

INSPECTION REPORT

STUDHAM C of E VC LOWER SCHOOL

Studham, Dunstable

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109607

Headteacher: Miss D. Rodway-Johnson

Reporting inspector: David Whatson
23494

Dates of inspection: 14 - 16 January 2002

Inspection number: 194013

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Lower
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	5 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Church Road Studham Dunstable Bedfordshire
Postcode:	LU6 2QD
Telephone number:	01582 872337
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Isobel Randall
Date of previous inspection:	April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23494	David Whatson	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Mathematics; Geography; Information and communication technology; English as an additional language; Equal opportunities.	The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9092	Ron Elam	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22147	Anne Holland	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Art; Design and technology; Music; Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage; Special educational needs.	How does the school care for its pupils? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22990	Chris Furniss	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; History; Religious education; Physical education.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Studham, is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled school that serves a largely rural area within the commuter belt for London. It is much smaller than other schools of the same type. It has 48 pupils on roll, aged between four and nine. Pupils are taught in three classes. There are broadly equal numbers of boys and girls. Most pupils come from the immediate area although a few travel from further a field, most home backgrounds are better than those found nationally. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. No pupils learn English as an additional language and there are no pupils from ethnic minorities. Attainment on entry to Reception for the current year group is as expected for this age group, although in previous years it has varied. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is in line with the national average but there are currently no pupils with statements of special educational need. The school has very high pupil mobility, and the school roll has been falling over recent years. Since the last inspection two thirds of the teaching staff have changed, including the headteacher.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school with many strong features, where pupils achieve better than expected results because of the good teaching and quality education they receive. Pupils attitudes towards school and learning are very good. The strong leadership provided by the headteacher and governors provide a clear direction for the work of the school. The school provides sound value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are high; singing is a strength of the school.
- All pupils achieve well, as consistently good quality teaching focuses on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- The school provides very good links with parents and many make considerable contributions to the life of the school and to their child's learning.
- Pupils are keen to learn and come to school, because a well-planned and enriched curriculum provides them with many exciting learning opportunities.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social (SMSC) development is a strength of the school and underpins their very good attitudes and personal development.
- The headteacher and governing body provide the school with strong and effective leadership.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The rate of attendance.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in the foundation subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since it was last inspected in April 1997. Because of better teaching, the greater use of assessment and more tightly planned learning opportunities, standards in many areas have risen. The strong and committed team of teachers and governors, along with the new headteacher, provide a clear direction for the school that is focused on further and sustained school improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
Reading	B	A*	A*	A*	well above average A
Writing	A	A	A	A	above average B
Mathematics	B	A	A	A	average C
					below average D
					well below average E

These are very good results, and they have improved since the last inspection. In the 2001 national tests, the performance of seven year olds in reading was in the top 5 per cent nationally, as it was in the previous year. High standards have also been maintained in writing, mathematics and science. Compared to schools of a similar nature, standards have been equally impressive. By the age of nine, pupils reach standards that are above national expectations in English and science and well exceed expectations in mathematics; on the basis of school tests these have also been sustained over the last few years. The school has set realistic but challenging targets for all its pupils. They are lower than those recently set in English, for pupils aged seven, due to the higher percentage of pupils with special educational need in the current Year 2. All pupils, including the high attainers, achieve well. There is little difference in the performance of boys and girls. Literacy and numeracy skills throughout the school are better than expected. By the age of seven and nine, pupils achieve standards that are above that expected for their age in design and technology, art, music and religious education. For seven year olds standards are as expected in history, geography and physical education, but are above for nine year olds. However, attainment in singing is well above for pupils in both Year 2 and Year 4. Children aged four in Reception are likely to exceed the expectations for pupils aged five due to the good start they are given to their education.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very good. They are keen to learn, attentive and enjoy school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils are well behaved in lessons in the playground and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils develop an ability to taken on responsibility and show great respect for others.
Attendance	Last year the level of attendance was unsatisfactory but it has started to improve in the current school year.

The school operates very well as a friendly and orderly community. It develops responsible individuals who can use their initiative. Pupils develop maturity as they move through the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching is consistently good throughout the school and so is its impact on learning. The small class sizes make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and overall good progress. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good due to the pace, vigour and appropriateness of many of the planned learning experiences. This is why pupils achieve so well, especially in reading. Teachers' planning, from Reception to Year 4, is particularly good. The emphasis placed on the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding mean that all pupils make good progress. Throughout the school, pupils benefit significantly from a committed team of adults with whom they have very good relationships. These trusting relations provide a secure environment in which pupils happily learn. Many teachers have consistently high expectations of behaviour and standards and demand that pupils try their best. In most cases, pupils respond well. Clear explanations and well-focused activities make learning both enjoyable and relevant. Teachers create a positive atmosphere for learning, and most use support staff most suitably, providing encouragement and recognising pupils' achievements; pupils are therefore well disposed to learn. Homework, that includes regular reading, is frequently set, reinforcing lessons learnt in school and actively encouraging parents' involvement in their child's learning. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is good; it is very good in reading and this is why pupils achieve so well. In a few lessons, particularly in key stage, teachers make effective use of computers in their teaching. The use of teachers' specialisms, as in music, brings a quality to the teaching that enthralls pupils to try their best.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The range of learning opportunities provided for pupils of all ages is good and there are many out of class activities that enrich the curriculum. It is well planned with many opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills, but not so many for their computer skills.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school has sustained its high levels of provision for pupils with special educational needs; all of whom make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Opportunities for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral and social development are very good and are a strength of the school. Provision for cultural development is good although more could be done to prepare pupils for a life in a multi-cultural British society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is good provision for pupils overall well-being; the school has a very caring ethos. Pupils' personal development is closely monitored and developed. The regular assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress is well established in some, but not all subjects.

The school works very closely with parents who are very supportive of the school and its aims. Health and safety matters were dealt with very professionally at the school. All staff know of the locally agreed child protection procedures; there is soon to be further training in this area.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The new headteacher has quickly gained meaningful insights into the school, and provides strong but caring leadership. All staff work well as a team; their many positive contributions to the success of the school are highly valued by parents and governors, although some further development of their roles is necessary.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very effective. It monitors the school carefully and provides high quality support and guidance. Governors have a deep appreciation of the needs of the school and provide a well-formed strategic vision for its development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is very good. The school analyses its results, its teaching and the curriculum very thoroughly, and takes effective action to improve. The written improvement plan is appropriate and clear, outlining its current priorities well, and it effectively communicates its long-term vision.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of the resources made available to it. The implications of educational and financial decisions are carefully considered and monitored to ensure that the best value and highest standards are always obtained.

Staffing levels are very good; good use is made of individual teachers' expertise to maintain high standards and meet the needs of all pupils. The school is set in a very pleasant location; the accommodation is adequate for the number of pupils at the school, although the hall is too small for some physical activities. There is a broad range of resources with many books, and computers which are now located in the new computer room.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy school. • The teaching is good, their children get the right amount of work to do at home, and they make good progress. • The school expects their children to work hard and helps them to become mature and responsible. • The school works closely with them, keeping them well informed, and they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions. • The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no areas that parents wished to see improved.

The inspectors agree with all the many positive comments.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When compared to all schools, pupils' results in the 2001 national tests were very high in reading, and well above average in writing and mathematics. Teacher assessed results in science were also very high. By age seven, all pupils in 2001 reached the expected Level 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. In relation to their above average attainment on entry, pupils make very good progress in reading, and good progress in nearly all other areas. Standards have risen since the last inspection and have remained at the same high level for the last few years. There is no consistent difference in the test results between boys and girls. By the time pupils leave the school at the age of nine, they have continued to make good progress and achieve standards that are well above the expected level in mathematics, and above expectations in English and science. Inspection findings for pupils currently in Year 2 are lower than those reported in the national tests for 2001, as there are more pupils noted as having special educational need than in the previous year.

2. A description of pupil performance at the age of seven compared to all and similar schools is given below.

Levels	Compared to all schools				Compared to similar schools			
	Reading	writing	mathe matics	science	Reading	writing	mathe matics	science
Overall	Very high	Well above	Well above	Very high	Very high	Very high	Very high	Very high
Level 2 and above	Very high	Very high	Very high	Very high	Very high	Very high	Very high	Very high
Level 3 and above	Well above	Well above	Well above	Average	Well above	Well above	Well above	Average

3. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 3 in most subjects is well above the national average and is testimony to the challenging and stimulating work the pupils receive. However, in science, standards were not as high as they could have been, due to a lack of challenge in the teaching of science. The school has recognised this and is taking remedial action; during the inspection, needs of the higher attaining pupils were being suitably met through good questioning and practical activities.

4. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good. In 2001 they all achieved standards in line with the national average in their tests, due to consistently good quality support. Staff are pro-active in meeting the needs of their gifted and talented pupils so they also make good progress, as in the case of the Year 1 pupil who has her literacy lessons with Year 2 pupils. This gives clear indication of how effective the school's practices on inclusion are.

5. Inspection evidence indicates that current standards for pupils in Year 2 are in line with the expected level for their age in reading and writing, although they are above the expected standard in mathematics and science. Standards are lower in reading and writing than in other subjects, because a number of pupils within the year group have been placed on the special need register due to concerns with their attainment in literacy. Teachers' have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Because of this and the use of specific targets for each lesson and careful instruction that engages pupils are motivated and achieve well, irrespective of the subject. Similarly, pupils achieve well in Key Stage 2, and pupils in Year 4

are achieving results above expected standards in English and science and well above the expected level in mathematics, due to very good teaching. Standards in the current Year 4 are marginally lower than those reported when they sat their national tests in 2000, as a number of high attaining pupils have left the school.

6. In speaking, pupils' skills are above what is normally expected at the age of seven and nine. All pupils are confident speakers, have a good range of sentence structures and vocabulary, and use these well in discussions. In most cases, pupils' listening skills are good, especially when engaged by good teaching. The standard of reading in Year 2 is in line with expectations for their age, but it is above in Year 4; all pupils achieve well. Pupils enjoy reading in group and one-to-one sessions. Pupils in Year 2 have an appropriate range of skills to read new words and understand a storybook. By the time they reach Year 4, most read fluently and with understanding, both fiction and non-fiction books, using many of the skills they learnt in Key Stage 1. In their written work in Year 2, most pupils use a legible cursive script. They have a sound knowledge of basic spellings for their age, and will attempt a phonetic spelling of most words. Their story writing is adequate, and uses reasonable levels of punctuation. In Year 4, pupils generally write neatly and with a good understanding of technical aspects. They write well for a range of purposes and different audiences, using these skills in a range of subjects.

7. In mathematics, all pupils currently make better than expected progress, and most achieve standards that are above national expectations in Year 2, and well above in Year 4. In Year 2 pupils in mathematics are confident with numbers to 20 and many to 100, using the four rules of number in simple problem solving activities that involved money, length and weight. They have a firm knowledge and understanding of the properties and relationships of two and three-dimensional shapes. Many pupils in Year 4 successfully build upon this knowledge, and choose the most appropriate mental strategies to solve number problems with numbers to a thousand. Many also use a variety of measurements and instruments to solve problems of weight, length and area and the perimeter of regular polygons.

8. In science, most pupils currently in Years 2 and 4 achieve standards above those expected for their age, and achieve well. Through practical work, pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of how to sort and classify material, and understand that materials can change when heated or mixed with water. In their books, pupils in Year 4 have studied forces, and have a firm understanding that friction is a force that can slow movement, but that some materials have properties that can overcome this resistance.

9. Standards have risen in most subjects since the last inspection, especially in Key Stage 2. Pupils' achievement has also improved across the school, due to improved teaching and the adoption of official guidelines that provide progression in skills and understanding, as well as knowledge. Attainment in design and technology, art, music and religious education is better than normally found for pupils aged seven. Standards in ICT, history, geography and physical education are as expected. Nearly all pupils in Year 4 are currently reaching standards that are above the expected standard in most subjects. In relation to their prior attainment, pupils in Years 2 and 4 achieve well in nearly all subjects. Throughout the school, pupils' performance in singing well exceeds expected standards; pupils do very well because of the skill, knowledge and enthusiasm of the music teacher.

10. Attainment on entry to Reception is about average for four year-olds, although there is a great deal of variation within this year group as there has been between previous year groups. However, children make better than expected progress so that most will exceed the early learning goals by the time they start in Year 1.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes and personal development, and their relationships with each other and with adults are strengths of the school, and make a very good contribution towards promoting their attainment and progress. This shows an improvement on the findings at the time of the previous inspection, when they were judged to be good, and reflects the widespread views of parents. Pupils' behaviour overall is good. Parents state that their children enjoy school. Nevertheless, the attendance of the pupils last year was unsatisfactory.

12. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes towards learning are very good. This includes those of pupils with special educational needs. Most pupils listen carefully, follow instructions, settle down to work quickly and are interested in all the various activities in the classroom; they obviously enjoy and are very proud of what they do. For example, during an art lesson, Year 3 and 4 pupils were eager to show off their work to the inspector. Even the youngest pupils sustain their concentration much longer than normally expected for children of this age. For example, in a literacy lesson where they compared a story on a television programme with the book they had read, their interest sustained them through much of the lesson. Many pupils are exceptionally confident, asking questions and initiating conversations, and they appeared self-assured as when they described their mental strategies for solving problems in mathematics.

13. The great majority of pupils behave well in the classroom, at play and at lunch times. They are open, well mannered, polite to adults and to each other, and courteous and welcoming to visitors. They move around the school in an orderly way and wait patiently for other pupils when going to and from their rooms for assemblies. They show respect for property, for example, when using the computers and take care collecting and putting away instruments during music lessons. Nevertheless, a small number of pupils, particularly in Year 2, are not always as self-controlled as others. In most instances they are managed well by their teacher, as in the design technology lesson, where the good choice of resources ensured their enthusiasm was well channelled and their interest maintained. Neither parents or pupils could recall any incidents of bullying or name-calling; the school has appropriate procedures to deal with any aggressive behaviour that may take place. There have been no exclusions in the past year.

14. Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good, and contribute to the quality of work in lessons. Pupils get on well with each other when playing games at break and lunch times. In the classroom, the youngest respect each other's space when sitting close together on the carpet, and are learning to follow the rules of circle time. The good co-operation, for example, in a Year 2 science lesson on classifying materials, was the result of the pupils' own realisation that they would achieve more through teamwork. Year 4 pupils supported each other very well when, unprompted, pupils guided others on how to use the World Wide Web. The caring atmosphere created in the school was highlighted by the arrival of two new pupils in the Reception Class. They were given a very warm welcome, the other pupils took them under their wing and they settled in immediately. Relationships, with all adults and other pupils are very positive. They are clearly built on trust, and this encourages pupils to ask questions and extend their thinking.

15. Pupils' personal development is also very good. Year 3 and 4 pupils showed their ability to respect the feelings of others when they willingly and sensitively contributed positive comments about their classmates in circle time. In the same class pupils listened respectfully to the compositions of their classmates during a music lesson. Pupils continually demonstrate initiative and independence in lessons when they search for information from books and from CD-ROMs. They willingly take on responsibility within the

classroom and outside, with, for example, the older pupils looking after the younger, and in the regular meetings of the school council. The pupils also benefit from collecting for charities during the year, and meeting people in the community such as when singing carols to older people at Christmas and playing football against other schools.

16. In the previous school year, attendance was unsatisfactory; it was well below the national average. In part this was understandable, due to two or three pupils with extended absence because of illness. However, it was also due to a large proportion of the parents taking their children on holiday during term time. Some of these holiday absences were for only a day or an extended weekend, and were approved by the school even though government guidance is that the school should only be prepared to authorise one annual family holiday. High levels of absence not only affect the attainment of individual pupils; other pupils are affected, as the teacher has to repeat work to help the absentee catch up. However, because of the school's efforts in taking a firm stance against holidays during term time the attendance in the autumn term of 2001 shows considerable improvement and is now below the national average. Pupils are keen to come to school, and come into the classroom before the start of the day ensuring a prompt start. Apart from one or two pupils, who have to travel from outside the area, late arrivals are rare.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. Overall, the quality of teaching throughout the school and in most subjects is good, and on occasions very good and even excellent, especially in English and mathematics. The needs of all pupils are therefore well met, and this is why they make better than expected progress. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and reflects the good levels of support provided by new policies and plans and professional training given by the school.

18. The teaching of literacy and numeracy in all classes, including Reception, is mainly good. Teachers' good understanding of the literacy and numeracy strategies, particularly in mathematics in Key Stage 2, lead to particularly well-focused instruction. The basic teaching of number and phonics, for example, are well covered in the joint Reception/Year 1 class, and in Year 2, so that pupils have a firm foundation on which to build. Teachers make good use of opportunities to reinforce literacy and numeracy skills by using them regularly in other subjects, such as science and geography. When they are able to, teachers make good use of computers, but the inclusion of ICT is not well established. Homework is set regularly, and its focus on the learning of the basic skills, especially in Key Stage 1, supports pupils' learning well.

19. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of most subjects and use this well to plan work that is interesting and builds carefully upon pupils' previous learning. Pupils are therefore more assured of success and good levels of learning. Teachers make sensitive use of questioning, that includes all pupils, and because of the probing nature of many of these questions, pupils increase their understanding. The pace of this oral learning, especially in Key Stage 2 mathematics, gave excellent results.

20. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning. They know their pupils well and often plan and prepare activities for those of different abilities, especially in English, mathematics and science, but not so regularly in other subjects. In many cases therefore, pupils' needs are well met, so they concentrate well and are productive in their work and rise to the challenge.

21. During lessons, all teachers are aware of, and sensitive to, pupils' needs, providing appropriate support or challenge when necessary. In the vast majority of lessons, however, the high levels of support made possible by the small class sizes is a great benefit to all pupils. Because of this close supervision, they receive good encouragement and direction,

putting a good deal of effort into their work, concentrating for longer and being more productive than is normally expected for pupils of this age. Pupils' learning is often good and sometimes very good, and reflects the pupils' particularly good attitudes. The high quality of teaching and the good support given by the skilful learning support assistants, especially to those with special educational need provide these pupils with a range of practical activities either in group work, or one to one, that closely match their particular need or learning style. Good use of specific and well-written numeracy and literacy targets in pupils' individual education plans, and their careful monitoring of their progress by the learning support assistants, ensures that these few pupils also make good progress.

22. Teachers help pupils to understand the relevance of what they are doing by sharing the learning intentions for the lessons with them and referring back to them so see what progress has been made. Teachers also set challenging targets for each pupil in English and mathematics; these are recorded in the front of pupils' books. Teachers and pupils frequently refer to them in their work, thus often encouraging and reinforcing the development of particular skills or knowledge. Pupils' work is regularly marked, and comments give pupils a very clear idea of how they can improve. These approaches to assessment, and teachers' own evaluations of their teaching, directly inform the planning for the next lesson so that in many lessons it closely meets the needs of pupils of different abilities.

23. Expectations of pupils' behaviour are consistently good, and pupils are encouraged to do their best. Teachers manage most pupils well, so that classrooms are productive places of work. On a very few occasions the inattentive behaviour of a few boys slightly disturbs learning, and the teachers' response was insufficient to restore immediate calm to the lesson. Teachers also have good classroom organisation skills. Many lessons are very lively and stimulating, and capture the pupils' interest to enhance their learning. The good choice and use of resources makes pupils' learning more relevant and interesting, as in the case of the Year 2 design and technology lessons.

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

24. The quality and range of opportunities for learning are good for pupils aged five to nine, and enriched by good links with the community and a very good range of out of class activities. The school has successfully tackled shortcomings in planning identified in the previous report; good use is made of national guidance to support planning, and pupils' learning experiences now build progressively as they move through the school. Planned learning experiences meet all statutory requirements, including religious education, and the fostering of pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Health education is well planned.

25. The curriculum for the youngest children is good. Close attention is given to the needs and the curriculum for the four children in the mixed Reception and Year 1 class so that they receive the recommended curriculum for pupils of this age. Careful planning of their curriculum ensures that it meets national guidance, with the exception of on-going outdoor activities. The school is successful in the teaching of the basic skills, which means that children are well prepared to begin the National Curriculum as the age of five.

26. The successful adoption of national strategies for literacy and numeracy ensures that the teaching of English and mathematics, and the basic skills, is securely based on the official frameworks; this helps support the rise in standards seen since the last inspection. There are some good examples of links between subjects such as history, geography, religious education and English. Well-planned research and recording connected with these subjects capitalise on pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. For example, pupils regularly and confidently use reference books and CD ROMs, as well as the World Wide Web, to support

their learning. The strategy for teaching numeracy is good and there are frequent opportunities for investigative work, which reinforces pupils' basic number work. There are also many other opportunities to use their knowledge, for example, computerised tessellated shape patterns in art and co-ordinates in geography. The focus provided by national guidance has helped propel standards in subjects such as music to high levels, and has appropriately reinforced the teaching of investigative skills in science. With its emphasis on the progressive development of skills, knowledge and understanding in subjects such as geography and history, it has had a similar effect, especially in Years 3 and 4. However, due to lack of assessment in subjects such as geography and computing, activities are not consistently matched to pupils of different abilities. Information and communications technology (ICT) as a separate subject is well planned, but pupils' computer skills and the use of the computer room has not yet been fully included in pupils' learning opportunities in all other subjects, especially in Key Stage 1.

27. Studham is an inclusive school. There is good equality of access and opportunity, and teachers work hard to ensure that all pupils are included in both lessons and out of class activities. Good provision is made for those pupils with special educational need. Their individual education plans identify specific targets, particularly in literacy and some in numeracy. The well-written plans are regularly monitored, reviewed and updated so ensuring that they are always closely matched to pupils' learning needs. In most cases, additional staff are well organised and effective. Although the school does not have pupils learning English as an additional language, there are sufficient resources and structures in place to ensure that their needs would be met. The sharp focus on individual pupils and their needs results in pupils, including high attainers, being appropriately challenged. In English, mathematics and science teachers plan a range of learning experiences that match a variety of abilities, but this is not as comprehensively done in other subjects. The school is aware of its gifted and talented pupils, and ensures that their needs are also catered for; for example, a Year 1 pupil undertakes literacy lessons in Year 2 so that she can be appropriately challenged.

28. There is a wide range of very good extra-curricular activities that include musical as well as sporting events. Many of these hinge on close co-operation with the community, as in the case of Maypole dancing, meeting with other local schools for sports competitions, and parental support. Provision for personal and social health education is good. The teaching of specific themes such as safety and healthy living are reinforced in circle times and assemblies, whilst sex and drugs education is appropriately planned.

29. Spiritual, moral and social (SMSC) development is a strength in the school, and cultural development is good.

30. Provision for spiritual development is very good, and reflects the school's very positive ethos that embraces a sense of belonging and warmth. There are many regular opportunities for reflection in lessons, and assemblies actively encourage pupils to think about and discuss their feelings; for example when the headteacher, along with the school puppet, Billy, led a very pertinent assembly on fear at the beginning of the inspection week. Assemblies are at times solemn occasions, when pupils engage thoughtfully and maturely in deep thought about the chosen theme. These themes are very well chosen, and reflect the caring ethos of the school. Each week, a well-orchestrated whole school assembly celebrates the achievements of pupils; these occasions are well attended by parents. In some lessons, such as religious education and music, teachers take good advantage of opportunities to extend pupils' spiritual development by encouraging them to reflect and appreciate the world around them. However, pupils' full spiritual development is not fully explored, as such opportunities are not planned aspects of pupils' learning experiences; they are currently more opportunistic.

31. Provision for moral and social development is very good and reflects the positive role

models that all staff provide. All teachers place great emphasis upon attitudes and relationships. Positive attitudes and good behaviour seen around the school are a tribute to this approach. Circle time has a very positive effect on pupils, as they are encouraged to think about the feelings of others, and to learn to listen to what others have to say. Many lessons have well planned activities in which pupils have to work co-operatively. The school council frequently gives pupils the opportunity to voice their views, and to consider how the school community can improve, as it has done in terms of equipment for the playground and the school's healthy eating project. The school places great value on pupil participation, and members of the school council have been on a training course on how to debate and present ideas and findings to an audience. School rules are proudly displayed in all classrooms and give a clear indication of what is expected.

32. Cultural development is good. There are close links to the local community, especially the two churches in the village, with regular visits to and from both churches. Pupils' appreciation of their own culture is also nurtured by participation in the yearly events of the Dunstable Lower Schools Music Festival and Maypole dancing. Further visits include trips to St Albans as part of Roman studies and a bi-annual Victorian Day, all of which enhance the curriculum and provide an appreciation of the pupils' cultural heritage. There are several opportunities for pupils to explore facets of different cultures through art, music, geography, and through a range of texts in English, for example stories from around the world. Pupils spoken to recall with pleasure the Divali Day held at the end of last term when they were all involved in a range of activities, concerning food, art, music and stories that reflected the culture of the Indian sub-continent. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their appreciation of Britain as a culturally diverse community.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The staff shows dutiful concern for the needs of pupils and, as at the time of the last inspection, provides good role models to encourage their development. Parents are pleased with the level of support offered by the school, seeing it as a caring community where staff are approachable if there are any problems. The school has made good progress in addressing the key issue for action from the last inspection; the procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development; educational and personal support and guidance are now good.

34. Overall, the school has satisfactory procedures for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of pupils. The headteacher is the designated officer for child protection, and the school follows locally agreed procedures. Staff have received sound levels of guidance on how to deal with any situations that may arise, and know who to report to in school if necessary. There is a trained first-aider, records are kept of any treatment and letters are sent home to parents as appropriate. Nevertheless, the school is reviewing the arrangements for first aid to ensure that a trained person is always available during the day. The governing body understands its responsibilities for health and safety and is actively involved in identifying any potential hazards. One governor has day-to-day experience of health and safety matters, and has ensured that a risk assessment takes place regularly; the health and safety policy is exemplary. Outside contractors regularly check the fire extinguishers and electrical items. Teachers ensure that pupils are made aware of health and safety issues during lessons such as science, physical education and design and technology reflecting the level of care that the school strives for. With support from the local education authority (LEA), the school participates in the healthy school initiative and has recently received an award for physical activities.

35. Formal assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science are good. A wide range of regular assessments accurately measures pupils' attainment. A comprehensive and detailed computer programme tracks the progress of both individuals and groups, identifying those at risk of underachievement and therefore in need of support. Teachers have regular access to this, although few have yet had training on how to obtain the maximum use from it. Teachers also have a variety of personal methods for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress. Although the school's approach is inconsistent, the information provided is accurate and used well. It enables teachers to plan carefully, set challenging targets and provide individualised targets that are also shared with parents. For co-ordinators, it has recently assisted in the identification of areas of development, such as spelling in English, and the underachievement of high attainers in science last year.

36. In the Foundation Stage, good use is made of information from the baseline assessment. It assists in the planning of work, the provision of resources and the setting of individual targets for the children. The school has recognised that the use of this information could be extended to provide clear information of children's attainment when they enter Key Stage 1.

37. The monitoring and support of pupils' personal development are good. Teachers keep few formal records but have a good understanding of individual pupils. Pupils' personal qualities are enhanced by various tasks they have around the school. Teachers conscientiously provide opportunities so pupils can develop initiative and independence. For example, older pupils help with the library and with setting out the hall for assembly, and the youngest independently gather the resources they need for their learning. The school encourages pupils to recognise the value of positive attitudes, with the award of certificates to the 'special persons' during Friday assemblies. Inspectors saw good use of circle time to help pupils appreciate the benefit of making positive comments about classmates. The school council provides a very good opportunity for pupils of different ages to work together, and both the older and younger pupils showed maturity in a discussion about how it operated.

38. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support, and the school has good links with outside agencies, particularly the local hospitals that have been caring for a pupil with a long-term illness. There are comprehensive systems for monitoring and reviewing the progress of pupils with special educational needs that are kept up to date by the Special Needs Co-ordinator. Teachers and learning support assistants maintain thorough daily records that help inform their planning and reviews. Progress against the targets identified in the individual plans, is monitored carefully and reviewed on a regular basis, with further targets being written when necessary.

39. Procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour are very good. The behaviour policy has a good balance of rewards and sanctions, with an emphasis on praising good behaviour. Parents are provided with a copy so that they can support the school in its endeavours. Class and school rules are displayed in classrooms, though teachers rarely need to refer to them. Staff reward especially good behaviour and attitudes by staff giving out team points and stickers. The overall positive ethos in school and the very good relationships ensure that new arrivals learn quickly from their classmates what is expected of them. Due to great care and sensitivity, pupil movement in and out of the school is well orchestrated. Those few pupils who, nevertheless, need extra reminders are, in most instances, very well managed by the teachers, so that any restlessness rarely affects the rest of the class. The school takes appropriate action if any bullying or racism occurs; certainly the pupils know such behaviour is unacceptable, and to report any occurrence to an adult.

40. Overall the procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance and punctuality are good. The school recognised that the level of attendance last year was unacceptably low and took action to improve it. The headteacher has reminded parents that holidays should be avoided in term time and now monitors the overall level each term. On a day-to-day basis, the secretary checks registers and telephones home if any absences are unexplained. Where necessary the headteacher discusses any unacceptable absences or regular lateness with parents, and involves the education welfare officer as appropriate. This action has resulted in a significant improvement during last term. Nevertheless, governors have not yet set any targets for improvement as part of the process of maintaining the raised awareness throughout the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. In their responses to the questionnaire, and at the meeting with inspectors, parents showed that they are very pleased with all that the school does. The inspection team supports all of their positive comments, which show an improvement since the time of the last inspection.

- * Their children like coming to school, behave well and make progress from the level of support they receive.
- * The teaching is good and the school expects them to work hard, helps them to become mature and responsible and provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.
- * They consider that their children receive the right amount of homework.
- * The school works closely with parents and they feel comfortable approaching the school with any questions; they are kept well informed about how their child is getting on.
- * The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

42. The school has established very good links with parents, and these contacts are effective. The headteacher sends letters home every couple of weeks or so providing general information about trips, clubs and administrative matters, as well as encouraging help from parents. Every term the school sends out a 'school matters' letter outlining what each class will be taught in each subject; other letters refer to more specific matters. Every morning and afternoon provides a very good opportunity for parents to see teachers. The school encourages them to come into classrooms before school starts and when it finishes to see the children's work and to attend weekly celebratory assemblies. The inspectors saw several conversations taking place and it is very apparent that parents feel at ease talking to staff. The contact book enables teachers and parents to have a written dialogue. These systems are particularly effective for children new to school, as the good level of communication facilitates their, (and their parents), smooth induction. Almost all parents come to formal meetings with teachers each term to discuss their children's progress. The annual report on progress, sent home in the summer term, provides a good summary of what the pupils know and can do in each subject. Nevertheless, the targets for improvement that are written by the pupils themselves are limited. They do, however, provide useful information when pupils transfer to other schools. The school works hard to maintain close links with parents whose children have special educational need. Parents are informed as soon as the school has any concerns. Invitations are made to parents, inviting them to regular meetings to review progress and to discuss the individual education plans and targets set for their children.

43. Parents' involvement with the school makes a very good contribution to its work and to the attainment of the pupils. Reading books go home every day, and reading records show that the majority of parents are interested in their children's learning and actively help at home. Discussion with pupils showed that their parents actively encourage and help them at

home. Pupils are happy in school and work hard and are keen to learn. These attitudes reflect the extent to which parents encourage their children to respect school and the education process. The 'school matters' letters suggest how parents can support their children at home. Parents help during the school day, coming in to the classroom to help with reading, craft work and trips out; others are active in the video club, coaching football and on gardening days. The parent/teacher and friends association is very supportive, arranging both fund raising and social events, including some for the benefit of the pupils.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. The leadership and management of the school are very good and have improved since the last inspection. The new headteacher, very well supported by the governing body, provides good leadership. The governing body's vision and involvement in school improvement is very evident. There is a clear path for the school set out in the well-presented school improvement plan. Each teacher is responsible for many subjects. Teachers' abilities to co-ordinate their areas have been slightly limited, as it is only recently they have been given the opportunities to undertake these roles fully. The school makes good use of the resources available to it for the benefit of pupils currently in the school; financial planning is very good. As at the time of the last inspection, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

45. The new head teacher has made a decisive and insightful start in appraising the school's qualities and needs, and has made a good impact in a short time. To do this, she has quickly built open and trusting relationships with parents, and made effective use of the new performance management procedures to support teachers. As a result, she has set out a clear path to guide the school's future improvement. The school's caring and inclusive ethos, where all pupils are valued and encouraged to achieve their best in many areas, is very strongly supported by parents and the community, and is reflected in all the school's work.

46. There is no deputy head and the approach taken to lead and manage many areas of the school is a collegiate one. Areas of the school, such as the Foundation Stage, are therefore well catered for. Teachers are hard working and conscientious. They have substantial responsibilities for subject leadership. Their work in developing subject policies and schemes of work has already had a positive impact on provision although their contribution to the leadership of their subjects through close analysis of data has yet to be fully developed through a training programme. The co-ordination of special educational needs by the headteacher is good. Procedures and practices are tightly focused and recorded, so that good support is offered to both pupils and parents. Due consideration is being given to the requirements of the new Code of Practice and the school is in line to have it fully implemented by September 2002. The support given by teachers and the governing body to the new headteacher is impressive, and shows that the school has a good capacity to succeed. The comprehensive staff handbook ensures agreement on many common approaches and promises a sound level of support for new staff and students.

47. The monitoring of teaching is good. The headteacher, governors and subject co-ordinators have observed a range of subjects being taught and this broad range of monitoring is well supported through staff discussions of teaching methods, examples of work and the quality of planning. The headteacher's observation of teaching as part of the new performance management strategy identifies priorities for teachers' personal and professional development, and these link appropriately to the school improvement plan; as yet, they do not include non-teaching staff.

48. Staff attend many courses that support the identified areas for development in the school improvement plan. For example, the success at meeting the needs of the high attaining pupils owes much to recent training. Training in ICT has been a recent priority, which has been successful in developing teachers' skills and confidence so that they are now more confident in teaching the subject. It is a good feature that the learning support assistant, who works with many of the pupils with special needs, has attended training in Early Literacy Support.

49. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties very well, providing the school with valued support and the parents and community with all the necessary information in a clear and understandable format. They also make a very good contribution to the work of the school, successfully steering it through a change of headteacher and the consequences of falling rolls. For example, in working closely with local schools. They have also provided, as the basis of a marketing strategy, very strong advice and direction in the planning of a survey local parents to find out what they want from the school. Through close involvement in monitoring the quality of education and a study of statistical information that compares the achievement of individual pupils, as well as the school with other schools, many have a good understanding of the school's academic strengths and areas of development. They have been, for example, instrumental in focusing the school's efforts to meet the needs of high attainers in science.

50. The well developed school improvement plan sets out clearly defined and appropriately chosen targets to reflect the school's needs across the range of its work. Its new format has overcome the shortcomings in it identified in the last inspection. It provides a timescale for improvement, identifies resources needed and the criteria against which achievement is measured. However some of the suggested activities are not very detailed, and some foundation subjects are not adequately included. The action taken to date to meet these targets has been good. In drawing up its improvement plan, the school takes account of others and includes the consideration of how well it is performing compared with others. As a result, in allocating resources it applies well the principles of best value.

51. The match of teachers to the demands of the curriculum is very good. Class sizes, especially in Key Stage 1, are very small; this enables the school to maintain a very good ratio of teachers to pupils so that all pupils benefit from close supervision and good levels of care. Three of the teachers are part time. As communication is so good between teachers, the quality education provided is seamless, and the school has the ability to use individual teachers' expertise across the school to great effect, as in art and music. There are sufficient support staff, and in most cases, their good knowledge and experience is deployed well and benefits pupils' learning.

52. The school is in a very pleasant, quiet setting and accommodation is satisfactory. In most cases, displays greatly enhance the learning environment and involve pupils in their own learning. The library is central to the school, easily accessible to all classes and is regularly used. The new computer suite is a great addition and offers many opportunities for pupils to explore the use of ICT, but it has yet to be fully integrated into teachers' planning. However, there is a lack of storage facilities, the hall is barely big enough for physical education lessons and facilities for staff are wholly inadequate, as the staff room has to double as the computer room. The outside play area used by all pupils at play and lunch times is spacious, giving plenty of space for energetic and fun activities. However facilities for pupils in Reception to enjoy continuous out door play are inadequate; the school is working very hard and seeking advice on how this can be addressed. The good range of learning resources in nearly all subjects promotes good opportunities for learning. There have been particular improvements in religious education and in the number of computers, and this is impacting positively on standards. In the great majority of activities, as in mathematics and art, they are used well.

53. Financial planning is very good. The school takes great care to spend its available budget for the benefit of pupils currently in the school. Through astute management the school has very successfully steered itself through a period of falling rolls and income. Budgeting is therefore thorough and systematic, based on a good understanding of the needs of the school. There is no specific funding allocated for pupils with special educational need, but grants for staff development are used very effectively, for instance in subjects such as science and ICT. The secretary helps the school to run smoothly on a day-to-day basis, with routine tasks such as the upkeep of attendance registers well managed. Good use is made of ICT in monitoring the budget and maintaining academic records. The recommendations of the last financial audit, recently completed, are currently being considered.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. To improve the school further and raise standards, the headteacher, governors, and staff need to:

- Take further measures to improve pupils' attendance so that their attainment and progress is not undermined. In particular the school should maintain initiatives that have recently been introduced and set specific measurable, achievable goals for improvement.
- Develop whole school practices to assess and monitor pupils' attainment and progress in all the foundation subjects, so that planned activities match more carefully the needs of pupils of different ability.
- However, the governing body might also like to consider for inclusion in its action plan;
 - * a review of the first aid arrangements.
 - * the planning of meaningful opportunities to prepare pupils to live in a British multicultural society.
 - * the development of the role of the subject co-ordinators.
 - * the use of the new computers and computer room in the teaching of all subjects.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	19
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	2	2	13	2	0	0	0
Percentage	10	10	70	10	0	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 more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s].

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR–Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	48
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	2

Special educational needs	YR–Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	12

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	7.3
National comparative data	5.6

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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	3	7	10

The test results have been omitted as the number of pupils who sat the tests was 10, and results are not, therefore, statistically valid. In 2001 all pupils achieved at least Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	48
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

YR–Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.48
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13.5:1
Average class size	15

Education support staff:

YR–Y4

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	31

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	173768.00
Total expenditure	168543.00
Expenditure per pupil	2555.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	10068.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

48
11

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	45	55	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	82	9	0	0	9
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	36	0	0	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	64	36	0	0	0
The teaching is good.	91	9	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	64	36	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	100	0	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	91	9	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	55	45	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	55	27	0	0	18
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	91	9	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	46	9	0	0

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

55. At the time of the inspection, there were only four children in the Foundation Stage. They are in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class. The school has sustained the quality of provision for children under five reported in the previous inspection. In some areas, such as planning, considerable improvement has been made, but currently, the children do not have constant access to an appropriate outdoor area. The school is aware of this aspect of the children's learning and is examining ways in which a patio area can be adapted to offer this provision for the children. Although the children are in a mixed age class, care is taken to provide a wide range of resources suitable for children of this age.

56. Attainment of the children on entry to the school is in line with national expectations for pupils of this age. The teacher plans carefully in line with the recommended curriculum, with the exception of outdoor activities. Teachers and support staff make sure that children with particular need are fully involved so they benefit from all the academic and social activities. Teaching is consistently good and the good progress the children make reflects the quality of teaching they receive. Support staff, through direct and sensitive interventions, contribute positively to the progress made. The teacher has high expectations of what children can achieve and the good use of assessment ensures that tasks match children's abilities. Baseline assessment provides data from which specific targets are written. The development of a system of using the results of assessments on entry to measure progress by the end of the Foundation Stage is well in hand.

57. Overall, the quality of teaching, the calm purposeful atmosphere in the classroom, and the carefully planned curriculum offered to the children give them a secure foundation to their school life.

Personal, social and emotional development

58. The personal and social development of the children has a high priority. By the time the children transfer to Year 1, most will exceed the expected standards in this area. This reflects the sensitivity of the teacher, and other staff including support staff, to the need to develop the children's confidence. The development of independence and confidence is supported both by the activities planned for the children and by the example of the older children in the class. The children are aware of routines, they tidy up automatically at the end of lessons, and they take care of equipment; they know which part of the room to go to for their structured play activities. They work well together as a group, listen carefully to the older children and make their own contributions to class discussions. Staff provide good role models and involve themselves with activities wherever possible. The fostering of children's spiritual and cultural development is successfully achieved through stories, assemblies, circle time and the general ethos of the class.

Communication, language and literacy

59. Children make good progress in language development, particularly reading and by the time they start Year 1 many will have surpassed the expected goals for their age.

60. The teacher emphasises the development of speaking and listening skills. Children's learning is deepened as adults carefully explain the meanings of words, stories and rhymes. The planning of the literacy hour provides a good range of activities appropriate for the age

group so that they follow the whole class sessions. The introduction of phonics through appropriate texts provides all children with a firm understanding of the basics. All the children can recognise and write their own names. Writing is encouraged; children know where to start on the page and are increasingly aware of how to form their letters. The more able pupils write independently. Children take books home to share with their parents, they are happy to share a book with adults and talk about the text. A higher attaining pupil is beginning to read simple texts and is already applying phonic skills to assist in the process. Teaching is good; focused activities sustain the children's interest.

Mathematical development

61. All children make good progress because of the good teaching they receive. All four children are on target to achieve the nationally expected standard by the time they enter Key Stage 1, and most will exceed it. Children are encouraged to recognise and use mathematical language. They are included in the mental number session at the start of the numeracy hour for the Year 1 children, thus providing opportunities to challenge high attaining children. When working independently in a group, they match appropriate numbers of objects to cards, between one and twelve. A less able child could explain coherently why she has difficulty in writing the numbers 6 and 8. The group activities consolidate and extend the children's understanding of the subject, and the teacher intervenes regularly to ensure that conceptual knowledge is developing.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

62. The planning behind the better than expected progress in children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good, and includes a variety of activities which draw their attention to the world around them. Teaching is good, and as a result, children are on target to exceed the standards expected of them by the time they start the National Curriculum. An examination of their workbooks reveals that they have been introduced to simple mapping. The introduction to food technology, as part of the schools healthy eating initiative, has led to a rudimentary understanding that some foods are healthier than others. They are beginning to understand the concept of 'old' and 'new' through looking at a variety of Teddy Bears. A walk in the village to compare houses reinforced the concept. Whilst out on their walk, they drew the teacher's attention to the singing of the birds. The environment is used effectively to support learning in this area and parents are happy to assist in the supervision of the children when they go around the village. They have ready access to sand and water, and they know that if they make a shape with sand, they need to add water if they wish to turn it out. All four children can use the computer independently. They control the mouse with confidence and know how to click, drag and drop pictures and how to change the screen.

Physical development

63. No physical education lessons were observed during the inspection, and the children have limited access to continuous play outside. Observations during playtime and dinner-time revealed that they are very confident in the playground, which is spacious, well equipped and allows them to be energetic and have fun in a safe environment; often being looked after by older pupils. They handle equipment confidently, can climb safely, run and skip. The school is planning to provide a safe outdoor area with appropriate equipment for Reception children. In class, care is taken to teach children the skills required, such as how to use scissors safely. As a result, children are acquiring safe control of these movements.

Creative development

64. Activities provided for the children when they enter the school ensure that they receive a wide variety of experiences that develop their creative skills. They handle paint and brushes confidently. The provision of a role-play area allows pupils safely to explore their imagination. There are some very good examples of children's collage and artwork around the classroom. Links with the history topic and through food technology provide children with an introduction to the skills and concepts of design and technology. Although no specific creative activities were observed, the activities are on-going and the confidence and independence with which the children approach them indicates that they are making good progress in this area of their learning. They can explain their work and how they achieved their results. Although no music lessons were observed, music is a strength of the school, and the foundation stage children join in enthusiastically when singing in assemblies; they also go in and out of assembly listening quietly to the music.

ENGLISH

65. The most recently reported national test results of 2001 state that the standards reached in reading were very high when compared to all schools, and to similar schools and standards in reading were also well above average. These are a significant improvement upon the last inspection when standards were reported as being above the national average.

66. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in reading and writing reached by pupils presently in Year 2 are not as high as those recorded last year, and are currently in line with expectations. This is because the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this class is significantly higher than previously. Standards in speaking and listening are above national expectations in Year 2, especially speaking skills. In relation to their attainment on entry all pupils, including those with special educational need, many of which are literacy based, achieve well. In Year 4, standards are above those expected of pupils of their age in speaking and listening, reading and writing, and all pupils learn well and make good progress.

67. The successful implementation of the national literacy strategy, and the improvements in assessment have enabled teachers to concentrate on basic skills whilst also developing good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills in many other subjects; as a result, pupils learn more effectively and attain higher standards.

68. Pupils come to the school with appropriate speaking skills appropriate for their age, and show confidence in talking to each other and to adults they know. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to speak. This is especially true in guided reading sessions where teachers' interventions encourage pupils to explain the plot or describe the characters in the text that they are reading. Pupils are given further opportunities to participate in discussions in geography lessons, share ideas in groups in science and design and technology and respond to others in circle time. These provide many worthwhile opportunities for further development of speaking skills. Teachers regularly encourage pupils to listen attentively to them, and to others, and provide opportunities in discussions and when reading to the class for pupils to refine their listening skills. In Year 2, the teachers insisted that pupils listen carefully and answer specific questions after listening to a story about Goldilocks, and repeat what they had been told to do in a science lesson. Year 4 pupils show a great deal of confidence in speaking, and usually listen well. They have a wide vocabulary and can express themselves well as they did in the class discussion of the class text, 'Suta's View'.

69. In Year 2, pupils have appropriately developed basic skills in reading, especially in phonics, and they use these to sound out unfamiliar words. For example, a higher attaining pupil sounded out, 'cautiously' and then used contextual clues to work out its meaning. In their discussions about Goldilocks and the Three Bears, most of the class showed a very good understanding of the story and were able to extrapolate and express ideas about the characters. For example, they commented 'It shows Mummy Bear is good at first aid' whereas Father Bear is 'grumpy' or 'grumbly'.

70. Basic reading skills are taught well and pupils make good progress. The use of visual and auditory stimuli reinforces pupils' knowledge. As pupils are regularly heard read in group sessions as well as one to one with the teacher, the development of their reading skills are closely monitored and promoted through good interventions. The school has a huge range of books so pupils benefit from a very wide range of material from which to choose. Reading is also a regular feature of pupils' homework, in which many parents take an active role.

71. In Year 4, most pupils read fluently and with understanding. Even the lower attaining pupils read with enjoyment and perseverance. All pupils recognise and talk about the characters and the setting of the story that they are reading, whilst the higher attaining pupils recount much of the plot and sequence of events referring to the text and using specific language used by the author. The basic skills of reading and writing of all pupils have developed well and they use phonetic techniques to read unfamiliar words, such as 'apprentice', and the context to work out that 'it must mean someone who's learning something'. Most pupils read a range of fiction and non-fiction books, but a small number, although competent readers, rarely, out of choice, read fiction books. All pupils have reading record books, and pupils, parents and teachers regularly use these. However, some of the comments made by teachers do not provide very clear guidance as to what steps the readers should next take to develop their skills or to expand the breadth of reading material. A variety of texts, located in the small, but central library, enables the subject to make a good contribution to work in other subjects, and to the cultural and multi-cultural development of the pupils. This is by exposing them to a range of cultural ideas and values which they are encouraged to think about and discuss.

72. Pupils in Year 2 write using a cursive script, although many have yet to develop a consistent size. Their sentences are generally well punctuated, and the teacher places due emphasis on the importance of the basics of punctuation, a point often referred to in their marking. Their story writing is adequate, although does not demonstrate great flair or use of interesting vocabulary. Spelling in English lessons is reasonable, and phonetically correct, reinforced by regular spelling tests. However, the skills pupils have are not consistently used or reinforced in other subjects. In a science lesson, there were some basic mistakes, for example 'mettle' (metal), 'plastik' (plastic) and 'sreche suph' (stretchy stuff). The subject co-ordinator is aware of the need to improve spelling, and to a lesser extent creative writing, across some subjects, and has already initiated a revision of the types of words given for spelling homework. A date has also been set for a literacy advisor to come to discuss writing. In Year 4, pupils generally write neatly and with a good understanding of technical aspects, such as sentence structure and punctuation. They write well for a range of purposes and different audiences, for example in the well crafted story entitled 'The Secret of Maju Lan' and in the playlet based on the tale of the 'Three Little Pigs'. Pupils also write imaginative poems, persuasive writing and reports, as in history when they recorded interviews about changes in the village. Pupils use their word processing skills reasonable well, changing fonts and colours to add character and meaning to their work.

73. Teaching is consistently good, and sometimes very good. The small class sizes, especially in Key Stage 1, enable teachers to give individual attention to pupils, so that they are all included and receive the appropriate help to reach their individual targets. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and are confident and competent in their use of the national literacy strategy to help them teach well the basic skills of phonics and handwriting for

example. Specific objectives are set for lessons, and because these are clearly explained and teachers provide good guidance, pupils achieve well. Teachers know their pupils very well and have high expectations of them, often providing them with a challenge that they know they will enjoy. It also enables them to target specific comments and questions to them individually during lessons. Marking too is well done with comments intended to guide pupils to improve and specific targets set. This ensures that pupils are well involved in their own learning. Teachers manage pupils well, and in the best lessons maintain interest and motivation by keeping a brisk pace, and making sure the work is varied. Because of this, pupils have very positive attitudes to work and are keen to improve. They respond well and show interest, settling quickly to the work and staying on task. Only in one Year 3 and 4 lesson where the pace lessened, did pupils' interest and effort slightly diminish. The learning support assistants are well deployed in helping groups, usually of pupils with lower attainment, so that they make good progress. In Year 2, they make frequent references to pupils' literacy targets in their individual education plans, and record carefully pupil progress after each lesson.

74. The subject is well led and managed. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment in reading and writing, with regular tests during term time as well as at the end of the year, and staff discussion about pupils' levels of work. These are carefully recorded on a computerised database that provides teachers with the opportunity to monitor individual pupils' progress and plan appropriate work. However, class teachers' records remain inconsistent across the school. The co-ordinator, the recently appointed headteacher, is making good progress in analysing test results and identifying strengths as well as development needs, as in spelling and writing.

MATHEMATICS

75. Standards in the national tests for mathematics have improved since the last inspection, and have been well above average for the last two years when compared with schools nationally, and to similar schools. All pupils, irrespective of gender or ability, make good progress because of consistently good teaching and the good use of assessment to set challenging targets. Inspection findings indicate that standards in the current Year 2 are not as high due to a higher number of pupils with special educational need in this year group; they are, however, well above the expected level for pupils in Year 4.

76. In Year 2, nearly all pupils are confident with numbers up to 20 and many to 100. They have sufficient mental strategies to identify all the multiples of ten to one hundred, to sequence them correctly and to describe the number patterns formed. Through their developing understanding of place value, most pupils independently partition numbers up to one hundred into tens and units and apply this knowledge to their work in money. Pupils have covered each of the four rules of number and have applied them in simple problem solving activities that also involve length and weight. Their ability to use both standard and non-standard units of measurement are above those expected for their age. They are able to describe the properties of most regular two and three dimensional shapes. Pupils in Year 4 have a very good understanding of number, and can identify and describe number patterns and such relationships as multiple and factor. All pupils have a range of mental strategies that use the four rules of number to solve number problems; the speed at which the high attainers calculate their answers is particularly impressive. Pupils regularly work with numbers greater than one thousand, and many confidently divide and multiply them by ten or a hundred. Many pupils use a variety of instruments and units to solve problems of weight, length, area and perimeter, accurately converting, for example, between millimetres, centimetres, metres and kilometres.

77. Teaching is good, and some excellent teaching was observed in the Year 3 and 4 class. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy is good,

particularly in Key Stage 2. The enthusiasm of the teaching, particularly with the older pupils, was infectious and fuelled pupils' own enjoyment. The series of well-planned lessons have a very clear structure, and a good and sometimes very lively pace that keeps pupils alert and interested. Extensive and fast questioning in some classes, during oral work, was prudently used to probe individual pupils to explain and expand on their answers, thus deepening their understanding and giving the teachers a firm insight into what the pupils knew, understood or could do. Good use is made of assessment information, and high expectations are clearly set in the challenging individual and group targets. This greatly helps to inform the planning of work for pupils of different ability, so a very few low attaining pupils in Year 4 worked with numbers up to ten, whilst others manipulated numbers up to one thousand and beyond. All teachers share the learning objective well with pupils so that they knew exactly what was expected of them, and in the very best of lessons this was returned to at the end, to quickly and expertly check on pupils' understanding. Relationships are very good, and the trusting and friendly atmosphere encourages pupils to ask for assistance when necessary, so that they can complete their tasks. In most cases pupils' work conscientiously, applying themselves well to their work, except in Year 2 where a few individuals were slightly restless and not very well managed. A good range of resources greatly helps most pupils consolidate their learning. Well-briefed support staff provide good support for small groups of pupils, although occasionally they were not as well deployed at the start of a lesson. All pupils' work is regularly marked. The informative comments assist pupils in deepening their understanding, and help them evaluate their own progress towards meeting their objectives, so that they have a good understanding of their own achievements. Homework is used well. It is consistently set and marked, meeting the needs of different groups of pupils and building upon skills, knowledge or understanding acquired in lessons.

78. The leadership and management of the subject are sound. The co-ordinator, amongst her many other responsibilities, monitors the quality of teaching and the curriculum. Assessment procedures across the school are good, with both termly and end of year tests, the results of which are computerised and analysed to identify pupils or groups that might be underachieving. The co-ordinator has as yet, not been provided with many opportunities to develop her skills in performing a close analysis of assessment information. This provides an accurate picture of pupils' attainment and progress, so that end of key stage projections are made and individual objectives written to focus on a pupil's next stage of learning. Individual teachers' records, although good, are not consistent across the school. Good use of mathematics in a range of subjects, such as design and technology and ICT encourages pupils to use their skills and knowledge of measuring and data handling. However, there is currently a lack of suitable computer programs to support the teaching of mathematics, and teachers do not consistently identify the use of computers in their planning.

SCIENCE

79. Based on teacher assessment in 2001, pupils aged seven reached standards that were very high in comparison with the national average, and with schools of a similar background. However, high attaining pupils did not achieve as well as expected, especially in investigative activities. Most pupils currently in Year 2 reach standards above those expected for their age in most areas of science. These are not as high as those recorded in 2001, because many of the pupils in the class are on the special needs register. All pupils, however, including those with special educational need, make good progress because of the small class sizes and good teaching. This progress is sustained in Key Stage 2, where pupils also reach standards above those expected for their age. This is a considerable improvement upon the results reported at the time of the last inspection, when standards were viewed as being in line with expectations; this is due to training and improved assessment, and long term plans that are based on national guidance.

80. In Year 2, work so far this year has focused on physical processes and materials and

their properties. In their lesson, most pupils had a good understanding of how to sort and classify materials, and understand that materials change, for example by adding water or by being exposed to heat. In Key Stage 2 there is good progression in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in nearly all areas of the science curriculum. Practical and investigative work is encouraged in many areas; for example, pupils have a good understanding of different forces, and know that friction slows movement. They have applied their knowledge of materials to carefully choose materials that either increase or decrease friction depending on their properties.

81. Two lessons were observed, and in both the teaching was good. In both, the clear explanation of the aims gave them relevance and a focus that all pupils understood. Care is taken to assess pupils learning, both in the marking of work and in the use of the learning objective to measure pupils' learning at the end of a lesson. This enables teachers to identify the next steps the pupils need to make, thus providing appropriate challenge that the pupils enjoy. Lessons have lively pace and purpose. A good range of activities support learning in the subject and resources are readily available, appropriate and used well. These approaches help to motivate and maintain pupils' interest, as observed when the boys in Year 2 responded particularly well to the good choice of resources - vehicles. Higher attaining pupils extend their thinking by discussion with their teacher and by experimentation. Through the good use of questioning, carefully pitched at pupils of different ability, teachers intervene effectively to move learning forward by encouraging pupils to explain and reflect upon their answers. Opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills are regularly planned; pupils record their experiments and work in a variety of ways, whilst they are frequently expected to measure accurately and record their results. However, the use of ICT is not planned as well.

82. The co-ordination of the subject is good. Assessment procedures are good and pupil results have been analysed carefully by the headteacher and governors; this highlighted the need to focus on the needs of the high attaining pupils. The co-ordinator has recently undertaken training on assessing the needs of the more able pupils in the subject in order that the school can enhance the opportunities it offers them. Inspection evidence indicates that their needs are being appropriately met. The school has adopted a national scheme to support teaching in the subject, and is currently trialling an additional scheme and resources to support this in order to raise levels of attainment in experimental and investigative science.

ART AND DESIGN

83. By the ages of seven and nine, pupils reach standards that are above those expected for their age, and all pupils, including those with particular needs, make good progress. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, particularly in Key Stage 1 when standards were in line with national expectations. This is because pupils benefit from, and enjoy, a wide range of well-planned artistic experiences that develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. Art lessons contribute positively to pupils' personal development.

84. Displays of work around the school completed by pupils in Year 2 include collage work, painting, decorated paper plates and displays to support work in other areas of the curriculum, for example, the life and work of Florence Nightingale; all are of a good standard. Even the youngest pupils use sketchbooks very early on and they have a good understanding of the value of a sketch or outline. They apply these skills well to other areas of the curriculum, particularly history, geography and design and technology. Pupils in Year 4 have studied the work of famous artists and perceptively paint in the style of Cezanne. They have a deep understanding of colour in their artwork, and their sketchbooks contain descriptions of how they mixed the colours to achieve the desired effect. Their painted snow scenes reflect the delicate tones of the winter landscape with an uncanny accuracy. In both key stages, there are good links with other areas of the curriculum.

85. In the one lesson observed, taken by the co-ordinator in a mixed Year 3/4 class, the teaching was very good. Because of her good use of resources and careful planning, all pupils understood how and why people pose in varying ways for portrait painters. The choice of paintings added positively to pupils' cultural development. Pupils worked particularly well together when discussing the sample portraits. The highlighting of specific art skills in the planning and the sharing of these with all pupils encouraged them to focus their efforts on the development of perspective and sketching to achieve good results. No time was wasted and the lesson had pace and purpose, thus maintaining pupils' interest and concentration. The teacher took advantage of opportunities to develop and extend language when they arose, carefully explaining artistic terminology. The high expectations of the teacher, and her ability to use questioning skilfully to move learning forward, resulted in very good progress being made by pupils.

86. The subject is well co-ordinated. The adoption of national guidance in conjunction with the school's own scheme of work has resulted in the raising of pupil achievement by setting out what skills pupils need to acquire. The associated assessment schedule is not yet in place. Good art resources provide pupils with a wide range of quality artistic experiences.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

87. By the ages of seven and nine, pupils reach standards above those expected for their age. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. This shows some improvement since the last inspection, when standards and progress in the subject were satisfactory in Key Stage 1.

88. In the one lesson observed in Year 2, teaching was good. The teacher had secure subject knowledge, the lesson was well planned and resources used were appropriate and well used. The teachers' choice of vehicles and her descriptions and demonstrations of how they move gained pupils attention and helped maintain their concentration. Skilful questioning enhanced learning, and care was taken to ensure that pupils understood the correct terminology, for example, chassis, axle and suspension. A discussion with Year 2 pupils revealed that they had fully understood the process they had undertaken earlier in the school year when making puppets. They knew that the design had to be big enough to accommodate their hand, and that the fabric was important, not just for its strength, but also to enable them to have the colour they wanted for their particular puppet.

89. The good display of pencil cases made by pupils in Year 3 and 4, allows all pupils to see a good demonstration of the design and make process which is also clearly labelled and well explained, using clear report writing. A discussion with some of these pupils revealed that they had a good understanding of the design and make process.

90. Co-ordination of the subject is sound. The adoption of national guidance, which stipulates how and when skills are to be developed through a broad range of topics, underpins the teaching of the subject. However, as yet, there is no formal approach to assessment and recording pupils' progress and work is not consistently matched to pupils' differing abilities. Good use is made of literacy to support the subject and pupils frequently offer detailed written descriptions of the design and make process, including perceptive evaluative comments.

GEOGRAPHY

91. By the age of seven, most pupils reach standards in line with those expected for their age. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make better than expected

progress. This is successfully built upon in Key Stage 2, where pupils continue to make good progress and achieve standards that are above those expected for their age due to their more highly developed literacy skills. This is an improvement upon the findings of the last inspection when standards met expectations at both seven and nine.

92. Through a study of a contrasting locality, many pupils in Year 2 clearly describe the physical features of a coastline, and contrast it with the rural landscape in which they live. In doing this, all pupils, and particularly the high attainers, wrote at length and in detail about the human influences on coastal areas with the development of ports and tourism. Most pupils understand that symbols and keys are useful tools in the study of maps, although the lower attaining pupils remain confused about what some of the symbols represent. Pupils' knowledge of the village of Studham is deepened in Year 4, and all pupils have written descriptions and evaluations, some at length, about the different features of the area and a variety of land use. Their appreciation of human influence on the locality is mature, and they discuss the implications of the closure of 'Maises Shop' on the community and the life of local pensioners.

93. Teaching in the one lesson observed with the older pupils was good. A good range of secondary sources, including maps and pictures, were used well to focus pupils' attention. There was a warm and friendly atmosphere in the classroom during a debate on the differences between Studham and a village in the Peak District, which was well paced and encouraged all pupils to have the confidence to put forward their ideas. The teacher, through careful questioning, ably included lower attaining pupils, but also challenged higher attaining pupils, encouraging them to explain and elaborate on their answers; for example, the consequences to both the environment and to humans of being under the flight path to Luton airport. Very careful instructions meant that the transitions between activities were seamless, with pupils quickly settling to their new tasks. The associated activities to the discussion, particularly the computer work, were very well planned and purposeful. A large group of pupils, taken by a parent helper, used the World Wide Web to find out more about a village in the Peak district. This included a few higher attaining pupils, who used the co-ordinates of an Ordnance Survey map to find key features such as the public house.

94. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The recently adopted national guidance provides a structure for the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, although the associated procedures for assessment have not been uniformly implemented throughout the school. Good use is made of the locality to give pupils practical experience in applying their knowledge and skills. There are good links with other subjects and the subject makes positive contributions to pupils' personal development.

HISTORY

95. By the age of seven, pupils reach standards in line with those expected for their age. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. This is appropriately built upon in Key Stage 2, where pupils make good progress because of their more advanced literacy skills, and achieve standards that are above those expected for their age; this is an improvement upon the findings of the last inspection.

96. Work in pupils' books, and displays around the school, indicate that the knowledge of pupils in Year 2 of important people, such as Florence Nightingale, is as expected for their age. Pupils in Year 4 talk about 'walking through history', remember visiting the Studham War Memorial and talk with understanding about the First World War and life in England at that time. They talk intelligently and knowledgeably about the different types of clothing, transport and health care and can make sensible and relevant comparisons with their own lives today. Higher attaining pupils talk about 'primary' and 'secondary' evidence and what it means. Work is neat and well presented, and shows that pupils have a good understanding

of how society today has arisen out of what has happened in the past.

97. In the one lesson observed, teaching was good. The lesson was well prepared, and the many parent helpers were well briefed. The concept of 'old; 'new' and change was carefully established and reinforced by a walk around the village looking at houses. The teacher's careful questioning, high expectations and calm manner encouraged pupils to pay particular attention to the details of houses, noting the differences and similarities.

98. Management of the subject is satisfactory. Effective use is made of visits to sites of historic interest, such as the Studham War Memorial and the Roman sites at St Albans. Other events, such as the bi-annual Victorian Day, add depth and breadth to pupils learning experiences. National guidance is used well to ensure that there is a progressive development of knowledge, skills and understanding. Assessment is carried out through evaluation of lessons, but there is no consistent whole school approach to using assessment to feed back into the planning process, to provide work for pupils of different ability. The subject makes a sound contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

99. Standards of work seen during the inspection meet national expectations for pupils aged seven, but are above the expected level for pupils aged nine; standards have been maintained since the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special needs make sound progress in Key Stage 1, but better progress in Key Stage 2 because of more planned opportunities to use computers.

100. Pupils in Year 2 know how to start up the computer, select the application they need from the screen icons and open the program. An established part of their repertoire is marking the text to change its size and colour to add visual impact to their writing. However, the sharing of ideas using images and sound is outside the experience of most. Pupils talk confidently and excitedly about how they can tell 'Terry the Turtle', (the schools programmable floor robot), how to move, but could not describe how they could give it a series of commands to follow a predestined path. Their understanding of the wider use of ICT was limited to only the high attaining pupils, who were able to describe sending emails or using the World Wide Web to find out about Harry Potter.

101. Pupils in Year 4 regularly use their word processing skills in both English and history, recording interviews that they have undertaken and changing the font and colour for effect. They also insert clip art into text and have used this technique to design their own Christmas cards. Most pupils understand that a data base is an efficient way to store information, and that such information can be easily presented as bar graphs or pie charts; although a few still have difficulty in recalling how to sort information into different fields. In geography, most pupils use the World Wide Web to find suitable information about a contrasting location to their own. They ably use the search feature to narrow their search, and the index lists on the actual web page to find Ordnance Survey maps and more detailed information about the Peak District.

102. The one lesson observed in Key Stage 2 was good. All the Year 4 pupils were grouped in the computer suite. The learning support assistant supervising them was well briefed and the activity was well prepared. A good recap of previous work, and a very clear exposition of the learning objectives gave the lesson a strong focus, and all pupils were very clear as to their task. Careful questioning skilfully moved pupils learning forward, as it emphasised the development of skills and understanding. The tasks set gave them good experience in working independently, and they persevered well in solving problems for themselves; when in doubt, friends, often unsolicited, gave support and instruction.

103. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The new scheme of work has addressed the weakness noted in the previous inspection, and this is effective in identifying what pupils should learn from year to year. Recent training means that teachers are now more confident in using computers and other forms of technology. There is a good ratio of pupils to computers, and the new suite is an additional bonus, where groups and classes can be given direct instruction. However, as yet, the use of computers is not systematically planned into other subjects as a way to widen pupils' experience and develop their skills. There is a lack of assessment procedures to monitor pupils' progress and to guide future support. In particular, current systems do not identify the needs of pupils who bring skills from home.

MUSIC

104. Music is a major strength of the school. Its appreciation, performance and enjoyment play an important part in the life of the school and add considerably to pupils' personal development. By the age of seven and nine, pupils reach standards above those expected for their age. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. The school has improved on the good standard reported at the last inspection.

105. Pupils in both Years 2 and 4 are reaching very high standards in music, particularly singing. Pupils sing clearly with verve and enthusiasm in music lessons and assemblies; they sing with accurate pitch and clear words. They join in tunefully, singing hymns with confidence, most of which they know by heart. They respond well when the teacher leading them in unaccompanied singing encourages greater effort. In a singing assembly, they listen carefully to the teacher and are aware that the piano will tell them when to join in. In assembly, pupils follow an established routine and sit quietly listening and appreciating the music whilst waiting for the rest of the school to assemble.

106. In an excellent lesson observed in a Year 3 and 4 class, the teacher's very good subject knowledge and high expectations created a dynamic learning experience. Learning was palpable due to the enthusiasm of the teacher, and all pupils responded in kind. Carefully planned, the lesson moved seamlessly and the precise sharing of the learning objectives focused pupils' thoughts and energy on the skills they were to learn and develop; they remained focused and attentive at all times. In the paired activities, pupils showed respect for each other and an appreciation of music when listening to the compositions of peers. Because of the high level of input by the teacher, and the emphasis placed on the use of musical language, pupils revealed a good understanding of musical terminology such as 'legato' and 'staccato'.

107. The subject is well managed. The school uses its own scheme of work that ensures there is a good progression in the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Currently, there are no formalised assessment procedures to monitor pupils' progress. However, informal methods that are not always clearly recorded, inform teachers' planning, so that the skills and aptitudes of different pupils are successfully met. The school has an adequate collection of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. The very good use of the expertise of a part-time teacher is significant in raising the profile of music and the quality of singing throughout the school. Opportunities for appreciation of music are well used, and pupils are given clear guidance on what to listen to. Pupils take part in local community events and competitions. Extra-curricular activities in the school, such as recorder clubs and Maypole dancing, support pupils' learning in the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

108. By the age of seven, pupils reach standards in line with those expected for their age. All pupils, including those with special need, progress at a steady rate. The school has maintained the standards reported at the time of the last inspection. No lessons in Key Stage

2 were observed and no judgment on standards can therefore be made.

109. In the gymnastics lesson seen in Year 2 teaching was good and pupils achieved well. The teacher gave pertinent reminders about health and safety issues, so the lesson proceeded in an orderly fashion. Following on from the teacher's well explained instructions, pupils developed a sequence of movements involving jumping, turning and spinning around the room, on mats and using a variety of large equipment. As the lesson progressed, effective intervention and guidance from the teacher enabled pupils to make good progress in controlling their bodies and movements and improving their sequences; this made them flow together and become part of a sequence rather than a series of separate movements. Good use was made of pupils to demonstrate good techniques and pupils were encouraged to self assess and to look for and point out what was positive in the sequences of others; this they did with maturity and confidence. Lesson plans from other classes, indicate a complete coverage of the National Curriculum, with work planned to provide progression in skills in all areas of the pupils' physical development.

110. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The adoption of national guidance has been instrumental in maintaining pupils' achievement by setting out what skills pupils need to acquire. However, the associated assessment schedule is not yet in place. The co-ordinator and other teachers have made good use of attending courses, such as for teaching football. This has resulted in the school acquiring extra resources. As a result, there is a good range of equipment overall, except in relation to large-scale apparatus for the older pupils, which is very limited. There is a large playground for use in games lessons, and pupils benefit from going swimming during the summer term. However, the main hall is barely large enough for the indoor lessons, even with the smaller classes. Numerous after school clubs support pupils' physical development, and pupils also participate in local sports competitions.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

111. Standards of work seen during the inspection were above national expectations for pupils aged seven and nine; all pupils, including those with special needs, make good progress. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, and indicates better planning and resources. The subject makes a very valuable contribution to pupils' personal development.

112. Pupils, throughout the school, develop an understanding of principles and practices of several world faiths. In discussions, pupils in Year 2 remember work on Sikhism, and in particular Sikh weddings. They show understanding of the symbolism of the scarf used to bind the couple together and talk sensibly and with sensitivity of the significance and meaning of vows and promises. Good use is made of the close links with the village's two churches, and of talks by church leaders. As well as celebrations of various Christian festivals, such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest, pupils also celebrate some non-Christian festivals. Last term, all the school was involved in celebrating Divali, and there was a range of cross-curricular activities that the pupils enjoyed and remembered well. Pupils spoken to could recall the story associated with Divali.

113. Teaching was satisfactory in the one lesson seen. It was well planned, following on closely from previous work. Good management skills and effective questioning ensured that the pupils listened well and remained focused. Pupils were guided well through discussions of examples of what makes things special and how they should be treated, but the opportunity to explore emotions and feelings was not fully exploited.

114. Subject leadership and management are sound. The scheme of work is based on the locally Agreed Syllabus, and provides good coverage and support for teachers' lesson planning. There is no evidence of formal procedures for assessing pupils' attainment to guide future planning and provision, and activities are not consistently matched to pupils of different ability. Good use is made of a range of resources to make lessons interesting. Assemblies make a strong contribution to pupils' understanding of different faiths and beliefs, and pupils are encouraged to reflect on values, feelings and emotion.