specific aspects of her role have yet to be fully defined but, at the time of the inspection, she was making good progress with the settling in process as a joint class teacher and member of the senior management team.
56. The school has permanent co-ordinators in place for most subjects. The success of their contributions to the leadership and management of the school is variable. This is because some have a clear understanding of the nature of their role and some do not. When co-ordinators are aware of the wider responsibilities of leading and monitoring a subject successfully, as in English, for example, their contribution is positive and supports both staff and pupil development successfully. When co-ordinators see their position as little more than being responsible for ordering stock, arranging events or providing teachers with information on courses, they are not doing the job effectively.
57. The provision for pupils with special educational needs, for pupils from minority ethnic groups and for pupils with English as an additional language, is very good. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has recently left the school. The responsibility has now been assumed by the headteacher who has a wide range of experience in teaching and advising on pupils with special educational needs. The overall provision for special needs is very good but a weakness is insufficient use made of ICT to support the development of pupils. For example, there are simple keyboards in the school but these are not being used to support the learning of these pupils. Provision for the financial management of special educational needs is successfully managed by the headteacher. The school identifies a significant financial contribution from its funds for special needs support and further development is an integral part of the school development plan. The special needs register is correctly updated and all pupils with statements have annual reviews.
58. The headteacher and the majority of staff are successful in ensuring that the school's aims and values are reflected in all that they do. Most teachers have strengthened their understanding and expectations of what pupils of different abilities can achieve in English and mathematics as a direct result of the leadership of the headteacher and the introduction of the literacy and numeracy hours. However, this understanding is not yet complete with all teachers and more work has yet to be done to change long established patterns of expectation. Teachers place considerable importance upon the need to develop pupils' self-esteem and work hard to ensure that all feel happy and comfortable about coming to school. The school also has secure systems in place to ensure that new staff are introduced quickly and professionally to school routines.
59. The governing body is led by an informed chairman and fully supports the actions that the headteacher is taking to move the school forward. Both the governing body and the headteacher are clear about what needs to be done to improve the school further. It is positive in its involvement and guidance and a number of its members are involved in school during the week. The chairman and deputy chair help in class each week on a regular basis and governors responsible for literacy and numeracy observe lessons in English and mathematics annually. Each governor has a class attachment responsibility and these various commitments ensure that the governing body as a whole is fully aware of how the school is progressing. Most governors attend each meeting and have various responsibilities on a number of committees dealing with specific aspects of governing body business.

60. The effectiveness of the governing body in fulfilling its responsibilities is secure overall. It has most policies that are needed to comply with statutory requirements and the majority of their documents are in proper order. There are a few exceptions. The school prospectus does not have a statement on parents' right to withdraw pupils from religious education. The governors' annual report does not include detail on the progress made with the post-inspection action plan, or on the various details about disabled pupils, pupils with special educational needs, or information on the professional development of teachers. A charging policy is not in place and a staff discipline policy is still in draft form.
61. The school's development plan is a positive statement and sets out a clear overview of what the governors hope to achieve over a three-year period for each subject of the curriculum and for other aspects of school life. The current year is then broken down into more detail to indicate the level of action to be taken, the time planned, the people responsible and an indication of how the success of the plan may be evaluated. Co-ordinators develop their subject requirements in terms of a priority grading system and put forward their bids for the headteacher to consider. Although this system is commendable, the link between projected forward planning and costs analysis in the school development is not in place and requires further attention to ensure that more effective management of the planned budget occurs.
62. The school has made satisfactory progress with improvements in most areas of concern since the last inspection. It has improved the programmes of study for ICT in both key stages by increasing the number and quality of computers in the school but it has not ensured that planning for all subjects and topic includes the use of computers and ICT equipment on a regular basis. It has improved the quality of pupils' experience, and their overall standards in design and technology, by significantly improving the number, quality and range of resources required to teach the subject more effectively. It is working towards an effective scheme of work but a level of inconsistency of use remains. Furthermore, teachers do not yet pay sufficient regard to pupils' own ideas.
63. The governors have been very successful in removing the inherited budget deficit of over £20,000 and now have the school on a secure financial footing. The school has had mixed success in improving the provision to support pupils with their learning. It has been very effective in ensuring that pupils with special educational needs receive more effective support through teachers matching work very carefully to individual needs in English and mathematics, and through additional teaching assistant appointments. It has been less successful in refining schemes of work in all subjects to show, in planning, that there will be a match between pupils' needs and planned tasks so that both higher attaining pupils as well as those with special educational needs are appropriately supported. This now happens effectively in English and mathematics but not in all other subjects of the curriculum. Teachers have not yet paid sufficient attention to improving the quality of pupils' independent learning, especially at Key Stage 2. The school has continued to find ways to improve the quality of parental involvement in pupils' education but there is still room for improvement in this area.
64. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance, and taking effective action, are good. The headteacher has a positive and constructive system in place for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching on a regular basis. This enables her to be fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of her team and to advise them appropriately. Staff job descriptions are in place. The governing body has a secure system in place for appraising the work of the headteacher and ensures that targets are set and the progress made towards them is monitored each year. The headteacher takes careful note of the school's test results, analyses them in detail and makes changes as necessary.
65. The school is making sensible use of new technology and secure systems are in place to ensure that the financial and administrative arm of school management is efficiently administered. All resources and specific grants and other funding are used correctly and the school applies sensible principles of best value when purchasing stock. Most of the

recommendations of the last financial audit have been acted upon, but not all, and outstanding matters require further attention and action from the governing body. These include matters relating to the policy on movement of money within the account, purchasing policy and the auditing of school fund accounts.

66. There is a sufficient number of suitable qualified and experienced teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. Staff are deployed appropriately and the match of staff to co-ordinating roles generally utilises their experience and expertise. The special needs co-ordinator and non-teaching assistants provide good support for those pupils with special educational needs. The specialist teacher for pupils with English as an additional language provides positive support for their learning. Staff more recently appointed have received appropriate support with satisfactory induction arrangements. Staff development is linked to the school development plan but also takes account of the individuals' needs. It is effective in improving both teaching and learning. Training for the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has been successful in providing a structured and effective programme of learning which has a positive impact on both the quality of teaching and learning.
67. The accommodation is unsatisfactory and detracts from the delivery of the curriculum and the learning of the pupils. The school consists of three permanent buildings and two temporary double classrooms with outside toilets. Staff report that these become exceedingly hot during the summer months and make it difficult for pupils to concentrate. Teachers make effective use of the buildings. They make attractive displays and the site agent ensures they are well looked after and kept clean. Nevertheless, there are considerable limitations. The rooms for children in the reception class are too small. In addition the lack of direct access to the outside means that these children do not have continuous access to outside play equipment for they can use it only at fixed times. Areas around the school for withdrawal of small groups are very limited and there is no facility for pupils with special educational needs. Movement of classes between buildings to go to the hall for assembly or physical education lessons, to the library or computer suite or to use the outside toilets reduces the time available for teaching. This is made worse in the winter months or when it is raining, as time is also needed to put on and take off outer clothing. In addition the opportunities for pupils to develop independent working are reduced, as they cannot easily be sent to the library or computer suite to seek out information.
68. Overall the provision of resources is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. Those for music are good and the provision for ICT has improved with the opening of the computer suite. The school makes appropriate use of the loan facilities provided by the local education authority to borrow artefacts for art, history and geography projects.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

**In order to raise standards further, the governors, headteacher and staff with management responsibilities should:**

A. Raise standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT:

- in English by:
  - providing more opportunities for creative writing and writing across the curriculum;
  - improving the use of the library to develop research skills;
- in mathematics, increasing pupils' skills of working out number combinations quickly;
- in science by ensuring that planning:
  - for each lesson matches the needs of pupils of all abilities;
  - over time makes sure that new learning builds on previous learning through the years.
- in ICT by:
  - increasing the level and frequency of whole-class teaching of specific computer skills;
  - providing regular opportunities for all pupils to develop proficiency in their use of these skills;
  - ensuring that a greater emphasis is placed on planning to ensure that ICT is actively used to support other subjects of the curriculum on a regular basis.  
(Paragraphs 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 17, 21, 22, 24, 26, 63, 67, 74, 77, 81, 90, 91, 92, 96, 101, 107, 116, 117, 120, 123 and 132)

B. Continue to improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that all teachers:

- give pupils more opportunities to experiment and work things out for themselves;
- increase pupils' ability to voice their opinions clearly and with confidence;
- raise the quality of their lesson planning in all subjects to that achieved in English and mathematics to ensure differentiation of work set for pupils of different abilities;
- focus far more on the development of pupils' independent learning skills;
- raise expectations of presentation and marking.  
(Paragraphs 3, 12, 17, 20, 23, 24, 28, 31, 45, 63, 73, 81, 83, 89, 90, 93, 96, 97, 114, 118, 130 and 137)

C. Improve the quality of the curriculum by ensuring that longer term planning in science and all foundation subjects ensures a steady progression of learning from year to year.  
(Paragraphs 3, 23, 73, 97, 104, 106 and 121)

D. Develop the leadership and management of the school by:

- clarifying the role of the deputy headteacher;
- making sure that all curriculum co-ordinators fully understand the nature of their role;
- establishing a closer connection between the school development plan, planned expenditure and evaluation of the effectiveness of spending decisions made;
- pursuing plans for alternative accommodation as soon as possible.  
(Paragraphs 58, 61, 67, 80, 84, 98, 103, 115, 119, 133 and 138)

E. Improve attendance and punctuality for pupils by:

- setting specific goals and deadlines for improvement and regularly monitoring progress;
- building upon the initiatives leading to the improvements in the past term.  
(Paragraphs 13 and 18)

F. Ensure the potentially dangerous situation in the car park is resolved as a matter of urgency.  
(Paragraphs 43 and 44)



In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan.

- Develop recording systems for pupils' skills development in all subjects. (Paragraphs 29, 109)
- Provide greater opportunities for pupils to reflect upon their own feelings and to understand the diversity of other cultures. (Paragraphs 41,42)
- Make sure reports to parents include attainment levels and guidance for future development. (Paragraph 51)
- Make sure all statutory requirements are met for the prospectus and governors' annual report and that all remaining points in the last financial audit are acted upon. (Paragraphs 60, 65)
- Consider an increase in the opportunities for parents of children in the Foundation Stage to visit. (Paragraph 69)
- Increase the use of sketchbooks in art and develop the level of teachers' confidence in teaching design and technology. (Paragraphs 100, 105)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

50

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

31

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0         | 6         | 32   | 58           | 4              | 0    | 0         |

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

|  | Nursery | YR – Y4 |
|--|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 0       | 211     |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals        | 0       | 98      |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

|   | Nursery | YR – Y4 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs       | 0       | 4       |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 0       | 68      |

#### English as an additional language

|   | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 24           |

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

|  | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 18           |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving           | 14           |

## Attendance

#### Authorised absence

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 6.0 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

#### Unauthorised absence

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 1.0 |
| 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 | 22   | 17    | 39    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 14      | 13      | 19          |
|   | Girls    | 12      | 13      | 13          |
|   | Total    | 26      | 26      | 32          |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 67 (62) | 67 (58) | 83 (73)     |
|   | National | 84 (82) | 82 (83) | 88 (86)     |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 14      | 18          | 22      |
|   | Girls    | 12      | 12          | 15      |
|   | Total    | 26      | 30          | 37      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 67 (60) | 77 (69)     | 95 (67) |
|   | 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      | 21           |
| Black – African heritage        | 0            |
| Black – other                   | 0            |
| Indian                          | 6            |
| Pakistani                       | 5            |
| Bangladeshi                     | 2            |
| Chinese                         | 0            |
| White                           | 135          |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 0            |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

### Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4**

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 9.4  |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 25.1 |
| Average class size                       | 26.4 |

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y4**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 11  |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 235 |

### **Financial information**

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Financial year                             | 1999   |
|  | £      |
| Total income                               | 362332 |
| Total expenditure                          | 348213 |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 1651   |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 7852   |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 21971  |

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

211

Number of questionnaires returned

33

### Percentage of responses in each category

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 88             | 9             | 3                | 0                 | 0          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 58             | 42            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 24             | 76            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 30             | 67            | 0                | 3                 | 0          |
| The teaching is good.  | 58             | 42            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 33             | 48            | 15               | 0                 | 3          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 64             | 30            | 6                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 64             | 30            | 6                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school works closely with parents.   | 30             | 48            | 21               | 0                 | 0          |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 42             | 48            | 3                | 6                 | 0          |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 48             | 52            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 42             | 33            | 15               | 3                 | 6          |

## **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**

69. All children enter the reception classes in September between the ages of four and five. Entry is staggered to allow children to settle into school confidently. The attainment of children on entry covers a wide range but is broadly below average, particularly in language and literacy and mathematical development. Baseline assessments made in the first few weeks confirm this. An initial visit, a booklet for children and parents to complete and information about school develops a partnership between home and school. However, parents feel they would like more visits both before and after their children start school to enable them to be more involved in their learning. The inspection agrees with this.
70. The quality of teaching is good for each area of learning except physical development where it is satisfactory and this is an improvement since the last inspection. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1, the majority of children attain the early learning goals in their knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative and physical development. All adults promote children's personal, social and emotional development very effectively and many children exceed the goals established for this area of learning. Although the majority of children achieve the targets for their learning in talking and listening, many do not attain the early learning goals in language and literacy or mathematical development.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

71. Children make good progress in this area of learning and become confident and willing learners. Well-organised activities and secure routines in the cloakroom and classrooms ensure children follow instructions and move around activities confidently. They share equipment and games and co-operate when playing together, for example, working together to make a model with plastic construction materials. All adults praise the children's achievement and behaviour. This encourages them to work hard, listen carefully to their teachers and builds their confidence. Good relationships between adults and children create a good atmosphere for learning. Children learn to persevere with tasks and concentrate for quite long periods of time, such as when making their models of 'pet homes'. When activities lack focus, children's concentration wavers. They enjoy their learning and join in discussion or answer questions eagerly. For example, they compete to name animal young or retell the story of the Three Bears. They become responsible for tidying up activities and organising some of their own resources, showing quite high levels of independence.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

72. Children make good progress with their speaking and listening skills, and reading and writing progress soundly. Teachers encourage children to talk about their learning and plan role-play activities to develop speaking skills. Children confidently act out the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Good support for children who have English as an additional language encourages them to talk with confidence. Teachers emphasise appropriate vocabulary when, for instance, learning about shape or the names of young animals. Children gain confidence talking in front of others when retelling stories or explaining the rules of games and they listen to one another attentively. Good questioning encourages children to think carefully and extends their learning well. Teachers plan their lessons within the framework of the National Literacy Strategy and this supports the development of children's enjoyment of stories and knowledge of letter sounds. They encourage children to attempt writing a story book and join in reading stories. Higher attaining children write their names and some simple recognisable words. Other children write strings of letters but below average children are only just beginning to make marks. All handle books correctly and turn pages from front to back. They understand that words tell the story but show little interest in the text and a reluctance to talk about the

books. However, although whole-class sessions develop children's reading and writing skills soundly, individual and group activities do not always reinforce this learning.

### **Mathematical development**

73. Good teaching with a wide range of stimulating resources and teaching strategies enables children to make good progress with their understanding of mathematics. However, many of them will not attain the expected levels by the time they start in Year 1 because of their low starting point. Number songs and rhymes develop number sequences but many children are unable to join in. Stories such as the Three Bears extend counting skills, so many children can count up in single numbers. They develop a growing awareness of shape and about half can name the common ones, such as square, oblong and triangle. Interesting activities, such as shape pictures, repeating patterns with multi-link and building with blocks, reinforce children's learning effectively. Children, who do not choose mathematical activities, miss this reinforcement. Insufficient planning for independent activities means that opportunities for further reinforcement mathematical development are sometimes missed.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

74. Children make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world due to good teaching. Brisk, lively class discussions and effective questioning enable children to learn the names of young animals, such as foal and calf, and understand that they will grow into adults. They link this understanding with their own growth since they were babies. Higher attaining children know that a caterpillar will grow into a butterfly and a tadpole into a frog. Children make porridge with the nursery nurse, sweeten it as the three bears may have done and then taste it. They express their opinions as to why Baby Bear's porridge is just right. They design their own pet homes, make models from recycled material and explain how the pets would get their food and different features of their models. They select boxes, straws and string and use sticky tape to join them together. Teachers encourage children to persevere with their models and evaluate whether they enjoyed making them. Children concentrate for a reasonable period of time. They learn to move the mouse around the screen to complete simple design operations connected with dressing the teddy on the screen. However, although children have some opportunities to develop computer skills, teachers do not consistently integrate this learning into all lessons. Celebrating the Chinese New Year through cooking, activities and games provides children with valuable opportunities to develop their understanding of other people's cultures and beliefs.

### **Physical development**

75. Planned physical education lessons and access to the outdoor play area at specific times enables children to make sound progress in this area and most attain the early learning goals by the time they begin in Year 1. They move confidently round objects and each other without touching or bumping. Learning support assistants ensure that children with special educational needs make good progress within their own capabilities. Children learn about what happens to their bodies when they are active, although they do not have sufficient opportunities to respond to questions asked. Outside, children climb across, and balance on, tyres. They ride and push wheeled toys confidently, kick balls to one another and attempt to shoot through a basketball net. Resources are good and staff supervise children well, encouraging them to share and move round safely. Lack of planning, for the development of skills during outdoor play, limits some aspects of physical development. This is due, in part, to the physical position of the outside play area. This restricts the opportunities that children have to move outside from inside without direct supervision. This remains a weakness from the previous inspection. Inside in lessons, children handle scissors and pencils with increasing dexterity.

## **Creative development**

76. The majority of children attain the early learning goals through secure teaching. They print and paint freely and use chalk, crayon and paint to create their own pictures. They make collage pictures of owls and snowmen using paper and fabric and paint self-portraits, including all basic facial features. Children sing enthusiastically and beat drums in time to music. They match their movements to music by clapping and marching. Good teamwork between teachers and classroom assistants ensures lessons are successful. However, teaching both classes together limits children's opportunities to experiment with musical instruments. There are many opportunities for children to play together in the home corner and to develop role-play through acting out their stories. These activities very effectively enhance children's creative development and reinforce other areas of learning.

## **ENGLISH**

77. Standards have risen overall in the last three years but remain below average at seven and when the pupils leave the school at nine. However, standards in reading are higher than in writing and are getting closer to expected levels when pupils are seven. Pupils make satisfactory progress with their learning overall although standards are not yet high enough. Results in the 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, show that standards in reading were below national averages but above those of similar schools. Standards in writing were well below national averages and below similar schools. The number of pupils at seven attaining the higher Level 3 is well above national averages in reading and is in line with writing. However, far fewer pupils achieve the expected Level 2. Test results have varied in the last four years but are now rising steadily. Inspection findings reflect the test results. The successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, with a wide range of texts used, contributes to the rising standards, particularly in reading. However, pupils are given limited opportunities to use their literacy skills in other lessons or to use the computer to support work in English.
78. On the surface, standards appear lower than those reported at the last inspection, but this comparison must be approached with caution because the system of analysis has changed since then. Overall, standards have improved. They are similar to 1998 but better than 1999.
79. Pupils enter school with below average levels of attainment in reading, writing, speaking and listening. They develop speaking and listening skills successfully through discussion and some planned opportunities to talk to each other in group situations. They use interesting voices to portray characters and gain confidence speaking in front of others. Pupils in Year 4 discuss their ideas for poems and express their feelings about how different poems make them feel. Most pupils listen carefully to their teachers and one another. Pupils achieve average levels in speaking and listening although their vocabulary is not extensive.
80. Pupils develop reading skills soundly as they move through the school although standards are below expected levels. However, the use of a broad range of books in the literacy hour extends pupils' understanding of texts and provides opportunities for them to develop a love of books. Most pupils enjoy listening to stories and poetry in particular, and join in class and group reading readily. Pupils develop a range of strategies to help them with unfamiliar words although the emphasis is on using letter sounds. Average and higher attaining pupils in Year 4 understand the main points of their books and read with some expression and developing fluency. Higher attaining pupils discuss characters and ideas within texts. However, average pupils struggle to read some words which makes their understanding of what they read difficult. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, read hesitantly and need considerable support. This affects their ability to use reading to help them with other aspects of the curriculum. Pupils have too few opportunities to visit the library and, as a result, research skills are limited. Parental support for reading has improved since the last inspection and contributes to the rising standards.



81. Standards in writing are below the national average. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 write interesting beginnings to their stories and begin to incorporate descriptions and effective vocabulary into their writing. They sometimes use full stops and capital letters in sentences and attempt to join their handwriting. Pupils of average ability are more successful working on grammar exercises and unaided writing is often short with simple sentences. They begin to show an awareness of different forms of writing and the need to punctuate sentences correctly. Handwriting is inconsistent with some capital letters used inappropriately. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, write phrases and simple sentences but rarely use full stops, and their spelling relies on sounds rather than recognisable patterns. By the age of nine, pupils write stories, reports, poetry and diaries. Higher attaining pupils begin to make their writing more exciting through effective language and descriptions, such as 'old and wobbly', and 'yellow slime-pit'. They achieve a reasonable balance between action and speech in stories and their spelling is usually accurate. However, although pupils attempt to make their writing more interesting, their vocabulary lacks breadth. This affects the writing of average pupils. Although it is often structured correctly, writing lacks imaginative language and punctuation is variable. The writing of lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, is limited through difficulties with spelling and the use of punctuation and grammar. Handwriting and presentation of work throughout the school is inconsistent and often unsatisfactory.
82. Teaching is satisfactory overall across both key stages but with some examples of good and very good teaching. Teachers have implemented the National Literacy Strategy successfully and it has improved their confidence and understanding of how to teach reading and writing. They use the introductory session effectively to motivate pupils and develop their enjoyment of different forms of texts. Humour and enthusiasm ensure pupils are fully involved in the lesson and listen carefully. Teachers reinforce and extend pupils' understanding of grammar and other language features through clear explanations and probing questioning. For example, in a Years 1 and 2 lesson a teacher reinforced reading skills through asking, "What did I miss when I read that?" This prompts pupils to identify and explain the use of a comma when reading aloud. Well-directed questions enable teachers to assess pupils' understanding and promote their interest. Good use of a variety of texts and other interesting resources, such as a puppet in a good Years 1 and 2 lesson, maintains pupils' interest and encourages them to offer suggestions and answer questions. Most teachers have good relationships with pupils and use a range of sound control skills. These result in pupils concentrating and behaving well. Teachers use the National Literacy Strategy to structure their lessons and plan activities to meet the differing needs of pupils. In a very good Year 4 lesson, effective planning, and the sharing of the expected learning outcomes with pupils, focused their learning and contributed to their very good progress. Classroom assistants provide very good support for pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language. They encourage all pupils to answer questions and build their self-esteem through praise. This enables them to learn successfully and make good progress. Brisk pace in some lessons, particularly at the beginning, keeps pupils on task and interested.
83. Although teachers use their knowledge of what pupils know, understand and can do to plan pupils' next stage of learning and set targets for development, marking is weak. Positive comments build their self-esteem but they do not guide pupils to help them improve or emphasise what they have achieved. The planned group activities are too often based on grammar exercises and opportunities to develop and extend writing skills are limited. The extra time allocated to English is not always used for creative writing. As a result, standards in writing remain below expected levels. In an unsatisfactory lesson, in a Years 3 and 4 class, lack of opportunities for discussion and low expectations of some pupils, slowed learning and pupils made little progress.
84. The co-ordination and management of English is good. The headteacher and co-ordinator monitor teaching and standards to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. An effective action plan and a range of strategies contribute to the improvement in standards

and parental involvement. The physical design of the accommodation prevents pupils making use of the library easily and, therefore, opportunities to develop library skills are limited.

## **MATHEMATICS**

85. Standards are below average when pupils are seven and when they leave the school at nine. The national test results for pupils aged seven for the last five years, including the results for the year 2000, indicate a significant drop in standards in 1997 but, thereafter, a steady climb in line with the trend achieved nationally. Results for the year 2000 indicate that standards in mathematics were average when compared with similar schools. On the surface, standards appear lower than those reported at the last inspection, but this comparison must be approached with caution because the system of analysis has changed since then. Overall, standards have improved. They are similar to 1998 but better than 1999.
86. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory overall and supports the judgement on comparison with similar schools. Teachers have a secure basic knowledge of mathematics and make regular use of correct subject-specific words. As a result, pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematical vocabulary is extended. Teachers use the numeracy strategy successfully, particularly during the session at the end to recap and consolidate the learning achieved. However, because many pupils continue to have difficulties with quick mental recall of number combinations, the emphasis on this part of lessons is insufficient to raise associated skills to a competent level.
87. Teachers plan for lessons effectively and make sure that work is set at appropriate levels for pupils of different abilities including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. Where teachers' expectations of pupils are high, as in a Year 2 class lesson seen on number combinations, the pace of the lesson is fast and pupils are expected to work hard and respond quickly and efficiently to the tasks set.
88. Teachers use an effective range of methods to make sure that pupils concentrate on their work. Most make clear to pupils what they are expected to learn by the end of the lesson and this helps pupils to develop an understanding of how well they are progressing. Teachers are firm and fair in their relationships with pupils and this helps to ensure that mathematics lessons progress in a steady and ordered way. In good lessons, such as one seen in a Year 4 class on multiplication, teachers set time targets for work to be completed. This helps pupils to focus on the task in hand and to complete the maximum amount of work in the time allowed.
89. The quality of assessment that teachers make is good overall. They mark work regularly and generally make positive comments to pupils both verbally and in written form. However, few teachers mark books with comments that guide pupils towards what is needed next to improve their work. Records of pupils' progress are regularly updated and keep teachers informed of how well each pupil is achieving.
90. Pupils make satisfactory progress with their learning in both key stages although standards are not yet high enough. By the time they are in Year 2, pupils understand various ways of representing addition and subtraction. The majority of pupils know how to count in twos with relative ease and know how to add small amounts of money although they find this difficult to do quickly and accurately. Higher attaining pupils understand the meaning of various mathematical signs, such as greater than and less than, and apply these in their work. Most pupils begin to understand the place of each digit in a number and are aware of quarters and halves in relation to telling the time. Pupils know how to use a number line to help them with their calculations and higher attaining pupils understand simple division of tens and units by units and know how to set these out in simple equation form. Many pupils continue to have difficulty expressing their thoughts about numbers and deciding upon various ways in which problems may be solved. Teachers guide them positively but do not always provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to try out alternative methods for themselves.

91. By Year 4, most pupils understand clearly the concept of rounding numbers up or down to the nearest ten. They have a basic understanding of numbers and their value up to 1000 but they are not confident in their table knowledge. As a result, they are unable to work out addition and subtraction of number problems quickly in their heads. Lower attaining pupils manage simple addition and subtraction up to 20 and higher attaining pupils know how to solve the missing parts of equations. They have a clear understanding of simple fractions and begin to understand the concept of equivalents. Most pupils know how to tell the time and understand the relationship between hours, minutes and seconds. Many pupils do not find it easy to work out their own solutions or to find a variety of ways of tackling new problems.
92. The co-ordinator for this subject has a satisfactory understanding of her role. She supports teachers by advising them on training courses and by offering them the opportunity to observe her own teaching. However, her understanding of the need to observe colleagues in action and to comment on their strengths and weaknesses, is underdeveloped. The use of ICT in mathematics is insufficient on a regular basis to support problem-solving skills and the development of number, although there is evidence of some provision in planning documents. Teachers make appropriate use of numeracy to support learning in other areas of the curriculum such as the recognition and development of the beat in music.

## **SCIENCE**

93. Standards are below average by the time pupils are seven and when they leave the school at nine. These are lower than those reported at the last inspection. Teachers' assessments for seven year old pupils in 2000 indicate test results above the national average and well above average compared with similar schools. The difference between the test results and the standards observed during the inspection is due to a combination of the difference of ability between the year groups and the weakness in planning for this subject.
94. Most pupils made satisfactory progress with their learning in the lessons seen during the inspection week, and those with special educational needs made good progress because of the close attention they receive from learning support assistants in particular. However, progress over time for higher attaining pupils is not satisfactory because of weak elements in planning for this subject.
95. Younger pupils learn about keeping healthy and know about the need for eating nutritious food and the importance of a balanced diet. They can name the main parts of the body and are aware of the stages between being a baby and an adult. Pupils know about the need to take care when dealing with electricity and they understand how to keep safe as evidenced by their completed work on safety posters to warn others of potential dangers. Pupils learn how to create an electrical circuit with wires, a battery, a bulb and clips, although they do not find this easy to achieve. Many pupils have difficulty representing their circuits on paper even with the positive support and appropriate questioning of both teachers and learning support assistants.
96. By the time pupils reach Year 4, most understand the requirements for plant growth. They accurately identify the component parts of a flower and know about the functions of each. They learn to classify mini-beasts into various groups according to certain characteristics and have visited a local park to further their studies into animal habitats. Pupils understand the basic function of the skeleton and compare similarities and differences between the teeth of herbivores and carnivores. They have a basic understanding of what is meant by a fair test in scientific terms but their experience of investigating and putting this knowledge into action is limited and underdeveloped. For example, pupils can describe the result of an investigation into how exercise affects the heart, but they are unclear about the process of reporting and presenting their work after tests have been completed. The lack of pupils' skills of investigation is also evident in samples of work – in particular with regard to pupils with higher ability in this subject where there has not been sufficient emphasis placed on the development of their skills of independent learning. Pupils do not present their work clearly, neatly and in a scientific way.

Neither do they make sufficient use of ICT to support their work in science through charts and graphs, for example.

97. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in both key stages but there are specific weaknesses in planning. Over the longer term, pupils repeat work of earlier years at the same level as they get older. Examples are seen in work on circuits as well as on themes connected with a healthy diet. In planning for individual lessons, teachers do not have clear objectives set for pupils of different levels of ability. As a result, all pupils basically do the same work at the same level and higher attaining pupils, in particular, do not make sufficient progress with their learning. Teachers do not focus sufficiently on the development of pupils' ability to test and work out solutions for themselves in science. As a result, the quality of pupils' skills of independent research is unsatisfactory. Teachers expect pupils to behave sensibly. As a result, interest in science and relationships between pupils are secure. Learning support assistants work successfully with pupils with special educational needs and this contributes effectively to the good progress that these pupils make.
98. The co-ordinator for this subject does not have a clear understanding of the role. As a result, leadership and guidance of both teachers and the curriculum is unsatisfactory. A particular weakness is the lack of monitoring of both teaching and learning to ensure that all aspects of science are taught successfully. Although new guidelines are in place, there remains a lack of knowledge of what is happening in each class and this, for example, allows repetition of work to occur that detracts from the quality and progress of pupils' learning over time. The main aspects of the subject are taught and so meet statutory requirements. However, there is an imbalance, with too much focus on plants and animals in particular. Links with other curriculum areas are being developed as are assessment procedures.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

99. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress in art and design. By the time they leave the school at nine, the quality of their knowledge, skills and understanding of the subject is at a level expected for pupils of this age. This quality has been maintained since the last inspection.
100. Younger pupils develop their observational skills as they seek to interpret the colours made by the flame of a burning candle. They increase their understanding of colour variation and how pastels and other materials may be used effectively to help them express their ideas. By Year 2, they have had a reasonable range of experiences with various types of paint and materials. They have started to use sketchbooks to express and develop their ideas through simple drawing, labelling and sketch work of trees and mechanisms, although this work is limited in quantity. They produce some good examples of pastel and paint shading in their finished work on winter trees in a Year 2 class.
101. Older pupils make satisfactory progress with their work on silhouettes in connection with developing design relationship between two figures. They explore and develop their ideas about how best to place their cut-outs on an appropriate background. In discussion, they are not forthcoming about saying what they think about the quality of their own work or of that of others. They demonstrate a clear lack of confidence to express their own ideas in a positive and constructive way. They, like younger pupils, have limited experience of sketchbook work and this is underdeveloped with particular reference to ideas that show forward thinking, development of new ideas and a final analysis of their work. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of colour, pattern and texture, but their knowledge of various art forms, artists and designers working locally and in different times is very limited.
102. It was not possible to see sufficient lessons in art to make a judgement about the quality of teaching overall. However, discussions with pupils and teachers about their work, and observations of teachers' documentation and pupils' art, indicates this subject is taught appropriately throughout the school.

103. There is not a permanent co-ordinator for this subject at present. The current co-ordinator has a satisfactory understanding of what the role involves but is acting in a temporary capacity and her management role is unsatisfactory because it has not been developed. The school does not have a consistent form of evaluation for recording the progress of individual pupils in this subject. Although there are examples of good practice where ICT is used to support pupils' learning in this subject, this is not consistent throughout the school.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

104. Standards have improved since the last inspection, when they were judged to be below those of pupils of a similar age. By the time pupils leave the school aged nine, the quality of their knowledge of designing, making and evaluating their work in this subject is at a level expected for pupils of this age. The adoption of new national guidelines has given staff support in building a design and technology curriculum to ensure continuity and progression through a recommended cycle of designing, making and evaluating throughout the school. However, there remains an inconsistency in lesson planning that affects the progress that pupils of different abilities make with their learning. In lessons where teachers set various levels of targets to be achieved, learning is at its best. Most pupils make satisfactory progress with their learning but pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the extra adult help and support they receive.

105. By seven years of age, pupils know how levers work and how to design and make their own constructions. They learn to evaluate how well they have achieved what they have set out to make, as with their recent work on vehicles. In one lesson observed, pupils were working with model vehicles and looking at the purpose of various parts and noting special features. When this happens, good levels of discussion take place about the similarities and differences in various vehicles. Pupils make drawings and label special features to help them gain a clearer understanding of their work. Some teachers lack confidence in their ability to teach this subject well and this shows through the variability in the quality of work produced in some classes.

106. By nine years of age, pupils make photograph frames and know how to measure reasonably accurately, how to cut wood safely, and how to join frames together, with cardboard triangles to strengthen them. They make rotating mechanisms, pop-up Christmas cards and investigate different types of bread as part of their study of food technology. Although the standard of work is satisfactory in Key Stage 2, there is a lack of consistency of approach throughout this key stage.

107. Teaching was satisfactory in the few lessons observed. It was not possible to see sufficient lessons to make a judgement about the quality of teaching overall. However, discussions with pupils and teachers about their work, and observations of teachers' documentation and pupils' art, indicates this subject is taught appropriately throughout the school, although insufficient use is made of ICT to support pupils with their design work in particular. There is clear evidence through the displays of work that, where there is good planning that matches the needs of all abilities, there is a subsequent rise in standards. This is more in evidence in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. Teachers expect pupils to behave and work sensibly together. As a result, concentration and interest in work is generally positive.

108. Although the subject co-ordinator has only been in post a short time, an audit of resources has been completed and an action plan written. A policy for this subject was redrafted in the previous term. In addition, there are plans for staff to receive in-house training, a design and technology day and a club for pupils after school. At the time of inspection the range of tools were barely sufficient to cover the subject needs. However, the co-ordinator recognises this and has started to organise resources to meet the requirements of the national guidance for design and technology and to increase the stock of tools.

109. Assessment is undertaken through the teacher and pupil discussing how their work has gone and how they could do better. There is no monitoring of progress in skill acquisition over time

and this is a weakness. However, the subject co-ordinator has identified this as one of the most important areas of her role at the moment and understands the need to go into classes to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

110. The quality of pupils' knowledge and understanding of methods of study, of places, change and patterns and processes is below the level expected for pupils when they leave the school aged nine. This level has decreased since the last inspection. The progress of pupils of all abilities through each key stage is unsatisfactory.
111. By seven years of age, pupils have studied aspects of their locality, supported by a field study visit to the local shops and shopping centre, in order to identify what each shop sells. The village post office has become a focus for their studies. A particular weakness of their overall experience is their limited understanding of basic mapping skills. Pupils interviewed generally had poor knowledge and understanding of the subject.
112. By the time pupils leave the school, they have studied the weather and created weather symbols. They have compared weather in the United Kingdom with that experienced on holidays. Pupils extend this experience by comparing the climates of different countries. These are then identified on a world map. They also study leisure activities and find named places on a plan and draw their own of the route they take to school. Pupils study plans of the locality and identify simple features such as the church and school.
113. It was not possible to see any lessons in geography in order to make a judgement about the quality of teaching overall. However, discussions with pupils and teachers about their work, and observations of teachers' documentation highlights weaknesses in teaching, thus the judgement on progress made through looking at samples of work, displays and through talking to pupils about what they know and understand.
114. In samples of work seen, some teachers do not mark work that has been set. When this happens, it is not possible for teachers to make a considered judgement about how well pupils are learning and this is unsatisfactory. Although the school is using new guidance documents to help with planning, the detail for Key Stage 2 is insufficient to ensure that pupils' learning is continuous and progressive. Pupils have a reasonable range of educational visits or field studies to widen their knowledge and understanding of the subject at first hand. However, there has been an absence of visitors to the school to talk about their experiences of travelling the world or living in different countries to help promote pupils' interest and enthusiasm for the subject.
115. The leadership of the co-ordinator is ineffective in ensuring that the curriculum is being planned and taught to the requirements of the National Curriculum. No monitoring of the teaching and learning has been undertaken, nor monitoring of pupils' books. There has been a review of resources and some aerial photographs of the locality have been purchased, including a play mat with an aerial photograph of the school and its immediate surroundings. Desktop maps that compare life today with that of 100 years ago have been acquired, including a CD-ROM. However, these resources have not yet been built into the curriculum planning to ensure a positive effect on pupils' learning.

## **HISTORY**

116. By the time they are seven, and when they leave the school at nine, standards in history are at a level expected for pupils of this age. This is the same as they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress with their understanding of past peoples and events. Pupils in Year 4 have a sound knowledge and understanding of history topics such as World War 2 and the Tudors. They show an understanding of life in World War 2 and ask relevant questions of a visitor to extend their knowledge. They begin to understand how evidence about the past is found and the conclusions that can be drawn from it. Although resources, including books, have been improved since the last inspection, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use enquiry skills to research historical topics. Consequently, pupils produce little written work.
117. By the age of seven, pupils show an enthusiasm for finding out about the past. They develop an understanding of the passing of time by explaining the development of transport, including the invention of the wheel. They place the events about changes in transport in the correct order, adding some reasons for change. For example, they explain that the solid wheel was too heavy so part of the centre was cut out, and much later metal rims made them stronger. They know of famous people from the past, such as Guy Fawkes and Florence Nightingale, and of their impact on our lives. By the age of nine, pupils have a deeper understanding of different periods in history. Study of artefacts, visits and visitors encourage pupils to consider different forms of historical evidence. However, limited research opportunities prevent pupils investigating historical periods in depth.
118. As only two history lessons were observed during the inspection, no overall judgement can be made about teaching. From the lessons seen, talking to pupils and looking at their work, teachers cover the curriculum adequately. However, the work is the same for all pupils and teachers do not assess pupils regularly or set work that challenges all, particularly the higher attaining pupils. Teachers use the local environment well and use artefacts soundly but there is no evidence of the regular use of ICT to support pupils' research into historical events.
119. Resources are now adequate and the school uses the guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. These are improvements since the last inspection. The management of the subject by the co-ordinator is satisfactory but with weaknesses. She monitors teachers' plans but has not monitored teaching or pupils' work. Consequently, although she has identified weaknesses in assessment, there has been little opportunity to pick up weaknesses in standards and set improvements in place.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

120. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is below the level expected for pupils at seven and by the time they leave the school aged nine. The quality of pupils' use, knowledge and understanding of this subject is similar to that described at the last inspection. There are three main reasons for this: until recently, insufficient planning for direct teaching of the subject meant that specific skills were not introduced or built upon; and pupils do not have regular experience on computers to enable them to develop their skills and to use this ability to support their work in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils do not have a sufficiently broad understanding of the use of ICT in the wider world. As a result, the progress of pupils of all abilities with their learning is unsatisfactory over time.
121. Until recently, the lack of progress that pupils have made in this subject indicates that teaching has been unsatisfactory. During the inspection, only three lessons were observed and the quality of teaching for these was satisfactory. Teachers seen have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the necessary skills to teach the subject. They organise small groups of pupils effectively to make the best use of the available computers and use secure whole-class teaching techniques to support pupils with new learning experiences. However, in two of the

lessons, both teachers and pupils were learning how to use new laptop computers for the first time. Teachers' planning for individual lessons took little or no account of the individual starting skills of pupils of different abilities. As a result, higher attaining pupils in particular mark time as they are taught skills that they already know. Further discussions with teachers and pupils about their work, observations of documentation and the very limited completed work, shows that this subject remains underdeveloped throughout the school. There are significant gaps in teachers' planning for its use both as a direct teaching method for specific skills and for its use as a subject to support others on a regular basis. Pupils are not provided with regular opportunities to practise their skills and their progress suffers as a result.

122. Younger pupils have recent experience of modelling work as they use their computers to design simple cars but, by Year 2, few know how to save or print out their finished designs. They are limited in their ability to use drawing programs, to write text with confidence and to discuss other ICT experiences that they have had both inside and outside of school. By Year 3, pupils are introduced to the concept of e-mails for the first time at school and few show any degree of practised skill on the keyboard. Pupils in Year 4 have a vague knowledge of how computers can be used for a variety of purposes but they are unable to readily identify other means of communication technology or a range of uses outside the classroom.
123. The co-ordinator for this subject is new in post and has yet to make a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. However, she has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve pupils' ability and skills with ICT. This includes observations and monitoring of both teaching and learning and the development and refinement of a scheme of work that has recently been introduced to ensure that pupils make steady and continuous progress. At present, although there is some evidence of planning for the use of ICT to support the development of other subjects, this is not widespread. Neither is it used sufficiently regularly for it to have a positive impact upon the progress that pupils make with their skills and knowledge of computer-based techniques in particular. A system of recording pupils' progress is in place but is not used consistently to be of much use to teachers in planning for pupils' further development at present.

## **MUSIC**

124. The progress that pupils of all abilities make is good. By the time they leave the school at nine, the quality of their music making is at a level above that expected for their age. This is an improvement on the last inspection. Pupils thoroughly enjoy music, especially singing, and this is of a very good quality. For example, they sing in tune, pitch notes effectively and they have a balanced range of sound production across the octave. This achievement is due primarily to the very high quality of teaching they receive from a music specialist.
125. By the time they are seven, pupils know that sounds can be created in many ways. They use a variety of voice and body sounds for pitch and rhythm. For example, in one lesson seen, pupils were working on a theme of 'fireworks' and could distinguish between high and low sounds and long and short sounds through the use of their voice. An early composition chart was displayed on a music stand and pupils created the firework sounds successfully by using both their voice and non-tuned percussion instruments. Pupils understand that tempo and rhythm are important to match a particular style of music and they know how to keep a steady, fast or slow, beat and how to clap different rhythms in response to their teachers' lead. Pupils understand how to vary the dynamics of their singing to fit the mood of the song. This was evident in their singing of 'Wake up, Wake up.' Pupils are very enthusiastic about their singing sessions and know how to sing rounds in two, three and four parts. Their confidence is outstanding and, when invited, they are happy to come to the front and either sing solo or lead the singing for the rest of the class.
126. By nine years of age, pupils have built on earlier learning effectively. This is because the overall quality of teaching is good. Although teachers use national guidelines to assist them with their planning, they also supplement these with a published music scheme with success. All



classes observed during the inspection had well-planned lessons appropriate for the theme chosen. For example, in one class pupils were working from a starting point using 'Timepiece' by the composer Paul Patterson. They worked on rhythm and conventional notation to represent the ticking of clocks. They worked in groups and organised a small composition, which was then played to the rest of the class. There was a significant increase in the quality of music between the initial rehearsal stage and the final sensitive, rhythmical playing of their performances. Furthermore, older pupils describe their experiences of graphics and explain how they match sounds to pictures or shapes. In the best lessons the pace is brisk and stimulating and that encourages pupils' interest and enthusiasm. This was particularly noticeable in the singing sessions. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory but does not involve monitoring of the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

127. Pupils have a wide range of musical experiences. Large numbers join the Show Stoppers Club where they prepare for musical productions. In the last year they have performed in Oliver and are now rehearsing for The Wizard of Oz, and their Christmas production was particularly successful. The whole school takes part in the Christmas Church Service, Harvest Festival, Musical Concert Night and May Queen Festival. The school choir has a busy schedule and takes part in the Bedford Festival of Music, the Children's University launch, the Bedford Schools Concert and the Schools in Harmony Yearly Memorial Concert in the Corn Exchange. Some pupils from the choir were invited to perform with an Opera Company for their performances of Carmen and Rigoletto. In addition, pupils perform for local residents in their carol service. The school has benefited considerably through being part of the Education Action Zone. One such benefit in music is the future funding for a National Choir to work with schools over an extended time.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

128. By the time pupils leave the school aged nine, their physical skills are at a level expected for pupils of this age in the aspects of the curriculum observed during the inspection. This is similar to the levels attained by pupils during the last inspection. Pupils, including those with English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic groups, make satisfactory progress with their learning overall. The school provides a suitable range of activities for pupils of this age group to ensure that all appropriate elements of the curriculum are taught.
129. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory overall, but good in Key Stage 2 where the pace of lessons is particularly fast. Teachers have a suitable knowledge and understanding of physical education and apply this appropriately during lessons. They teach pupils to listen carefully and respond quickly and safely to instructions, as in a Year 1 lesson with a focus on balance in open spaces and on large apparatus in the hall.
130. The quality of planning is generally effective with a clear focus on what pupils are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson. Most teachers make sure that pupils understand where they are heading at the beginning of the lesson and this ensures that steady progress is made. However, few teachers give sufficient thought to how they may extend further the skills of pupils who are already good at what they do.
131. Teachers make effective use of a variety of methods to ensure that pupils remain on task and interested in what they are doing. In the majority of lessons observed, teachers make sure that pupils work hard physically. A particularly good example of this was seen in a team game lesson in Year 3 where the pace was very fast throughout. As a result, pupils were out of breath by the end of the lesson but increased their physical stamina and knowledge of specific skills. They also developed their self-control and ability to work together effectively. Teachers maintain sound control of pupils because they set the ground rules clearly and simply. As a result, pupils enjoy their physical education and behave sensibly both independently and in a group.

132. Younger pupils develop their ability to balance on low-level equipment and to hold various positions with skills appropriate for their age. They learn to copy, repeat and explore simple actions of dance movements and to control these in time with various pieces of music. They develop their ability to run, stop and change direction with increasing skill and control. Pupils work together effectively by the time they are in Year 2. They know how to move without interfering with others and begin to understand the importance of sharing and of being aware of what others are doing around them. Most know how to kick a large ball to a partner with reasonable accuracy. Older pupils increase their skills of working together effectively as a team although teachers do not often provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to discuss and analyse the success of what they do or to determine how they might improve themselves.
133. The co-ordinator for this subject does not have a clear understanding of the role. As a result, leadership and guidance of both teachers and the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Until very recently, planning for continuous and progressive development of specific skills was not in place. The school has now adopted a published scheme of work but this has yet to be adapted to suit the particular needs of the school. The school does not have a consistent form of assessment procedure in place that enables teachers to record the level of progress that individual pupils make with the development of their physical skills. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is particularly good. Learning support assistants make sure that these pupils join in with enthusiasm and enjoyment and make good progress with their learning within their own capabilities.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

134. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress and achieve standards that meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus by the time they are seven and when they leave the school at nine. Pupils of all ages learn the principles of Christianity and important features of other world religions. Study of special places and special times show pupils how religious education links with their lives. Their attainment in religious education is similar to that of the last inspection.
135. By seven years of age, pupils learn about the Jewish way of life and understand the importance of Shabbat. They begin to consider special places, such as churches and mosques, and the respect shown when visiting them. They explain why books can be special, for example " every book has a little bit of magic in it," and know that the Bible and Koran are special to Christians and Moslems. They identify some bible stories, such as Noah and his ark, and important times, events and festivities in the Christian calendar.
136. By nine years of age, pupils develop a wider awareness of Christianity and Judaism. They learn about religious rituals and ceremonies, such as the meaning of food rules in Jewish families. Pupils know about the life of Jesus from his birth to resurrection. They link the importance of water to life and religion. They broaden their knowledge of religious festivals through finding out about the Chinese New Year but their understanding of Sikhism, the second religion in the Agreed Syllabus, is less secure.
137. Only one lesson was observed in each key stage so no overall judgement can be made about teaching. However, from the work seen, teachers plan using the locally Agreed Syllabus. Visits to local churches form a major part of pupils' study of Christianity but there are also visits to the local gudwara and mosques. The co-ordinator has identified the need to improve assessment of pupils' achievements. In samples of work seen, the work set for pupils of different abilities is variable. In some examples, all do the same thing whereas, in others, work is set at different levels to match more closely the ability of individual pupils. When this happens, all pupils make positive progress with their learning. In the two lessons observed, the sensitive handling of pupils' misunderstandings when considering the importance of special places, in Year 1 for example, developed pupils' respect for other peoples' views and beliefs.

138. The co-ordinator manages aspects of the subject soundly but does not monitor teaching or look at pupils' books. As a result, she is unclear about the standards that pupils achieve. Resources have improved since the last inspection and careful planning ensures steady progression of pupils' learning overall.