

INSPECTION REPORT

LANCOT LOWER SCHOOL

Dunstable

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109518

Headteacher: Mr A I C Hamilton

Reporting inspector: Mr G T Storer
19830

Dates of inspection: 17th – 20th September 2001

Inspection number: 193770

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lancot Drive Dunstable Bedfordshire
Postcode:	LU6 2AP
Telephone number:	01582 667956
Fax number:	
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Hughes
Date of previous inspection:	21 st – 24 th April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
G T Storer 19830	Registered inspector	English as an additional language Equal opportunities Science Art Design and technology Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well is the school led and managed? School improvement Effectiveness
G Marsland 13706	Lay inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance How well does school care for pupils? Partnership with parents
C Richardson 22058	Team inspector	Foundation Stage English Music Religious education	How well are pupils taught?
D Pattinson 19120	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Information technology Geography History	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

The inspection contractor was:

TWA Inspections Ltd.
5 Lakeside
Werrington
Peterborough
PE4 6QZ

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	20
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	21
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	24
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	25
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Lancot Lower School is situated in a mixed residential area on the outskirts of Dunstable. The school serves the local community living on nearby private and local authority housing estates, although about half of the pupils come from further afield. With 293 pupils on the school roll, this school is larger than other first schools nationally. The school faces a variety of social and educational problems. There is increasing unemployment in the area and a growing number of families experience hardship. Just over 8 per cent of pupils receive free school meals. This is below the national average, but does not accurately reflect the circumstances faced by families, as many do not register their entitlement. Pupils' attainments on entry have declined in recent years and are now well below average and more pupils are facing difficulties in their learning. There are 54 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs. Four pupils have statements of special educational need. This is about average for a school of this size. Almost 3 per cent of pupils are from homes where English is an additional language. This is higher than in most schools nationally. However all speak English fluently and so none of them need to receive additional support. The school also deals with a fairly high turnover of pupils. During the last school year 41 pupils (14 per cent) entered or left the school at times other than at the beginning of the reception year or the end of Year 4. In the absence of the headteacher who is ill, the deputy headteacher (acting headteacher) takes responsibility for leadership and management in the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a good education. Pupils make good progress. By the age of seven, most pupils attain or exceed the nationally expected standard in English, mathematics and science. The quality of teaching is good overall and there are examples of very good teaching in the early years and in some of the Key Stage 1 classes. The acting headteacher and senior management team provide effective leadership. They receive very good support from the governing body and together they have improved aspects of leadership and management. They have a clear view of the way ahead and are committed to school improvement. The school manages its budget effectively and provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- Children in the Foundation Stage¹ get a good start to their education.
- The acting headteacher and governing body provide strong leadership.
- The school makes good arrangements for pupils with special educational needs, who receive effective support and make good progress.
- The school's arrangements for the care and welfare of pupils are very effective.
- The very good range of additional activities extends and enriches the curriculum.
- Partnership with parents is strong. Many parents are actively involved in the work of the school and they contribute to the quality of pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- The more able pupils do not always make as much progress as they should.
- The school does not have the necessary resources to enable pupils to attain the nationally expected standard in information and communication technology (ICT).
- Annual reports do not tell parents enough about what pupils know, understand and can do.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997. Since then, the school has been successful in improving the quality of education that it provides for its pupils. The overall quality of teaching and learning is much better than it was at the time of the previous inspection. There are improved curriculum arrangements for children in the Foundation Stage that ensure that these children make better progress. In most subjects, pupils gain knowledge, understanding and skills more systematically and there are more planned opportunities for pupils to undertake investigations, for example, in mathematics, science and music. There are more comprehensive arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and teachers use assessment information more effectively to track pupils' progress and to plan for pupils of differing abilities. However, they still have a way to go in providing effectively for the school's higher attaining pupils. The

¹ The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class year. It is a distinct stage, preparing children for later schooling, and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and personal and social development, but also include knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development.

school is more successful in promoting pupils' personal (including spiritual, moral, social and cultural) development and as a result, their attitudes to their work are good. The acting headteacher, senior management team and governing body have improved aspects of leadership and management. Because they regularly monitor teaching and learning, they have a clearer view of the way ahead and they have improved the procedures for meeting development targets. The school has improved its partnership with parents by involving them more fully in the work of the school and by providing them with more information about their children's education, although progress reports are still not as detailed as they should be. The school also gives very good support to the wider community by, for example, providing accommodation and resources for the 'Cygnets' parent and toddler group. Resources for ICT are better than at the time of the previous inspection, but still fall short of what teachers need to teach ICT effectively.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
reading	B	B	C	C
writing	C	C	B	B
mathematics	B	A	A	A

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

In relation to their attainment on entry, pupils make good progress and achieve good gains in knowledge, understanding and skills. Progress is particularly good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 and continues to be satisfactory in Years 3 and 4. For a number of years, children's attainments on entry to the nursery have been below average, particularly in the areas of communication, language and literacy, mathematics and personal and social development. Assessments taken in the last two years indicate that children's attainment on entry has declined and is now well below average. In 2000, the results of national tests and assessments for seven-year-olds were in line with the national average in reading, above average in writing and well above average in mathematics. In reading, writing, mathematics and science almost all pupils attained or exceeded the nationally expected level², though the number attaining the above average level was lower. Taken together, the 2000 results were above those in similar schools, but this picture of high attainment is not consistent with the more recent (unpublished)³ National Curriculum test results for 2001 or with the inspection evidence. In the 2001 tests, the proportion of pupils attaining the nationally expected level remains quite high, though the number attaining Level 3 has declined. This is likely to affect the school's position in relation to schools nationally and to similar schools. Most pupils in the current Year 2 are on course to attain the expected standard in English, mathematics and science but the proportion set to attain a secure Level 2 or a Level 3 is again lower than in the preceding year. However, this apparent decline in standards does not indicate a reduction in the quality of teaching and learning or in the achievements that pupils make. The school's social and educational circumstances have become more challenging. Attainment on entry is lower than it was and in the current Year 2 classes almost half of pupils have special educational needs. Whilst almost all are making good progress, some will not attain the nationally expected levels and this affects pupils' performance in the annual tests. Standards in religious education are in line with those set out in the local guidance. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards in all other subjects except ICT, where standards are below the expected level at the end of Year 2 and by the time pupils leave the school.

² The nationally expected level is Level 2 for a pupil aged seven. If a pupil is attaining Level 3 at the age of seven, he or she is reaching standards above those expected for a child of his or her age. Most pupils aged 11 are expected to attain Level 4, with more able pupils attaining Level 5.

³ The 2001 tests have been marked. Schools and parents have received the results but statistical comparisons with other schools are not yet available.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school; most work hard and make an effort to improve.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Most pupils behave well in lessons, though there are times when the behaviour of a small number interrupts the learning of others. There is no evidence of bullying or of any other unpleasant behaviour in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils treat each other with respect, which contributes to the very pleasant and harmonious atmosphere in and around school.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupils' attendance has improved steadily and remains close to the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	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 is good. There is good teaching throughout the school and examples of very good teaching in foundation stage and Key Stage 1 classes. During the inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in all but two lessons and one lesson in 10 was very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers have sufficient knowledge and understanding to teach most subjects of the national curriculum well, which has led to improved teaching in English and mathematics. The teaching of English and mathematics has also improved because of the school's successful response to national strategies. Teachers do not, however, provide enough opportunities for pupils to reinforce their numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum. Some teachers are less confident with ICT and do not use computers enough as a tool for pupils' learning. Most teachers manage their pupils effectively. They use resources well to interest pupils and organise support staff to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are fully included, able to succeed and make progress. However, problems with the disruptive behaviour of a small number of pupils contributed to unsatisfactory teaching in two lessons in Key Stage 1 classes. Teachers use regular assessments in English and mathematics to provide work for pupils that is matched to their particular needs. This works well for average and lower attaining pupils, but work for higher attaining pupils is not always set at a sufficiently challenging level to allow them to attain above average standards. In other subjects, teachers' planning for pupils of all levels of attainment is often on the basis of broad target levels from the National Curriculum and not on what pupils know, understand and can do. This also reduces the progress of the more able pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school teaches all subjects of the National Curriculum and enriches pupils' experiences with a range of stimulating projects and educational visits. However, lack of resources prevents teachers from covering all aspects of the ICT curriculum thoroughly. There are more activities outside lessons than in many schools.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support. They take part in all that the school has to offer and so make good progress
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Teachers' planning for lessons and assemblies successfully promotes pupils' personal development. This is particularly evident in the quality of relationships that pervades the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a caring school. Procedures to ensure child protection and pupils' welfare are very secure and teachers use their knowledge of the pupils effectively to support academic and personal development.

Partnership with parents is a strength of the school. Many parents are actively involved in the work of the school and their contribution adds to the quality of pupils' learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff	Good. The acting headteacher and senior management team have brought stability to the school and are making sure the school improves.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governing body plays an active role in raising standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Governing body procedures for monitoring standards and quality are both rigorous and effective.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The governing body uses the school's budget and other grants effectively, according to principles of best value and in the interests of the pupils.

There are good staffing levels throughout the school. The school provides good accommodation and the quality of the outdoor facilities have a considerable impact on pupils' learning in science and in physical education. There are good resources for most subjects other than ICT, for which current resources are inadequate.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teaching is good.• They are comfortable approaching staff with questions or problems.• School helps their children to become mature and responsible.• Their children like school.• Teachers have high expectations.• Their children make good progress at school.• Pupils' behaviour is good.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information about pupils' progress.• How closely the school works with parents.• The amount of homework that pupils receive.• The range of activities outside lessons.

There were 128 questionnaires (44 per cent) returned and 26 parents attended the meeting for parents. Parents' responses overwhelmingly supported the school and the quality of education provided for their children. A small number of parents expressed concerns. The inspection endorses the positive views but also finds evidence to support some of their concerns. There are some inconsistencies in teachers' use of homework. However, homework generally relates well to the work pupils are doing and so contributes appropriately to their attainment. The pupils' annual progress reports do not thoroughly evaluate their learning. They do not give parents clear information about what pupils know, understand and can do. The school has worked hard to improve its partnership with parents. It actively seeks to involve parents in the work of the school and in their children's education. The number and range of activities that take place outside of lessons are considerably greater than in other schools of this size. Many of the activities that are provided, for example, in music and in French are of good quality.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards in relation to the national average or to nationally expected levels of attainment are falling. However, this does not mean that pupils' achievements or the quality of teaching and learning are in decline. In recent years, the school's social and educational circumstances have become more challenging. Many children come to school from a background of social and economic hardship. Attainment on entry is lower than it has ever been and in the current Year 2 classes, almost half of pupils have special educational needs. Whilst almost all pupils are making good progress, some will not attain the nationally expected standards by the end of Year 2 and this affects the school's performance in the annual tests. Pupils' progress is particularly good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 and continues to be satisfactory in Years 3 and 4.
2. For a number of years, children's attainments on entry to the nursery have been below average, particularly in the areas of communication, language and literacy, mathematics and personal and social development. Assessments taken in the last two years indicate that children's attainment on entry has declined and is now well below average. Many children have not mastered clear speaking and are unable to listen carefully or for any length of time, nor have they had much experience of books. They do not really know how to work or play co-operatively with others and have not begun to form the basic concepts of numeracy. Against this background, children in the nursery and reception classes make good progress in all areas of learning⁴. However, by the end of their reception year, many have not attained all of the early learning goals⁵ for children in the Foundation Stage.
3. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have made good gains on the standards that they achieved at the end of the Foundation Stage. In 2000, the results of national tests and assessments for seven-year-olds were in line with the national average in reading, above average in writing and well above average in mathematics. In reading, writing, mathematics and science, almost all pupils attained or exceeded the nationally expected level, though the number attaining the above average level was lower than in schools nationally and in similar schools in reading and mathematics. Taken together, the 2000 results were above those in similar schools, but this picture of high attainment is not consistent with the more recent (unpublished) national curriculum test results for 2001 or with the inspection evidence. In the 2001 tests, the proportion of pupils attaining the nationally expected level remains quite high, though the number attaining Level 3 has declined in all subjects other than science, where there was a slight improvement. This is likely to affect the school's position in relation to schools nationally and in relation to similar schools. Most pupils in the current Year 2 are on course to attain the expected standard in English, mathematics and science, but the proportion set to attain a secure Level 2 or a Level 3 is again lower than in the preceding year. However, this apparent decline in standards does not indicate a reduction in the quality of teaching and learning or in the achievements that pupils make. It is almost entirely a reflection of the changing social and educational circumstances that the school faces.
4. There are no significant differences in the attainments of pupils of different gender, or background. However, whilst most pupils make good progress, some do not. The reason is found in the way work is matched to the abilities of individual pupils. Teachers are

⁴ There are six areas of learning in the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage - communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.

⁵ Early learning goals – these are expected standards for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with the six areas of learning.

beginning to use assessment information to plan work that is matched to the needs of pupils of differing abilities. In English and mathematics, this works well for average and lower attaining pupils, but the higher attainers often complete the same work as others before going on to more challenging tasks. This is not an effective use of their time as it reduces the progress that they make. In other subjects the planning for pupils of all levels of attainment is often on the basis of broad target levels from the National Curriculum and not on what teachers have discovered that pupils know, understand and can do. There is little specific planning for more able pupils and again their progress is inhibited.

5. By the time that pupils leave the school, standards are in line with those expected for nine-year-olds in English, mathematics and science. Most pupils are on course to attain the nationally expected Level 4 by the age of 11, although few are working at above average levels. The school has adopted national guidelines for most subjects and this ensures a more systematic approach to the teaching of knowledge, understanding and skills. As a result, pupils in Years 3 and 4 continue to make sound progress. Standards in religious education are in line with those set out in the local guidance. As they move through the school, pupils achieve satisfactory standards in all other subjects except ICT, where standards are below the expected level at the end of Year 2 and by the time pupils leave the school.
6. The number of pupils with special educational needs is increasing year on year. Despite good levels of achievement, some face quite profound difficulties that result in below average standards at the end of Year 2 and by the time they leave school and this affects overall standards as reflected by test results. Where pupils have statements of special educational need, the good support, closely focused on the individual, results in at least satisfactory progress across a wide range of areas. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive satisfactory support and are included fully in all tasks and activities. As a result, there are no significant differences in the attainments of pupils from different ethnic groups.
7. Effective links with other subjects allow pupils to practise and consolidate the skills of literacy. There are fewer such links with numeracy and this adversely affects pupils' capacity to use their developing numeracy skills in 'real life' situations. All pupils make good progress in their personal and social development. This progress is an important factor that allows most pupils to adopt helpful patterns of behaviour and response and enables teachers to establish conditions in which profitable learning can take place.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The pupils' attitudes to school are good. Most parents confirm that their children enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic about what they do there. Pupils sustain interest and concentration for suitable periods of time and follow instructions carefully. There was a good example of this in a reception class physical education lesson, where the children worked hard throughout and swiftly followed instructions. The pupils know the school routines well, understand what is expected of them and most settle down quickly to lessons. They listen to each other during classroom discussions and are prepared to take their turn to speak. This was evident in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, where their response to questioning indicated that they had listened well. Good attitudes to school contribute to successful learning and the standards that the pupils achieve. Most pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude to their work. They are keen to make progress, eager to please and enjoy succeeding.
9. Behaviour in the school and playground is satisfactory. This confirms the judgement of the last inspection and the views of the parents. Most pupils respond well to the school's high expectations for good behaviour. These are clearly explained to pupils and parents in the school brochure, in the home/school agreement and on displays in the school. There are

some pupils who occasionally display challenging behaviour. However, most of the teachers and supervising staff manage these incidents effectively and problems are discussed openly and swiftly resolved. Most pupils with special educational needs are well behaved and respond well to the encouragement they receive. This helps to boost their confidence and enables them to take pride in their achievements. However, the behaviour of a small number of pupils with special educational needs is sometimes unacceptable and it is not always dealt with effectively.

10. The pupils respect the teachers who successfully teach them the difference between right and wrong and the effect their actions could have on others. There were no bullying or racially motivated incidents during the inspection. During the last three years no pupils have been excluded from the school. The good behaviour of most pupils has a positive effect on learning in most lessons and contributes to the welcoming and friendly atmosphere in the school.
11. Relationships within the school are good and have been maintained since the last inspection. Relationships between the pupils and between pupils and staff are caring and friendly. Most pupils get along very well with the adults who help them. Pupils work together well in lessons, sharing ideas and resources and helping each other to learn. At breaks and lunchtimes pupils talk sociably and play together happily. Friendship groups are mixed in terms of gender or race. Good relationships are a strong feature of the school.
12. The school successfully promotes the personal development of its pupils. As a result, most show respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. This was evident in a school assembly celebrating the Jewish New Year, where the pupils were eager to learn about other faiths. Personal, social and health education lessons also enable the pupils to discuss their emotions openly without fear of embarrassment. Pupils take responsibility for tasks around the school and are reliable and trustworthy. They act as assembly, register and tuck shop monitors. The pupils gain an understanding of the needs of others through the school's fundraising activities that have supported many charitable causes.
13. Attendance rates throughout the school are satisfactory and in line with the national average for primary schools. The pupils are punctual for schools allowing lessons to start on time. However, although actively discouraged by the school, some families still take holidays in term-time and this reduces the school's overall attendance figures.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching is good and contributes strongly to pupils' positive attitudes to learning and to the standards that they achieve. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection in all phases of the school. In the current inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in almost all lessons observed. Over half of all lessons were good and one in 10 were very good. There were frequent examples of good teaching throughout the school. There was very good teaching in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 classes. There were only two lessons in which teaching was unsatisfactory.
15. In the Foundation Stage, teaching is good overall. Teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants work very well together to establish a welcoming and calm atmosphere in the nursery and reception classes so that children feel secure and ready to learn. They carefully promote children's personal development so that they learn to work and play happily together. The staff establish good classroom routines and the children are confident, demonstrating good levels of independence as they pursue their activities. Staff use assessments very effectively to see what children are capable of doing. They ask direct questions and check children's work to highlight what they know and understand. This information is used well to provide a basis for future work. As a result, tasks set for

individual children are closely related to what they need to learn next. Groups of children are set work at a similar level, but challenging work is provided for those who are ready to tackle work of a higher level of difficulty. This helps children of all capabilities to make good progress.

16. From Year 1 – 4 the most successful teaching takes place when teachers give suitably demanding tasks to pupils of all abilities and expect them to work hard. This is particularly evident in upper Key Stage 1. For example, in a Year 2 literacy lesson, the teacher set pupils the task of finding the missing words to complete sentences. The teacher's systematic presentation of the task when reading the big book stimulated pupils' imagination and they tried hard to make sensible suggestions. When they moved on to written work, the task interested pupils because the sentences were set out in different colours on the blackboard so that they could distinguish them more easily. As a result, most pupils gave their full concentration and effort, higher attaining pupils moving on to inserting missing words into a poem. In consequence, they made very good progress in selecting correct or suitable words to complete the sentences in the lesson. Years 3 and 4 pupils concentrate very well when the teacher gives different groups a list of the words they have to learn for their next spelling test. This is part of regular homework and gives pupils opportunities to build on and extend their work in class.
17. The quality of teaching in literacy is good and is resulting in improved standards by the time pupils leave the school. Teachers share the aims of the lesson with pupils, who in turn respond attentively and approach tasks purposefully. Year 1 pupils practise their skills in matching objects with initial sounds whilst watching an alphabet video. Years 3 and 4 pupils recap learning in previous lessons confidently. They correctly categorise different sounds linked to the alphabet rap they have learned because teachers have introduced this new work with enthusiasm and skill.
18. Teachers have responded positively to the National Numeracy Strategy. Consistent teaching in mathematics is enabling most pupils to consolidate learning effectively. Where teachers place a strong emphasis on mental work, pupils' ability to manipulate numbers and recall number facts is improved. Year 2 learn to count accurately the number of cubes needed to complete addition sums to 10 or 20 when the teacher explains carefully how things are worked out and demonstrates the task clearly. Tasks are often presented as investigations and challenges. This encourages pupils to play an active part in lessons. For example, Years 3 and 4 pupils are very enthusiastic about their task of estimating how many people there are in school. By skilful questioning the teacher encourages pupils to think about different strategies for counting large numbers.
19. Teachers make strong and effective links between subjects. This gives added coherence to pupils' work and improves the progress that they make. For example, Year 1 combine elements of geography and history when they look at photographs of the area around the school and work out how it has changed over time. The current music topic in Year 2 has brought together elements of science and music. Pupils blow with effort and concentration across the tops of plastic and glass bottles, metal and cardboard tubes to discover which make high or low notes. They learn why instruments are different shapes. In Years 3 and 4 pupils' mathematical knowledge of scale helps them solve problems when looking at maps in geography.
20. Teachers have good knowledge of most subjects. They use this well to support pupils' learning. However, most staff are awaiting further training in the use of information and communication technology. Teachers prepare thoroughly for lessons, sharing plans with support staff and ensuring that books and items to support teaching are ready in advance, so that lessons can proceed at a brisk pace. Teachers plan lively lesson introductions, which engage pupils' interest well and promote their active involvement. For example, in a Year 1 science lesson, pupils were eager to describe the different materials the teacher

had brought to the lesson and explain which were transparent and which not transparent. Similarly, in a Years 3 and 4 music lesson pupils were keen to settle to their listening and singing after hearing that they would be adding instruments to their tunes later in the lesson.

21. Teachers select resources thoughtfully to stimulate pupils' interest and promote their learning. For example, in an art lesson pupils are motivated to think carefully about their colour mixing when they discuss works by Van Gogh and Monet before they start to work in the style of Mondrian. In English, pupils start to move and sing as they hear the introduction to the THRASS (Teaching of Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills) programme. They learn the rhythms very quickly and show that they can apply their learning and new skills consistently. Teachers used taped programmes in music and dance very effectively to motivate pupils and this develops their listening skills well.
22. Good relationships between teachers and pupils enable teachers to manage pupils well in most lessons. This successfully promotes pupils' co-operation and involvement in lessons. Teachers know their pupils well and readily respond to their efforts with encouragement. They show the value they place on pupils' work by carefully mounting and displaying it throughout the school. By these means, teachers successfully foster pupils' good attitudes and willingness to learn. However, where teachers do not make their expectations of good behaviour and active participation in lessons clear, some pupils are inattentive and take time to settle to work. This contributed to unsatisfactory teaching in two lessons in Key Stage 1 classes when the teacher was unable to create the conditions in which effective learning could take place because of the behaviour and response of a number of pupils. Therefore, they did not make the progress they should in the lesson and the learning of other pupils was affected.
23. Planning is satisfactory and teachers have a clearer understanding of what they want pupils to learn. In the great majority of lessons, pupils of different ability receive work that is sufficiently challenging and they make sound, and in Key Stage 1, good progress. However, demands made on more able pupils are not high enough. As a result, these pupils make less progress in improving their skills and understanding.
24. Teachers question pupils skilfully. This is particularly successful at the beginning of lessons when previous work is reviewed and new work introduced, and in discussions at the end of sessions, where teachers consolidate pupils' learning and assess their level of understanding. For example, in a religious education lesson in Years 3 and 4, the teacher's initial, well-structured questions enabled pupils to share and discuss their understanding of what constitutes good and bad behaviour very sensibly.
25. Teachers assess pupils' on-going work carefully through questioning, talking, observing and marking and use this information when planning future work. However, although marking is thorough, it does not consistently identify clearly for pupils what they need to do to improve their work.
26. Teachers and support staff work well to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language receive the support that they need to succeed and make progress. Teachers ensure that learning assistants are well briefed so that they can help all pupils to participate fully in lessons. Clear, precise explanations minimise the potential learning difficulties and carefully targeted questioning allows teachers to assess pupils' understanding. Pupils' individual education plans are usually sufficiently clear and specific to guide teachers in matching tasks appropriately to their needs. However, the quality of these plans does vary and in some classes they are not specific enough to identify exactly what the pupil must do in order to improve. The pupils with statements of special educational need receive effective support from class teachers and support assistants. With the full support of all members of the school

community, staff are committed to ensuring that they play an active part in school life both inside and outside the classroom.

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

27. The school provides a good curriculum for its pupils. This is an improvement since the last inspection. All subjects required by the National Curriculum are securely represented. There is good emphasis on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding in most subjects to ensure that work carefully builds on previous learning for most pupils. Investigative and problem solving activities, a weakness at the time of the last inspection, are now in evidence in a good range of subjects.
28. However, weaknesses still exist which slow the progress pupils make over time. Pupils do not have sufficiently regular access to computers and this affects the rate at which pupils develop their information technology skills. Neither information technology nor mathematics are given sufficient emphasis in other subjects to aid learning. Planning is sometimes not precise enough to ensure that the higher attaining pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Skills are not always taught in a logical order to help develop knowledge and understanding, for example, making skills in design and technology.
29. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils at the Foundation Stage of learning, in nursery and reception, are good and take account of the early learning goals. Children take part in a wide range of thoroughly planned and carefully structured experiences, which give them a good start to their education.
30. The curriculum is well organised to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to make at least sound, and sometimes good, gains in learning. Work is usually well matched to their particular needs and where additional support is available it is carefully targeted to help ensure that they make the best possible progress. However, some targets in individual education plans are not sufficiently precise to enable pupils to make the best possible gains in learning.
31. The curriculum places good emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills within English and mathematics. The school has successfully introduced the national strategies for literacy and numeracy to help improve standards. However, some of the impact of the mental starter and plenary sessions in mathematics is lost because teachers are not always consistent in their approaches. Literacy skills are developing well in other subjects of the curriculum and this is helping pupils to improve their knowledge and understanding of written and spoken English.
32. The curriculum provides pupils with a good range of learning opportunities and worthwhile educational experiences. A suitable range of educational visits, such as to Dunstable Downs, Totterhoe and the National Portrait Gallery, and a good variety of visitors, such as the dental hygienist, the local policeman and members of local churches, enrich the curriculum. The visits motivate pupils well by bringing their learning to life. There are also more frequent opportunities for pupils to use materials which they can handle and learn from at first hand. This is now a regular feature of successful lessons in science, religious education, music, design and technology and history. A wide range of clubs and 'out-of-school' activities appeal to the interests of many pupils and add to their learning and social development. They are well supported and much appreciated by pupils and their parents. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection. The activities now include recorders, French, line dancing and music groups as well as sports' clubs, such as football, and a popular daily after-school club.

33. Teachers make every effort to ensure that the contributions of all pupils are celebrated and valued. Pupils with special educational needs take a full part in the life of the school. All pupils gradually learn to respect one another and to support each other's learning. The inclusion of all pupils, whatever their ability, ethnicity or background, is given a suitably high profile to ensure that they have every chance of reaching their potential.
34. Teachers give good emphasis to pupils' personal, social and health education within the curriculum. They promote these areas actively and consistently as part of a carefully structured programme, which is embedded in the life of the school. For example, the importance of caring for others receives a high priority in regular discussions in all classes. The programme includes suitable work on the importance of a healthy diet and exercise for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Sex education is taught in line with agreed policy. Teachers often give praise to enhance pupils' self-esteem. Older pupils run the tuck shop and mark some of their own work in mathematics, for example, which helps to develop a sense of responsibility. Pupils in most classes have specific tasks to perform, which they carry out conscientiously. Fundraising for the local special school and hospice helps to develop care and consideration for others.
35. The community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning through the school's establishment of a variety of links with local organisations and institutions. For example, there are regular visits to local churches, including an annual carol service at the Methodist church. There have been links with the local radio station, community and charitable organisations, all of which have benefited pupils. Visits by younger pupils to the nearby Fire Station help to make pupils aware of the world of work. The well-attended and popular Cygnets group is an effective means of supporting local families by providing good quality pre-school education for toddlers and of promoting the school amongst parents of prospective pupils.
36. There are firmly established links with the schools to which most pupils transfer at nine years of age. Teachers of pupils in Year 4 communicate regularly with staff of nearby middle schools, some of whom visit to help ensure that pupils make as smooth a transition to their new school as possible. There are good links with local colleges, some of which send students to the school as part of their training. Links with the local playgroup and nursery are good. When pupils join the school from the nursery, their records enable teachers to build on their achievements and help ensure that the move is seamless.
37. The school makes good overall provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is an improvement since the last inspection, particularly in respect of the opportunities that the school now provides for pupils to gain a wider understanding of social and cultural diversity.
38. The spiritual development of pupils is good. The school complies with legal requirements in respect of a daily act of worship. The quality of collective worship is good. Teachers leading assemblies successfully create an atmosphere of calm and reflection and develop spiritual aspects effectively. There are moments of prayer and reflection in assemblies, for example, when the pupils thought about the suffering of people in America in the aftermath of terrorist activities. Pupils' spiritual awareness is extended when they express their feelings in personal, social and health education lessons and discuss some of life's fundamental values such as the importance of friendship or caring for others. Although there is no documented school policy for promoting spiritual development across the curriculum, this is implicit in the school's ethos of valuing each individual. In practice, much of the spiritual dimension of pupils' learning comes as a result of the rich and stimulating experiences that teachers provide. There were good examples of the awakening of spiritual awareness; for example, in the reception class a child gazed in wonder at the complexity of a spider's web, and in the Nursery children talked excitedly about the amazing appearance of a cocoa pod.

39. The school successfully promotes the pupils' moral development. The school's aims and values are familiar to the pupils and are supported and appreciated by the parents. There is a clear sense of unity of purpose in what the school stands for and the staff work hard to reflect this in the everyday life of the school. All class teachers and staff provide clear moral direction and reinforce good standards of behaviour. There is an effective scheme of rewards and sanctions and praise is used regularly to promote pupils' self-confidence. The school code of conduct is clearly displayed throughout the school and teachers successfully help the pupils to distinguish between right and wrong. The staff make good use of assemblies to reinforce moral and social values and the effect the pupils' actions have on others.
40. The school makes good provision for pupils' social development. The personal, social and health programme has a special focus for pupils to develop confidence and greater self-esteem. The pupils have frequent opportunities to work together and teachers instil values such as sharing, co-operating together and taking turns from an early age. Many pupils take part in school productions, special events and sporting activities and this adds a further dimension to their social awareness. Pupils are developing a strong understanding of citizenship and have raised funds for many charitable causes. All pupils take responsibility for returning registers to the office, assisting in assembly and helping in the tuck shop and in this way contribute to the school as a community. Visits to local places of interest and the example of visitors to the school make good contributions to social development and after-school activities enable many pupils to expand their personal interests.
41. The cultural development of the pupils is good and has improved considerably since the last inspection. The school celebrates the culture of the surrounding area through its community involvement. For example, the pupils have visited local churches and places of interest. Pupils learn about other cultures during assemblies and the study of festivals such as the Jewish New Year. Subjects such as art, music and physical education help the pupils find out about different artists, composers, and dance traditions. Displays throughout the school celebrate cultural diversity and include examples from non-western cultures. Educational visits have taken place to the Luton Museum, National Portrait Gallery and the Roald Dahl Gallery. Visitors to the school have included the local vicar, dance groups, a Hindu priest, a Muslim priest and a Peruvian parent and grandparent. These arrangements work well and help pupils to appreciate the richness and diversity of cultures that now form part of the shared culture of this country.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The class teachers and staff care for their pupils very well. The pupils know that the staff value them and relationships are based on mutual respect. The success that the school achieves in the support and guidance of its pupils has a beneficial effect on behaviour, attitudes and learning and contributes to the school's efforts to raise standards of attainment.
43. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupil's welfare are very good. There is a suitable policy for child protection. The school's agreed procedures are consistent with the local authority's guidance. Teaching staff understand these procedures and receive regular training. However, although the lunchtime ancillary assistants provide effective support they have not yet received formal training on child protection issues. The staff conscientiously follow the procedures in the governing body's health and safety policy. Fire precautions, electrical checks and whole-school risk assessments are carried out annually. Staff and ancillary assistants supervise pupils carefully at breaks and lunchtimes. There are good arrangements in place for dealing with accidents. There is a small well-stocked medical room and six members of staff are trained in first-aid

procedures. All members of staff are trained in resuscitation techniques because of the presence of the on-site swimming pool. This adds to pupils' safety during swimming lessons, which in this school begin in the reception year. Pupils are alert to health and safety issues because of the frequent visits of the fire service and police, who support the personal, social and health education programme. Posters throughout the school promote dental hygiene and healthy eating. The provision of the Breakfast Club and After-School Club make a very valuable contribution to the care and welfare of the pupils and strengthen the school's partnership with parents and the community.

44. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. The school takes a firm line on attendance and requires parents to write an absence letter whenever a pupil is absent. The secretary monitors attendance each day and immediately contacts the parents of any pupil who is absent. She informs the acting headteacher if any pupil's attendance is a cause for concern. The secretary checks that all absence letters are received. The educational welfare officer also visits the school each half term to monitor attendance levels and provides additional support when necessary. The school plays an active part in a local initiative aimed at improving the attendance of disaffected pupils.
45. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. There is an effective behaviour and anti-bullying policy, which has the active support of the parents. Most staff and lunchtime ancillary assistants consistently implement the behaviour guidelines, which are fully understood by the pupils. An appropriate scheme of sanctions is in place. Procedures for promoting good behaviour include badges, star charts and 'well done' stamps. No bullying was seen during the inspection and when challenging behaviour did occur most staff dealt with it swiftly and effectively. Serious incidents of challenging behaviour or bullying are recorded and referred to the acting headteacher, who works closely with staff and parents and takes action as necessary.
46. Procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development are good. The teachers know their pupils well. Personal, social and health education throughout the school makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' personal development. Teachers use a discussion period called 'circle time' to enable pupils to sit together in a circle and discuss relevant issues such as kindness and friendship. The pupils set and review their own targets for behaviour, literacy and numeracy in co-operation with their teachers and parents. This makes them evaluate their learning and progress and helps them to understand what they have to do in order to improve. The school maintains effective links with outside agencies, such as health professionals and the police, which also help to support the academic and personal development of the pupils.
47. The school's arrangements for monitoring pupils' academic progress are good and have improved since the last inspection. Governors and senior staff analyse assessment data, such as that resulting from national tests. They set targets and carefully monitor progress towards meeting them. Staff assess pupils regularly in English, mathematics and science as they move through the school. Core subject recording systems are varied and thorough, and are embedded in the school's work. For example, teachers track pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. These approaches are helping to improve pupils' performance over time. However, the quality of assessment arrangements in other subjects is more variable. For example, in information technology, arrangements focus on what pupils have done rather than what they have learnt. In most other subjects, there are no consistent approaches to assessing how pupils acquire important skills so that work can carefully build on previous learning.
48. Assessments undertaken soon after pupils begin school help staff in the foundation stage establish the correct starting points for children's formal education. They are used to group pupils according to ability so that teachers can match work more precisely to their

needs. Teachers carry out a variety of tests and assessments, mostly in English, mathematics and science, as pupils move through the school. These enable teachers to:

- discover what pupils know and understand;
- obtain information which enables them to set individual targets for pupils to help with their learning;
- place pupils in groups by ability so that work is more closely matched to their precise needs;
- plan work for pupils of different abilities;
- help teachers assess pupils' work against National Curriculum levels.

49. However, there are few examples of pupils' work, levelled and annotated to National Curriculum requirements, to ensure consistency of judgements about levels. As a result, teachers have been reluctant to award pupils an above-average level in science at the end of Year 2 and in this way do not always give full credit to pupils' achievements or to overall standards in the school. Teachers are beginning to link assessment and planning more closely. However, marking or other assessments following lessons are inconsistent and sometimes do not indicate sufficiently clearly what pupils must learn next time in order to build carefully on what they already know and understand. As a result, work planned for some groups, mostly for higher attaining pupils, is sometimes too easy or difficult and this slows their progress.
50. Pupils with special educational needs are quickly identified through the initial assessment following admission. Teachers use this information well to set precise targets on pupils' individual education plans of what is needed to help them improve. Most teachers monitor pupils' work carefully in order to evaluate the progress they are making towards meeting their targets and to establish what will be needed next. As a result, most pupils make good progress. However there is some inconsistency in the quality of individual education plans. Some are too general in the targets they set, do not present clear criteria for evaluations and as such do little to improve pupils learning.
51. Older pupils have started to become involved in assessing their own work, such as through marking tests in mathematics and taking ownership of their targets to help them improve. This is helping them to become more involved in, and more responsible for, their own learning. It is helping to give pupils pride and a greater understanding of how they can improve further.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. The school works very effectively with parents. The quality of this partnership has improved considerably since the last inspection. The school's success in this area is reflected in the fact that parents express overwhelming support for the school and for the quality of education that it provides.
53. The school maintains very good links with parents. Frequent newsletters keep the parents informed about forthcoming events and about the pupils' achievements. The acting headteacher and staff are very accessible. Parents feel comfortable when approaching staff in order to seek information or to resolve problems that occur. A suitable home/school agreement has been distributed and the majority of parents have promptly signed and returned it. The school actively seeks parents' opinions and responds to their concerns. Parents responded positively to a recent survey and some parents are involved in the school improvement working party. The parents of pupils with special educational needs receive regular information about their children's progress and are fully involved in the target setting and review process. School productions at Easter and Christmas and the monthly consultation evenings for parents are also very well attended.
54. The school has a home/school liaison policy, which is committed to building links with

parents. As a result, parental involvement has a very good effect on the life of the school. The Lancot Home and School Association provides very good support organising social and fund-raising events. The association consists of governors, parents, staff and school sports coaches. A very substantial sum was raised during 1999/00 and at present the Association is involved in the 'buy a brick' appeal to raise additional funds for the planned information communications technology suite. Parents also support the school tuck shop, weekly cake stall and uniform shop. Many parents give freely of their time to help in classrooms, listen to readers and accompany the pupils on educational visits. Parents also support after-school activities by giving their skills and expertise to act as teachers and coaches for the French club, football and line dancing sessions. As a result, the school provides a better range of activities outside of lessons than is found in many similar schools.

55. The quality of information for parents is satisfactory. The school has hosted sessions for parents to help them to understand the aims of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Information about what the pupils will be learning in the coming year is also distributed to parents at the start of each term. The governors' report and school brochure are informative and contain all the required information. Parents have the opportunity to consult the staff formally every month to discuss their children's progress and to agree targets for improving their work. Parents have indicated that they are pleased with the results of the targets set for the pupils in English and mathematics. There are also 'walkabouts' each term so that parents can see the work that the school and their child has done. However, the pupils' annual progress reports are unsatisfactory. Absence figures and National Curriculum levels are now included but there is not enough information regarding the pupils' knowledge and understanding and targets to improve their work. Although much of this information is discussed at the monthly consultation with parents, not all will be able to attend, and for this reason, the quality of written reports needs to be improved.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The quality of leadership and management are good. The acting headteacher and senior management team manage the school effectively. The acting headteacher provides very good leadership. She has generated a strong team spirit amongst the staff. Staff have a renewed commitment to supporting each other and to helping the school to improve. There is a greater consistency of approach that ensures that the school's fundamental aims and values are reflected in the most important areas of the school's work. This results in a pleasant learning environment, within which most pupils are confident and well behaved. The acting headteacher has a clear view of what the school needs to do to improve the quality of pupils' education and the standards that they attain. She has already begun to introduce suitable measures to do this. For example, senior staff monitor teaching and learning more rigorously, with the result that planning for school improvement is now better than it was.
57. The management of the curriculum is satisfactory. Key Stage co-ordinators lead the teaching teams effectively, ensuring that planning for each phase is coherent and consistent. Teachers have taken on the responsibility for managing a subject throughout the school. They are enthusiastic and are developing an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. Most have been able to improve this understanding by seeing other teachers at work. However, the current programme of co-ordinator monitoring takes in all subjects, so whilst all co-ordinators have regular brief opportunities to monitor standards and quality in their subjects, none has the time to do it in depth. This reduces their effectiveness as subject managers. Issues relating to special educational needs are managed well. The special educational needs co-ordinator and the responsible governor oversee this important area effectively. The co-ordinator gives good leadership, ensuring that support staff have clear roles and responsibilities, work well together and are

valued. She conscientiously maintains and regularly updates the special needs register and ensures that plans for development are clear, realistic and focused.

58. The governing body is very effective in fulfilling its responsibilities and in making sure that the school provides all that it should for the pupils. There have been substantial improvements in this area since the last inspection. The governing body is fully involved in the monitoring programme and as a result is now very well informed. Governors have a clearer picture of what goes on in the school and so have a greater understanding of what needs to be done. They work very well together through their committees. For example, governors have gained a very good grasp of the school's financial dealings as a result of the work of an effective finance committee. Individual governors oversee work in literacy and numeracy and all other subjects of the curriculum and the governor responsible for monitoring special educational needs is closely involved in all stages of the process. There are also links between governors and individual year groups. Visits by governors, either to observe the teaching of a particular subject or to sample the work within a year group, are always followed by feedback to the staff concerned and a report to the full governing body. This conscientious and professional approach means that governors can be rigorous in holding the school to account for aspects of its work, whilst providing effective support through the newly developed school improvement programme.
59. Since the last inspection, there have been improvements in the way the school monitors, evaluates and develops its teaching. Arrangements for analysing pupils' performance data are more thorough than at the time of the previous inspection. This enables the school to meet pupils' needs more effectively. Teachers and governors compare the achievements of pupils at Lancot Lower School with those of pupils nationally and in similar schools. The senior management team looks for differences in the attainments of different groups of reception or Year 2 pupils from year to year in order to identify strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum. This has resulted, for example, in measures to improve pupils' writing. The school also tracks the progress of pupils in other year groups and uses the information to set targets, to identify pupils needing additional support or to establish ability groups for some lessons in Key Stage 2 classes.
60. The school identifies suitable priorities. They are clearly set out in its improvement plan, together with specific targets and suitable action plans to help it to achieve its intentions. There is a continuing focus on what the school plans to do to improve the areas of weakness that were pointed out in the previous inspection. In addition, the school has thoughtfully identified other issues, including improving the quality of the school's provision for ICT. Financial planning effectively links spending with priorities in the school's development plan. This is a further improvement on the planning that resulted from the 1997 inspection. The acting headteacher and governing body systematically and thoroughly review progress towards improvement targets and amend the plan, where necessary, to ensure that adequate time and funding is available for staff to carry out improvements thoroughly.
61. Careful financial planning effectively supports the school's educational aims and priorities. This planning is appropriately forward-looking and governors are already considering initiatives that extend beyond the current year, such as finding the on-going funding necessary for the planned ICT suite. This ensures that the school meets its financial commitments and targets available funds on identified areas for development that are carefully linked with its drive to raise pupils' attainment and improve the quality of education provided. The governing body, in close collaboration with the headteacher and school administrator, manages the school's delegated budget very efficiently. The administrator gives very good support to the governing body. She monitors the school's budget and provides the up-to-date financial information that is essential to inform governors' planning and decisions. The school uses specific grant funding, such as the government's Standards Fund, appropriately. The school applies the principles of best

value for money well. It uses data to compare its performance with that of similar schools and strives to improve the performance of all of its pupils. It is careful to ensure that services provided by outside bodies are economic and effective. The school provides sound value for money.

62. The number of teachers and support staff effectively meets the demands of the curriculum and enables the school to give good support to pupils with special educational needs. Members of the teaching staff are all very experienced. They have also benefited from suitable in-service training to keep them abreast of new developments, such as the introduction of the national strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy, or to prepare them for new areas of responsibility. The school has made suitable arrangements to manage the performance of teachers and these are beginning to contribute to improvements in teaching and learning. There are also suitable arrangements for the induction and support of newly qualified teachers, although these are not presently in operation. Training is also extended to include ancillary and administrative staff as well as to governors. Together, these arrangements help teachers consolidate their teaching skills and overcome difficulties that arise and allow other members of the school's non-teaching staff and governing body to carry out their duties more effectively.
63. The accommodation is good. The school is situated in extensive grounds surrounded by trees and shrubs. The school has a large playing field and an outdoor swimming pool. These facilities add considerably to the schools resources for teaching aspects of physical education, science and geography. Staff use these facilities well and this improves the quality of pupils' learning in these subjects. All classrooms are of a suitable size and there is a large hard play area where the pupils can play safely at break times. Accommodation for the Foundation Stage children is of a high standard with a secure play area that provides very good facilities for children's personal, social and physical development. The building is clean and well maintained by the on-site manager and staff. Teaching resources for most subjects are at least satisfactory and in some, such as physical education, science, art, religious education and music, they are good. However, the school does not have enough computers or the necessary range of programs to develop pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. In order to extend the school's current achievements, the governors, headteacher and staff should jointly:

- (1) raise standards of attainment in information and communication technology by:
 - i) ensuring that staff plan more systematically for the use of ICT in all subjects of the curriculum;
 - ii) ensuring that assessments focus on what individual pupils know, understand and can do and that teachers use these assessments to plan the next stages of pupils' learning;
 - iii) completing the planned programme of training so that all staff have the necessary expertise to teach ICT more effectively;
 - iv) carrying through the planned expansion of resources and facilities and ensure that these are used efficiently to improve the teaching and learning of ICT;

(paragraphs 5, 28, 85, 112, 117 and 122)

- (2) improve the progress made by higher attaining pupils by:
 - i) ensuring that teachers use assessment information more systematically to plan tasks that are challenging enough to move higher attaining pupils forward in English, mathematics and science;
 - ii) ensuring that higher attaining pupils do not waste time completing tasks that are too easy before going on to more demanding work;
 - iii) giving greater emphasis to developing the skills of writing, so that all pupils, but especially the higher attaining, develop greater fluency and competence in communicating their ideas in writing;
 - iv) improving the quality and range of reading books available to more able readers so that they are more motivated to read widely and for pleasure;
 - v) ensuring that teachers plan more opportunities for pupils to reinforce numeracy skills through work in other subjects;

(paragraphs 3, 4, 7, 23, 28, 49, 82, 85, 87, 89, 93, 97, 102, 112 and 117)

- (3) improve the quality of information for parents by:
 - i) ensuring that pupils annual progress reports tell parents more about what pupils know, understand and can do and about what they need to do in order to improve (paragraph 55)

OTHER ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- i) Ensure that the small number of pupils who behave badly do not disrupt the learning of others; (paragraphs 9, 22, 112 and 132-133)
- ii) ensure that all individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs contain the necessary detail to guide teachers planning effectively; (paragraphs: 30 and 50)
- iii) provide more opportunities for pupils to evaluate their work, particularly in art and in design and technology, and to consolidate their learning by reflecting on what has worked well and what has not. (paragraph 109)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	53
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
Number	0	5	24	21	2	0	0
Percentage	0	10	46	40	4	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents two percentage point[s].

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)	33	260
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	21

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	1	54

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	8

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	31
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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 (Year 2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	18	21	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	14	18
	Girls	21	20	19
	Total	36	34	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (89)	87 (81)	95 (98)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	14	18
	Girls	21	20	21
	Total	36	34	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (94)	87 (95)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	3
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	198
Any other minority ethnic group	2

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)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	145.25

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	33
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	35.75
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000 / 01
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	532,172.00
Total expenditure	529,127.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,092.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	3,040.00
Balance carried forward to next year	6,085.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0.0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0.0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0.0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 39%

Number of questionnaires sent out	326
Number of questionnaires returned	128

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	38	5	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	52	6	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	48	6	2	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	54	20	3	0
The teaching is good.	36	59	2	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	48	26	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	47	48	4	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	31	61	4	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	25	50	25	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	25	55	6	6	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	30	64	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	46	13	2	4

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

65. Children enter the nursery after their third birthday and transfer to reception in the September or January before their fifth birthday. The attainment of most children when they enter the nursery is well below that typical of children of this age, particularly in the areas of language and communication and personal and social skills. Boys, girls and children with special educational needs make good progress across the areas of learning recommended for young children. As a result, by the time they are five, the majority of children are closer to the expected levels of attainment in communication, language and literacy, numeracy and knowledge and understanding of the world. They are still, however, below the levels expected for their age in these areas. In personal and social, creative and physical development they achieve levels typical of children of age five.
66. Teaching and learning for children in the Foundation Stage are good. Teachers and support staff transmit their enthusiasm to the children, who are keen to work and show pride in their achievements. Adults make good use of praise and encouragement and explain clearly why a child has gained success. This builds children's confidence and self-esteem. Day-to-day assessment is good and makes it possible to have careful targeting of activities to extend and challenge children, without causing any loss of confidence. Children respond very positively to the attractive and well laid out variety of activities in their classroom. The good standards in the nursery have been maintained since the last inspection and the assessments made in the reception year provide an effective record to track children's progress. Teachers use assessment information effectively to make sure that children's learning builds progressively as they move through the foundation stage.

Personal, social and emotional development

67. By the time most children leave the reception class, they have reached the expected levels in personal, social and emotional development because of the sensitive and effective teaching they receive. When they come into the nursery, most children are very immature and do not communicate easily with unfamiliar adults. They do not join in readily with the planned activities or speak to adults or to each other. Many children require constant support to take part in the interesting activities planned carefully by the staff, as they often prefer to work alone. Members of staff have a thorough understanding of how young children develop and learn. They know their children very well and plan activities thoughtfully, intervening sensitively and effectively to develop confidence and interest and to establish helpful patterns of behaviour and response. For example, staff make very good use of times for drinks and snacks, arranging comfortable chairs in groups so that children sit and chat together in a relaxed situation. Whilst they are in these and other groups, children are learning rules; they learn, for example, that this is a time for one person to talk and others listen. Although they find this difficult, they are improving their listening skills.
68. In the reception classes, teachers build well on the good start in the nursery. For example, school routines are taught successfully and children begin to take turns, share equipment and move around school sensibly. Classroom management and organisation are good. There are clear rules and routines and most children begin to select and use resources and activities more independently. They understand that there are tasks that have to be accomplished each day and understand what 'targets' are because the teachers regularly draw their attention to these. Children work sensibly in small groups, some with constant guidance from adults and others quite independently.

Communication, language and literacy

69. Children make good, and often very good, progress in their learning because the teaching of basic skills in the nursery and reception classes is very good, even though only a few children attain the expected levels by the time they are five. For example, only a few higher attaining children speak in simple sentences whilst many use single words or remain silent. Staff plan imaginative play opportunities very thoughtfully. The play area equipped as an imaginary medical centre develops skills of speaking and listening, early reading and writing well because of skilful staff interventions and the range of resources provided to stimulate imaginative play. Initially, many children have little vocabulary or confidence to form a descriptive sentence. On most occasions adults need to use many prompts to develop a simple conversation. Teachers read stories well to children and work very effectively to encourage concentration and participation. They use questions skilfully to help children to understand stories.
70. Staff in the nursery pass on useful assessments of children's progress to the reception teachers so that future learning builds on the skills already developed in the nursery. As a result, higher attaining children read a few simple sentences and others read one or two-word sentences with prompting. Many lower attaining children still need support to tell a story although they show great interest in books and a desire to read. Children look forward to reading the big books together, especially when they have to tell the teacher exactly how it should be done. Many children demonstrate perseverance and interest in reading and writing because of the hard work and detailed planning of the staff and the imaginative strategies and resources used in teaching. Good management of the children and effective organisation ensure that small groups of children receive tasks that are well matched to their prior attainment. Most parents actively help their children at home, helping them to learn key words or listening to them read. As a result, the children's literacy development benefits greatly and progress is more rapid. Members of staff plan well together to encourage reading, writing and the development of skills of speaking through a range of formal and practical tasks.

Mathematical development

71. Most children's achievements are good relative to their attainment on entry. Early mathematics are well taught through many practical tasks. Members of staff plan extremely carefully and make thorough assessments of early mathematical understanding. In the nursery most children's mathematical language and understanding are very limited and the staff make sure that each area of learning provides opportunities for mathematical vocabulary to be developed. For example, when children make cookies they count spoonfuls of ingredients and use scales, counting up to 10. When cutting shapes out of play dough a girl counts up to five and predicts that one more will be six. They have fun predicting and are delighted if they are correct. However, many children lack confidence and concentration during these activities and staff work extremely hard to develop mathematical understanding in purposeful activities that reinforce children's understanding of counting, shape and colour.
72. By the time children enter the reception classes, they have gained more confidence and their concentration skills have improved greatly because of the good teaching and learning of basic number skills in the nursery. Children join in counting from zero to 30 on the number stick. They work out which numbers are missing from the number line when the teacher quietly removes them, and consolidate their understanding of counting forwards and backwards in a series of games. They recognise numbers and groups of shapes on pictures and count with the teacher as she draws the squares for hopscotch. Teaching and learning in the reception classes are good because teachers plan effectively together and run well-organised and managed numeracy lessons. Staff are confident and knowledgeable about teaching basic numeracy skills and provide challenging tasks that are matched well to children's prior understanding. Teachers use focused questions effectively to assess children's understanding during lessons and careful records are kept

in order to assess progress before children move into Year 1. Teachers make good use of songs and number rhymes to reinforce understanding and to promote enjoyment of mathematical activities.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

73. Children achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry because staff plan to attract children's interest and curiosity and to stimulate their learning. Staff join in imaginative play in the home corner when interventions are necessary. Children use the computer with and without adult support, pressing the mouse to change or add pictures on the screen. When they bake they see how the ingredients and mixture change in consistency and colour. They wonder that something that smells as 'horrible' as cocoa pods can produce such 'yummy' chocolate.
74. In the reception classes the children listen well to adults and use their learning in other situations. For example, children watch a video about spiders and look for webs outside. They watch the purple colouring in the water trough as it is released into the water and see how it swirls like smoke until completely mixed into the water. Children learn to experiment and build with construction materials. The idea of time is developed through the routines of the day and week, children ordering the days of the week successfully. They learn to sequence stories and, when using the computer, draw patterns with brushes and drag shapes across the screen to make their own patterns. They use the mouse and the menu to print off their work.

Creative development

75. Children make good progress and achieve well because staff plan interesting opportunities thoroughly. Children enjoy finger and hand painting. They concentrate well when painting their pictures, using brushes carefully and with some deliberation. Skilful questioning by adults makes them think about their tasks and improve their skills and concentration. Children make interesting models and collages with a wide variety of textures and shapes, using glue and tape purposefully and efficiently. Children enjoy singing and making music. They are extremely enthusiastic about singing games in the playground.
76. In reception, children have a good understanding of the primary and secondary colours and paint careful portraits of themselves. Skilful teaching in small steps makes it possible for children to learn what happens when they change their brush or the angle at which they are holding it. The quality of children's observational drawings and colouring improves as they mature and children's attention is drawn to ways in which they can improve their work. They join in songs that they know in assembly with enjoyment.

Physical development

77. In the nursery teachers provide the children with a variety of opportunities for physical development in indoor and outdoor activities. Staff make imaginative and thoughtful use of the outdoor area so that children move with confidence, control and co-ordination on wheeled toys and with small toys. Reception children have regular sessions in the hall and join in 'The Bear Hunt' with enthusiasm, displaying good control of their bodies as they move around together. Children try to hop, stretch, skip, march, tiptoe and run with varying degrees of success. At the end of the hunt, they lie on the floor, listening to their heartbeat and noting how it has become faster because of all the activity.
78. By the time they move to reception, children are confident about climbing and balancing on the apparatus outside, and cycle around the playground very confident that they will avoid others. They learn to follow instructions in the hall, run, skip, hop more confidently and link movements together well. They learn to use the space properly and respond to the teacher's signals. From the time they come into the nursery children are learning to use tools, including knives and scissors. They use them with increasing dexterity and

demonstrate a good level of co-ordination when emptying and filling containers. Children use a wide range of construction equipment, which develops their manipulative skills.

ENGLISH

79. Most pupils attain standards that are typical of pupils at the age of seven and nine in speaking and listening, reading and writing, but few pupils attain at the higher levels in each aspect. Over recent years, there has been an apparent decline in standards. The proportion of pupils attaining or exceeding the nationally expected standard in reading and writing fell between the most recently published tests in 2000 and the unpublished tests in 2001. This trend is continuing in the work of pupils currently in Year 2. However, this decline in test results does not indicate deterioration in the quality of teaching and learning. It is largely due to the facts that firstly more pupils now enter the school with below, or well below average language development and secondly that the current Year 2 has a particularly high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Despite lower overall standards, most pupils are making good progress and have come on a long way from their attainment at the age of five, which for most was below that normally expected of pupils of that age. The school has taken suitable steps to stem this decline and to raise pupils' standards higher by:
- carefully analysing test results;
 - providing more opportunities for the practice of handwriting, spelling and extended writing;
 - introducing joined script and writing in ink earlier;
 - introducing a scheme to help pupils improve their spelling and word-building skills.
80. This new programme is greatly enjoyed by all pupils and is already improving letter and sound recognition skills. It has not yet been in operation long enough to have an impact on pupils' test scores.
81. Pupils of all capabilities, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and attain standards in speaking and listening that are typical of those expected at seven years of age. Most pupils are developing satisfactory listening skills. When teachers ensure pupils' full concentration and speak very clearly to pupils, most pupils make an effort to listen to all that is said. Pupils in Year 2 communicate their ideas about the cat's visit to the vet in the story they are reading, but many lack confidence and are reluctant to participate in class discussions. Most pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in Years 3 and 4 so that by the age of nine, most pupils' speaking and listening skills are broadly in line with national standards. Teachers successfully introduce pupils to a broader vocabulary, using a range of stories, poetry and videos in different subjects. They work hard to encourage pupils to respond to questions appropriately and extend simple answers skilfully. For example, in religious education, they ask pupils about choices and pupils respond with thoughtful and honest answers. Teachers structure questions carefully to help pupils develop their confidence. Pupils enjoy learning new words and retain much of the technical vocabulary they learn in other lessons for example, science. Teachers plan lessons carefully to provide specific opportunities for pupils to listen to each other. For example, pupils read out their work at the end of the lesson and speak clearly. However, a number of pupils are tentative and their speaking lacks clarity, for example, when they express their own opinions or preferences.
82. Attainment in reading is typical of pupils aged seven and pupils make good progress from the time they enter the school. Most pupils in Year 2 are on course to attain the nationally expected standard, but there are very few pupils on course for above average levels. Thoughtful teaching of letter sounds and patterns enables younger pupils to read simple texts by themselves, so that they make good progress with their basic reading skills. Pupils in Year 2 learn how to predict words they do not immediately know by looking at what comes before and after the unknown word. Very skilled teaching enables them to

work out possibilities from the size of the space and by building up the word from the first letter. Higher attaining pupils know how to use a thesaurus and use alphabetical order correctly to find spellings and meanings in dictionaries, but few read widely for pleasure. The careful labelling of displays and the use of written questions around the room give pupils additional opportunities to practise their reading and think of answers to questions.

83. By the age of nine, most pupils are reading at levels expected for their age because of the good teaching of basic reading skills. However, few pupils reach higher than average reading levels and read for pleasure or enjoyment. This is partly because of below average levels of attainment on entry to the school and partly because the school has too few high quality modern books to interest and motivate the more able pupils to read more widely. Teachers are good at leading the reading of texts the class are sharing, encouraging pupils to use expression and intonation. A few higher attaining pupils read fluently, accurately and mostly expressively, especially when there is dialogue in the text, but most are still at the more mechanical stage of reading. Pupils use the library confidently and they are learning to search for information on a range of topics.
84. Pupils' standards in writing at the age of seven are broadly average and pupils make good progress from their limited skills on entry to the school. In Year 1 many pupils' writing is below expected standards. However, all pupils improve their formation of letters and write legibly and the higher attainers learn to write a joined script during Year 2 because of the additional time given to written work and teachers' imaginative planning. They read their work back successfully at the end of a lesson and are able to see any errors they make in their writing. Pupils use capital letters and full stops more consistently in their writing and appreciate any opportunities to use capital letters for emphasis or speech and exclamation marks. Years 3 and 4 pupils write about themselves using the present tense, Year 4 pupils linking ideas together well with simple joining words such as 'and', 'but' and 'because'. The teacher introduces the idea well so that pupils are clear about what they have to do and keen to complete the number of sentences asked for.
85. Pupils write a range of letters, stories, poems and instructions and use these skills effectively in other subjects, for example writing facts and postcards in history. Pupils find things out from non-fiction books to help them with other subjects, such as geography and history. In science, pupils record their findings about the experiments and label diagrams. They write about other faiths in religious education. However, writing is still a chore for most pupils. They still have to think so hard about the basic structure of their writing and about all but the most basic spellings that the quality of their more creative writing suffers as a consequence. Even the more able pupils are not gaining sufficient fluency and confidence to allow them to attain higher standards in their written work. This is evident when some pupils groan at the prospect of a written task in one Years 3/4 class. Information and communication technology is not often included in the planning for lessons so pupils get few opportunities to develop their writing skills through word processing.
86. The quality of teaching is good. A consistently effective feature of the teaching of English is the way in which teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to ensure that all pupils with special educational needs receive encouragement and well-targeted support. This enables them to be fully involved in literacy sessions and results in them making at least satisfactory progress.
87. Throughout the school, the use of individual targets for pupils and the consistent teaching of spelling and letter formation help pupils to develop confidence in their own ability to spell correctly. Many pupils try hard with their writing and cannot yet write fluently and legibly at the same time because they put so much effort in to the actual writing. As they grow in confidence they write interesting stories and reports. The school is aware that there is a need to build on the good practice already established and to maintain the focus on the

development of handwriting so that all pupils, but particularly the more able, develop more fluency in their writing.

88. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they understand the purpose and organisation of the National Literacy Strategy. Consequently, lessons are well structured and teachers know what they intend pupils to learn. They regularly discuss this with pupils so that their expectations are clear. For example, pupils in a Years 3/4 class knew exactly why they were learning certain letter sounds and this added to the quality of their work in performing the 'Thrass rap'. In the most successful lessons, they make their teaching points very clearly and reinforce them regularly throughout the session. This helps pupils to work purposefully and make good progress. Teachers promote literacy skills effectively through stories for younger pupils and by encouraging older pupils to write independently and practise skills taught in the literacy hour.
89. Good planning makes sure that lessons build on previous learning. Teachers ensure that all pupils have tasks they can achieve and build on their own strengths, some pupils with the guidance of the support staff. Activities are interesting and enjoyable, but there is sometimes not enough challenge in the activity for higher attaining pupils. Pupils reinforce many writing and reading skills, but do not always have the opportunity to extend them further. The marking of work is prompt and makes it clear to pupils what teachers' expectations are. It also shows pupils how well they are doing against their targets. Teachers maintain good reading and spelling records and there is good dialogue between home and school through pupils' reading records.
90. In all classes, teachers use well-targeted questions to recap previous learning, extend pupils' thinking and assess their learning, particularly in the introduction and whole group session at the end of the lesson. Teachers work hard to extend pupils' vocabulary and use every opportunity to introduce and explain new words and encourage pupils to use correct terminology. For example, in a music lesson the teacher encourages pupils to use precise terms to express their ideas accurately. There are planned lessons in drama in English and religious education and the Year 4 production of 'Cats' gave pupils an opportunity to develop their speaking and listening skills very effectively.

MATHEMATICS

91. Standards in mathematics are close to national averages by the end of Year 2. This is reflected both in the most recent (unpublished) national tests and in inspection evidence. The proportion of pupils attaining or exceeding the nationally expected standard is now lower than it was in the 2000 tests and only a few pupils are likely to attain above average standards. However, standards close to the national average represent good progress for most pupils, because standards on entry have declined considerably in recent years and are below what is normally expected by the age of five. Pupils continue to make at least satisfactory progress as they move through Years 3 and 4. This is a similar picture to the findings of the last inspection.
92. Most pupils achieve well because:
- teachers match the work carefully to pupils' different needs, especially for low and average attaining pupils;
 - the school makes sure that well focused planning helps teachers build carefully on previous learning;
 - the plans emphasise the development of number skills, which is helping to improve mathematical understanding;
 - most teachers provide increasing opportunities for pupils to explain their mathematical thinking to help develop their reasoning and build confidence;
 - the school follows the requirements of the National Numeracy strategy, which is helping to raise standards over time;

- pupils increasingly assess their own work, which gives them greater ownership in their own learning;
 - teachers make sure that support staff help pupils with special educational needs;
 - the school's mathematics curriculum ensures that pupils cover all aspects of mathematics thoroughly;
 - the teachers value everyone's contributions, which helps to improve levels of confidence and performance among all pupils whatever their ability, background or ethnicity;
 - mathematical tasks emphasise problem solving to improve understanding.
93. However, some pupils, mostly the more able, do not make the best possible progress because:
- teachers do not target work precisely enough to meet pupils' individual needs; the result is that pupils undertake work that is either too easy or too difficult for them;
 - teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes not high enough, except in Year 2;
 - mental and oral work is not brisk enough to improve pupils' speed of calculation recall;
 - plenary sessions are sometimes too short to encourage pupils to consider problems encountered during the lesson to help them build effectively on their learning.
94. Most pupils develop their understanding of number well. By the end of Year 2, pupils solve number problems using mental calculation and sequence numbers to 100 in different ways, showing that they understand the place value of digits. At the end of Year 4, most pupils understand place value to a thousand and try different approaches to solving problems. The school emphasises investigative approaches to learning mathematics much more than it did at the time of the last inspection. For example, Year 2 pupils discover the many different ways of adding two numbers to make 20. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 consider different approaches of counting larger numbers in work on estimating, investigate the properties of two-dimensional shapes, and consider how collected data can be represented.
95. Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2, and is satisfactory overall in Years 3 and 4. However, good teaching was seen in all years and there was no unsatisfactory teaching, an improvement since the last inspection. Where teaching is good, teachers' high expectations result in challenging work and pupils put more effort into getting it right. Purposeful questioning develops clear understanding of new knowledge. A good choice and use of resources ensure that learning is effective. High levels of enthusiasm from the teacher, good relationships and a brisk pace help to keep pupils motivated and involved. All these good features were seen in Year 2 during the inspection, and helped ensure that pupils were well motivated and made good progress. Weaker features of teaching include an inadequate use of information technology to support learning, and missed opportunities to use and apply mathematics in real life situations to encourage greater interest and involvement. Some teachers do not encourage pupils enough to take pride in their work through neat, careful presentation. However, strengths easily outnumber weaknesses, indicating why most pupils respond well to mathematics' lessons.
96. The subject is well led and there are clear plans for its continued development, such as through the planned development of links between mathematics and information technology. However, teachers do not make enough mathematical links with other subjects to help pupils appreciate the subject's importance in life. There are not enough regular arrangements for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching and learning through direct lesson observation to enable her to discover strengths and weaknesses in the subject. There are a variety of arrangements to help teachers find out what pupils know and understand and teachers monitor pupils' work regularly. As a result, most pupils now have individual targets to help them learn more effectively. Recent improvements to the range, storage, quality and quantity of resources have helped to meet National Curriculum requirements more effectively.

SCIENCE

97. Pupils' attainments in science are broadly average by the end of Year 2. The proportion of pupils that attains the nationally expected standard is greater than that found in schools nationally and greater than that found in similar schools, although the proportion exceeding national expectations is below average. This is consistent with the results of the most recently published teacher assessments in 2000 and the unpublished assessments in 2001. Starting from below average levels at the end of the reception year, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in Years 1 and 2. This is particularly apparent in the range of investigative and experimental skills that they gain and in the depth of knowledge and understanding that they gain about life processes and living things. Standards in these aspects of science have improved since the last inspection and are now above average. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 continue to make sound progress and most attain satisfactory standards by the time that they leave the school at the age of nine.
98. Throughout the school, most pupils make good gains in the skills of scientific investigation. This is an important improvement since the last inspection. Pupils respond well to suggestions about how to find things out. They make observations of objects, events and living things, noticing similarities and differences. Older pupils make repeated observations and use measuring instruments such as thermometers and force meters to make their observations more accurate and reliable. All pupils record their findings independently, with older and higher attaining pupils producing a good standard of writing and carefully drawn graphs and charts as part of their work in science. This is a consistent strength of work in science that also contributes to pupils' developing literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils gain and apply these skills through a range of well-conceived practical first-hand experiences, such as the mini-beast hunt, the habitats survey, planting seeds, heating and cooling different materials, and investigating the links between forces and motion. These experiences bring science to life and help pupils gain a more secure grasp of the underlying principles. Work such as this greatly improves the quality of pupils learning and has been a major contributory factor in pupils' good progress to Year 2 and continued satisfactory progress thereafter. It has also helped to keep standards in science steady in the face of declining attainment on entry.
99. By the time that they are seven years old, most pupils show satisfactory levels of knowledge and understanding of other areas of science, though their understanding of life processes and living things is good. They know that living things grow and reproduce and illustrate this by explaining how seeds grow into new plants or describing the life cycles of plants and animals. This understanding forms a good basis for the informal sex education that forms part of the personal, social and health education curriculum. Pupils identify ways in which worms and other mini-beasts are suited to different habitats. They know the basic conditions that are essential for growth and development and apply this knowledge to understanding changes in living things and to healthy eating in humans. In addition, most pupils accurately describe the characteristics of different materials and explain how they are suited to different purposes. They know that materials such as water and chocolate can be changed from solid to liquid by the effect of heat and that this change is reversible. They accurately name other materials that will react in the same way. Pupils describe how simple electrical circuits work. A consistent strength of pupils' learning in science is that it is based on understanding at a conceptual level. This is illustrated by the fact that many pupils can apply their specific knowledge in order to make general statements or classifications. For example, pupils in Year 2 use their understanding of mini-beasts to classify creatures as insects and pupils in Year 1 group materials according to their properties.
100. Pupils' attitudes to science are good and this adds to the quality of pupils' learning in most

lessons. Pupils listen well to their teachers and they are confident in offering suggestions and ideas, especially when they are excited by their work. This is apparent when pupils in Year 2 are animated and keen to explain what they have noticed as they test the characteristics of different materials. They are conscientious, noticing things that many pupils of this age would miss. This adds a new dimension to the discussion that increases pupils understanding. Most pupils settle quickly to their work, are well motivated and respond positively to praise. This allows teachers to direct pupils' enthusiasm into productive work. Pupils co-operate effectively when working in groups and most behave well. This creates the conditions under which teacher can conduct practical activities with confidence. Pupils take pride in their work; they present most recorded work tidily and there are examples of good quality writing in pupils' independent recording in Years 3 and 4.

101. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Most teachers have secure subject knowledge. As a result, their explanations are clear and accurate and they use scientific terms appropriately. Teachers manage most pupils effectively so they behave well and apply themselves to their work. Pupils in Year 2 are excited by the chance to handle different materials, but the teacher successfully channels their excitement into well-focused observations and comments. There are, however, occasions when teachers are unable to maintain the interest and concentration of all pupils, as ,for example, in the Years 3/4 lesson on materials. When this happens, pupils become distracted and restless and their progress is reduced. Teachers' planning includes appropriate opportunities for pupils to gain knowledge, understanding and skills in practical tasks. This careful planning reinforces pupils' learning, particularly when skilful questioning encourages pupils to think carefully. Teachers welcome and value pupils' ideas and suggestions whether or not they are scientifically accurate. This builds pupils' confidence and adds to the progress that they make. This is apparent when pupils are asked to explain the basis of their thinking about the ways in which materials respond to stretching, squashing and twisting. Most teachers use a good range of resources effectively, especially those offered by the school grounds and the local environment, both to interest and motivate pupils and to extend their investigative skills.
102. Where teaching is most successful, as in some classes in Year 2, teachers make clear to pupils what the main aims are at the beginning of each lesson and this enables pupils to understand what they are expected to learn. Teachers link planning to on-going assessment and match tasks to pupils' attainment in earlier lessons. This ensures that all pupils in the class can succeed and make progress. However, this level of planning is not yet in place throughout the school. In some lessons, most notably in Years 3/4 classes, all pupils undertake the same tasks, which are often suitable for average or lower attaining pupils, but lack rigour and challenge for the more able. This reduces the progress that higher attaining pupils make.
103. The teacher responsible for managing the science curriculum is doing a good job. She has successfully led the drive to improve teaching and learning since the last inspection. She has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses in current provision. She is actively seeking to bring about further improvements by investigating new assessment materials intended to help teachers improve their planning for pupils of differing abilities.

ART AND DESIGN/DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

104. The teaching of art and design and of design and technology takes place in blocks of time that last for approximately half a term and alternate from half term to half term throughout the school year. During the inspection, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were working on art and those in Years 3 and 4 on design and technology. However, pupils attain satisfactory standards in these subjects, both by the end of Year 2 and by the time that they leave the school.

105. There have been similar improvements in both subjects since the last inspection. These stem largely from the school's introduction of national planning guidelines. Long-term planning is more coherent than it was. Over the course of a school year in Years 1 and 2, and over two years in Years 3 and 4, pupils experience a more balanced coverage of the various elements of the curriculum which form a sound basis for the systematic teaching of skills. These developments improve the quality of pupils' learning and ensure that pupils of all levels of attainment make satisfactory progress. The sound one-to-one or group support for pupils with special educational need means that they can be fully involved in art and design and technology activities and progress at a similar rate to others in the class.
106. In art and design, pupils complete a satisfactory range of two-dimensional work. They use various media, including pastels, chalk, charcoal and pencil. Pupils work effectively with different paints, mixing to achieve particular colours and experimenting to achieve different effects. For example, they use extra water and apply it thinly as a 'wash' to be the background for their work. Pupils develop their understanding of pattern when they use mathematical shapes and sequences or the concept of symmetry as part of their designs. Pupils also make three-dimensional work, for example modelling small pots in clay, linking with work in history and collage representations of a recent educational visit. Pupils compare art from other places and times, and pupils know the work of a range of famous artists, including Monet, Van Gogh, Matisse, Mondrian and Picasso. For example, Pupils in Year 2 used the work of Mondrian as the starting point for both collage and computer art and older pupils thoughtfully interpreted the work of Matisse, as well as artists from non-western traditions, in their project on portraying relationships. Projects such as these not only further pupils' education in art but also add to their wider cultural development.
107. In design and technology, pupils make satisfactory gains in the skills of investigating, designing and making. Pupils throughout the school use pictures, books and artefacts in order to gather ideas for their design and technology projects. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 find out how pop-up books work as a prelude to making their own books for young children. Pupils make quite detailed drawings to show their design intentions and to record what they have made. By Year 2, these usually approximate well to the finished product. For example, the designs made as part of the 'puppet' project that show colours and the style and decorative detail of the puppet's clothing are reflected accurately in the finished work. Older pupils design in more detail, for example showing how the moving parts of their books will work. Pupils learn to use a suitable range of tools, materials and techniques. The younger pupils use malleable materials to make simple models. By Year 2, pupils cut, shape and join paper, card, felt and recycled materials effectively, whilst older pupils use more precise techniques, such as nets, as part of their 'packages' project.
108. The teaching of art and of design and technology is satisfactory. Teachers have sufficient knowledge and understanding of these subjects. Their planning includes satisfactory provision for the teaching of skills, processes and techniques. Lessons are well organised and resources are appropriately prepared in advance. This allows teachers and pupils to make good use of the available time. Teachers stimulate pupils' interest when they make effective links to other areas of the curriculum. For example, when Years 3/4 pupils investigated different breads as part of their 'sandwiches and snacks' project, their work was more meaningful because of its link with their study of healthy eating in science. Teachers encourage pupils to work together collaboratively and to tidy up on completion of their work and this adds to their personal development.
109. However, there are weaknesses in the teaching of both subjects. In both art and design and technology, teachers give too little emphasis to the evaluation process. There is no evidence of pupils reflecting on their work, either in progress or when it is complete, in order to identify those aspects that could be improved. In overlooking this element,

teachers miss the opportunity to consolidate and extend pupils' understanding and to improve the quality of their finished work. Additionally, in art, the use of sketch books as a means of pupils investigating and improving various techniques is at a very early stage of development and is not yet having any impact on the quality of their work.

110. Pupils respond well to the teaching of both subjects. They are attentive to their teachers and follow instructions carefully. Pupils in Year 2 become absorbed in their Mondrian projects and their work rate is high. They take care and show pride in the quality of their finished work. They are keen to use the art-based computer program and do so confidently and independently when the opportunity arises. They are attentive when the teacher or classroom assistant offers advice and this adds to the progress that they make. Pupils are proud of their achievements. Older pupils in Years 3 and 4 are enthusiastic and talk animatedly about the strange new breads that they are tasting. Only when some become over-excited does the quality of their work deteriorate somewhat. Throughout the school, pupils work together co-operatively, use resources sensibly and readily share equipment.

GEOGRAPHY

111. Pupils make sound gains in learning as they move through the school and reach satisfactory standards in most aspects of geography by the end of Year 2 and 4. This is because:

- sufficient time is given to geography to ensure that it is secure within the curriculum;
- teaching is satisfactory overall. However, teachers ask good questions to develop geographical knowledge and understanding, and use praise well to instil confidence and enhance self-esteem;
- teachers place satisfactory emphasis on learning through outside study and direct observation to help motivate and involve pupils;
- pupils now have more opportunity to draw maps of different sizes and scales as map work is now given more emphasis than previously;
- pupils with special educational needs and those speaking English as an additional language receive good support that enables them to join in practical activities and so make good progress;
- the school has improved resources to help make the subject more interesting for pupils, and teachers choose resources carefully to extend learning;
- the subject is soundly led and there are plans for its further development with realistic time scales to ensure plans are realised;
- the positive attitudes of most pupils help ensure that they make sound progress.

112. However, areas for development are still evident. These include:

- enabling the subject co-ordinator to observe teaching and learning more regularly through the focused observation of lessons to see what is working well and what must be improved so that she can become more effective;
- extending existing links with other subjects, such as mathematics, through the increased use of measuring and more fieldwork, and information technology, for example, through surveys, which generate data handling activities;
- ensuring that mapping skills are always taught in logical sequence to assist learning, through the establishment of a carefully structured programme which will provide clear guidance to teachers;
- assessing pupils' progress regularly and recording the development of skills so that work carefully builds on previous learning for all pupils;
- matching work in geography more precisely to the needs of pupils with different abilities, as all pupils often complete the same work at present;
- increasing the range of external visits to help bring the subject to life;
- placing greater emphasis on the acquisition of a geographical vocabulary to help develop knowledge and understanding;

- ensuring that control strategies are effective for all pupils in geography lessons so that they can benefit fully from what is taught.
113. The development of mapping skills is now given good emphasis, although not always in logical order. Pupils in reception and Year 1 draw 'picture maps' linked to stories, such as 'My map to the house of the Three Little Pigs', and their journeys from home to school. Year 1 pupils recognise and comment on the features of their local area through a study of aerial photographs of the school and its surroundings. Year 2 pupils look at different types of maps to begin to understand scale and follow the journeys of Barnaby Bear in his travels around the world gaining insight into the places that he visits. Older pupils study an Ordnance Survey map of Totternhoe as part of a village study and mark specific routes on a map of York. They study and discuss detailed plans of buildings and draw plans of their classroom showing developing spatial awareness.

HISTORY

114. Pupils reach satisfactory standards in history. This is a similar picture to the findings of the last inspection. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes in the past are typical of pupils nationally by the end of Year 2 and pupils make sound progress over time in this area of the subject.
115. Year 1 pupils start to show that they know the difference between past and present by studying toys of different ages and comparing classrooms in the past with those of today. By the end of Year 2, pupils have studied the lives of some famous people, such as Guy Fawkes, Grace Darling, Mary Seacole and Samuel Pepys. They find out about important events in our history, such as the Gunpowder Plot and the Plague of London. They discover differences between a Victorian and a present day seaside resort to gain an understanding of how things change over time. By the end of Year 4, pupils know about the origins of the Vikings, why they settled here and what their homes were like. They learn about the Second World War, consider the benefits and disadvantages of wartime shelters, and compare food consumed in wartime with the vast range available today.
116. Pupils begin to develop an awareness of the passage of time by comparing past and present objects and by distinguishing between past lives and their own. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 compare life as an evacuee in wartime with their own lives today. However, timelines and dates are insufficiently used to help develop understanding of time, especially with older pupils.
117. Despite satisfactory standards, some aspects of the school's provision for history require further development. For example:
- teachers do not assess and evaluate pupils' progress in the development of historical skills consistently enough to ensure that work carefully builds on previous learning;
 - teachers do not always match work carefully enough to the abilities of higher attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs;
 - there are not enough links with information and communication technology.
118. However, the school is moving in the right direction. There are good links with some other subjects, such as art, geography and English, which help to make history more interesting for pupils. Pupils convey developing historical understanding in different ways, such as through writing in different forms, pictures, discussion, drama, maps and reading. Teachers provide some opportunities for pupils to undertake historical investigations within the immediate locality, such as at the local church, to help make pupils appreciate that history is all around us. Resources have been developed and audited since the last inspection and are mostly used well to assist learning. Worksheets, which can develop negative attitudes in pupils towards history if they are used too much, are now less evident than they were at the last inspection. All of these developments improve the quality of

pupils' learning and ensure that pupils of all levels of attainment succeed and make progress.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

119. Standards in information technology are below national levels by the end of Year 2 and by the time pupils leave the school, and progress for all pupils is generally unsatisfactory.

This is because:

- pupils of all abilities, including pupils with special educational needs, do not yet have sufficiently regular access to computers to enable them to improve their skills at an appropriate rate;
- not all teachers are sufficiently competent and confident to teach effectively all components of the curriculum, such as control technology;
- record keeping systems emphasise coverage of curriculum requirements rather than the development of important skills. This prevents teachers from tracking pupils' progress and building carefully on previous learning;
- links with other subjects are under-developed and pupils do not, therefore, have enough opportunities to practice skills across the curriculum;
- the school does not yet have a computer suite to enable pupils to derive maximum benefit from teaching, by practising what they have learnt in demonstration lessons immediately, although one is planned for the near future;
- there are shortages in resources, which affect teachers ability to cover National Curriculum requirements, such as in the area of control technology.

120. Although this is a broadly similar picture to the findings of the last inspection, some significant progress has been made in establishing a firm platform from which to help pupils make much needed progress. The school has made the following improvements since the last inspection:

- at least one computer is available for each classroom;
- staff training to improve teachers' knowledge and understanding is continuing;
- the school has bought additional hardware (programmable robot) and programs to help cover the ICT curriculum more thoroughly;
- the school now has access to the Internet.

121. These are all positive developments but they will have little real impact on standards or on the quality of pupils' learning until the building of the school's planned computer suite, which is due to take place during the current school year.

122. During their time in the school, most pupils gain some basic ICT skills. They learn to switch on the computer, open a program and use the mouse to make choices. Older or higher attaining pupils save or print their work. However, pupils' access to computers is so limited that few gain the skills or confidence to use computers independently as an aid to learning. Most begin to master the most basic word processing skill, but can only use other applications such as information handling or simulation programs under the close supervision of staff. The school plans to extend the limited use of information technology in other subjects and some links are already evident. For example, Year 2 pupils complete a data handling activity in mathematics to record the results of an investigation using dice and, in a link with art, create pictures in the style of Mondrian using a computer graphics package. In a literacy link, Year 2 pupils use different computer keys to correct punctuation in a piece of text. They are starting to use CD-ROMs to research information such as to support work in history. However, pupils have too little opportunity to control equipment by a series of instructions to achieve particular results.

123. Despite these weaknesses, teaching was sound where it was observed. Teachers show secure subject knowledge in lively whole class presentations, such as demonstrations to enable younger pupils to write a short sentence and older pupils to change the size, colour

and style of font. Teachers support pupils working on computers when they need it and give clear explanations to help pupils make progress. Teachers try hard to ensure that all pupils receive equal access to computers.

124. ICT makes a developing contribution to the personal development of pupils. This is because pupils often work in pairs and provide effective support for each other. Leadership of the subject is sound and there is a rigorous approach to raising the profile of information technology to raise standards. The introduction of a consistent approach to the recording of the development of important skills to make sure that work carefully builds on previous learning is one of many proposed developments.

MUSIC

125. Pupils throughout the school attain the standards expected for their age and enjoy their music making activities, especially their singing. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Music makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.
126. In Year 1 and 2 classes, younger pupils build up a good repertoire of songs. Pupils concentrate well, sing tunefully and learn melodies and words quickly. They listen carefully to the music between verses and learn to match their singing to the different speeds and moods. Pupils concentrate on new songs very thoughtfully so that before the end of the lesson they sing them well. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 sing with good diction and follow the teacher's instructions well. The older pupils make a good contribution to the singing in assemblies and hymn practice and this helps the younger pupils learn the songs more quickly.
127. Pupils enjoy music lessons because teachers plan interesting activities that improve their learning. Eyes shine with approval when the teacher produces bottles and blows across the top of them as part of a Year 2 lesson. Pupils start to make scientific hypotheses about what would happen if water replaced some of the air in the bottles. Pupils are delighted when they are given time to experiment and as a result enhance their understanding of how some musical instruments work and sound effects are made.
128. Pupils in a Years 3/4 lesson learn from first-hand experience about the importance of musical notation and about the role of the conductor. They clap the rhythm of a tune accurately and all play instruments, keeping the beat of the tune effectively. However, when the teacher asks them to evaluate their playing pupils agree, 'It wasn't very nice because we didn't have notes to play. You need someone to tell you when to play.' Pupils improve their playing with a conductor, trying different combinations of instruments. A group of pupils make a good attempt at reading a chart to play chime bars, which makes it interesting for them and for the listening pupils.
129. Music plays an important part in the life of the school and pupils are involved regularly in events outside of school. Pupils of all ages who play recorders learn to read musical notation very accurately and play tunes and scales, watching the notes on the stave very carefully. There are opportunities for pupils to learn to play the violin or cello with a teacher who visits the school each week and pupils who play instruments share their skills with the rest of the school when they play in assemblies and concerts. The enjoyable version of the musical 'Cats' gave pupils the opportunity to perform to a large audience. The production included high quality acting, choral speaking, dance, singing and recorder group contributions. Visiting groups and musicians come to the school to share their expertise with the pupils. All of these occasions extend and enrich the school's curriculum in music and contribute very positively to pupils' learning.

130. The teaching of music is good and so pupils enjoy making music and achieve well. They work sensibly together and know that it takes effort to achieve good results. Levels of concentration are good when pupils sing in class or assemblies because the teachers lead these activities effectively. Teachers consider practical issues carefully and ensure that everyone is settled, has enough space and can see any words or music. Teachers plan lessons effectively to include appropriate practice and extension of what pupils know and can do. The teaching of recorders is of a very high standard and pupils learn in groups appropriately matched to their ability and length of time learning the recorder. Pupils who take examinations in the summer achieve very high standards because they work hard and respond well to the very good teaching they receive.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

131. Pupils throughout the school reach the expected standards in the aspects of the physical education curriculum that were seen during the inspection. Inspection evidence and teachers' planning for physical education indicate that all elements of the National Curriculum receive appropriate attention. Most pupils of all levels of attainment in both key stages make satisfactory progress in the areas covered. Pupils make very good progress in swimming because the school has its own training pool and children begin their programme of instruction from the age of four. Consequently, by the age of nine, most are attaining standards normally expected of 11-year-olds.
132. In Years 1 and 2, almost all pupils respond to their teachers' instructions quickly. They work safely individually, in pairs and in small groups. Younger pupils in Year 1 move in a variety of ways and this establishes an appropriate foundation for the development of gymnastic and expressive movement in later years. There are, however, a small number of pupils who have not yet learned to control their behaviour or their movement during physical education lessons and the standard of their work is below that which is normally expected of pupils of this age. By Year 2, pupils are confident and show increasing precision in their work. For example, they control their bodies well as they perform jumping, landing and rolling sequences. They are beginning to respond imaginatively to music, finding original ways of depicting the Four Seasons to the music of Vivaldi. By the time that they leave the school, most pupils develop satisfactory co-ordination of hand and eye, so that they throw and catch with a reasonable degree of accuracy. They play small games and understand the importance of following rules. They transport and set up apparatus correctly. They use gymnastic apparatus safely and purposefully. They use space well and show appropriate control of movement and balance.
133. The majority of pupils respond well to the teaching of physical education. They enjoy their work and join in energetically. They are animated, yet give their attention promptly, when required to do so. This allows teachers to make the best use of available time. Most pupils listen carefully and respond well to suggestions given by the teachers. However, a small number of pupils in Key Stage 1 classes, some of whom have special educational needs, behave badly during physical education lessons. They are noisy, disobedient and their movements lack discipline and control. Where the teacher is unsuccessful in controlling this inappropriate behaviour, the quality of learning of the whole class is diminished and they and others make little progress. This is unsatisfactory.
134. The teaching of physical education is sound. Teachers' planning identifies suitable objectives, and when they are shared with pupils they give a clear focus to teaching and learning that improves pupils' progress. Teachers give clear explanations and they monitor pupils' response carefully. This ensures that all pupils are able to work confidently and to make progress. Nevertheless, teachers in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 classes give too little attention to coaching, to identifying individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses and to teaching the techniques that pupils need in order to improve. Most teachers manage their pupils effectively and have successfully established positive

patterns of behaviour and response by using an appropriate balance of praise and challenge. This allows the lesson to proceed briskly and effectively maintains the pace of pupils' learning. However, in one lesson the teacher's failure to manage pupils' behaviour successfully was a contributory factor in unsatisfactory teaching.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135. It was possible to see only two lessons during the inspection, but planning, discussions and scrutiny of work show that pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry. By the ages of seven and nine, the majority of pupils meet the standards expected in the local education authority's guidelines. These findings match those of the last inspection.
136. Pupils aged seven know some of the important characters and stories in the Old and New Testaments. For example, they discuss the story of 'The Good Samaritan', working out the message of the story as they listen. They know that people have different beliefs and special symbols or artefacts. This knowledge and understanding comes as a result of a study of Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism and Hinduism. Pupils understand the importance of festivals and design their own Diwali cards. Teachers make lessons interesting and visits produce interesting opportunities for pupils to learn. For instance, pupils visit the local church. They learn how to carry the cross, light candles and understand that there are special clothes for the vicar to wear. Visits from the vicar and a Muslim priest help them to understand that prayer is important to all and that symbols of all faiths are treated with respect. Pupils know that the birth of a baby is very special for everyone and that parents from different faiths celebrate this very special occasion in different ways. They act out a baptism in the church and this enhances their understanding of the importance of this event.
137. By the age of nine, pupils' knowledge of the Bible increases and pupils deepen their knowledge of other world religions, significant leaders and teachers. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 gain an increased understanding of the features of places of worship and have a good insight into the life of a Jewish family. They write sensitively about the artefacts and show a good understanding that they are 'special'. Pupils' work in religious education also contributes to their personal development. For example, they understand that they have to make choices in their lives and that their behaviour can affect their own and other people's happiness. They know that there are times when people choose to be polite and gain insight into the ways in which it is easy to be rude.
138. Teaching and learning are good and pupils' learning is enhanced by interesting activities linked to a variety of religions. Visits to places of religious significance and the impact of visitors to the school bring religious education to life and improve the quality of pupils' learning. Teachers place a very good emphasis on faiths other than Christianity, so pupils have consistent opportunities to learn about and understand the customs and beliefs of other faith groups. They build consistently on their previous learning and recall events and people well. The teachers promote literacy effectively through stories and the study of a range of religious writing. Teachers encourage pupils to write independently and practise the skills taught in the literacy hour. There are good links with music in assemblies and pupils use their own artistic skills effectively to illustrate their writing in religious education. Pupils respond well to the opportunities that teachers provide for them to discuss and to express their own views and because of this they find that religious education lessons are interesting and enjoyable.