

INSPECTION REPORT

GREAT BARFORD LOWER SCHOOL

Great Barford, Bedfordshire

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109454

Headteacher: Mrs Anna Snelling

Reporting inspector: Brenda Iles
12000

Dates of inspection: 11th to 14th February

Inspection number: 194025

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Silver Street Great Barford Bedfordshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor Carole Ellis
Date of previous inspection:	6 th May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
12000	Brenda Iles	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage Equal opportunities Mathematics Information and communication technology (ICT) Art and design Design and technology Music	What should the school do to improve further; The school's results and achievements; How well are pupils taught; How well is the school led and managed.
13526	Richard Barnard	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents
3692	David Hill	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language English Science Geography History Physical education Religious education	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT	12
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED	18
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER	20
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	21
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	25

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Great Barford Lower School, which is smaller than most primary schools, draws three-quarters of its 128 pupils (53 boys and 67 girls) from the village. Children have the opportunity to start school at the age of four and attend school on a part time basis prior to full time education from the term in which they reach statutory school age. Sixteen children were of nursery age and a further twenty-five were in the reception year at the time of the inspection. There is a broad range of attainment on entry but overall it is below the local average. Ten percent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is about average. A small number of pupils are of Indian, Pakistani or Caribbean heritage and very few speak English as an additional language. Sixteen pupils are on the register of special educational needs. Of these, four have statements and two more are pending, which is a high number for a small school and shows an increase since the last report. Twenty-two per cent of pupils joined or left the school at times other than the usual admission and transfer times during the last year, which is very high. This is due mainly to transfers to local independent schools at the age of eight and changes in family circumstances. The majority of pupils live in owner occupied housing with an increasing proportion living in rented accommodation. The social circumstances are average overall. The school has grown in size since it was last inspected and is under new leadership following the retirement of the previous headteacher.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school, under new leadership, is very well led and managed and results are improving steadily. The quality of provision is very good and higher than that described in the last report. Teaching is very good and pupils achieve well. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides very strong and effective leadership, well supported by staff and governors
- Standards are above average at the ages of seven and nine
- Teaching is very good
- Attitudes to learning are very good
- The curriculum supports teaching and learning very well
- Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent

What could be improved

- The school has no key issues for improvement.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in May 1997 there have been changes in the school's leadership and many improvements that have built well on the school's strengths. The clear vision and direction of the headteacher has moved the school forward significantly. Standards have improved and are now above those of most seven and nine-year-olds in the basic skills, and pupils make very good progress. The school has dealt with the issues raised in the last report effectively. The quality of teaching is now very good and the more able pupils are challenged well. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are very effective and provision for cultural development is very good. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented very effectively and the curriculum for all age groups supports teaching and learning very well. Improvements in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) are raising standards rapidly.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
reading	C	B	B	B
writing	B	D	B	B
mathematics	D	C	C	C

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

Pupils have a very good start to their learning in the nursery and reception class and make rapid progress, which is built upon consistently well in the infant and junior classes through very good teaching. Test results over the last three years show a steady upward trend. The school sets targets for each year group based on pupils' prior performance, a practice that is contributing well to rising standards. The differences between results from year to year reflect the varying proportions of more able and special needs pupils within the cohorts.

Reception aged children make very rapid progress given the below average achievements of many when they start school. By the time they enter Year 1 almost all are likely to meet the expected standards and those who are more able are likely to exceed them. Inspection evidence shows that standards in the current Year 2 are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Statutory teacher assessment in science in Year 2 last year indicated that attainment was average overall but that the proportion of pupils who achieved the higher levels was well above average. Standards for nine-year-olds are above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. Particular strengths are evident in reading and pupils' practical application of skills and knowledge to problem solving in subjects such as science, mathematics and design and technology. Across all classes the quality of reading is very good. Strengths in the basic skills have a positive influence on the quality of learning in other subjects. Standards in religious education are above local age related expectations for seven and nine-year-olds. In ICT they are also above average at both ages. Particular strengths are evident in pupils' ability to use e-mail, research information and access a range of programs to present their work. In almost all the other subjects of the National Curriculum standards are above average for both seven and nine-year-olds.

Pupils with special educational needs, and those who are more able are challenged appropriately to enable them to achieve their best. The very small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported and make very good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and like school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are excellent and a significant strength. Pupils' individual needs are met very well. Adults provide very good role models and excellent relationships promote confidence, self esteem and understanding of the needs of others.
Attendance	Attendance is above average

The school has a strong, caring ethos. All pupils are valued and there is a very high level of trust and respect. Pupils receive very good encouragement to make independent decisions and use their initiative.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very Good	Very 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 a strength of the school. It is never less than very good in the nursery and reception class and the features of excellence are the reason why children make rapid progress in their early learning. Teaching in the infants and juniors is also very good. Almost all the lessons observed were either good or very good with examples of excellence in Years 2 and 4. The remainder, which was a very small number, were satisfactory. Very good teaching of literacy and numeracy supports learning in the basic skills very effectively. Teachers plan interesting lessons that provide exciting practical opportunities. They motivate pupils, inspire interest and make learning fun. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and challenge higher attaining pupils well. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported. The very small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language are also well supported to achieve their best. Target setting for individual pupils is effectively supporting raising standards. The teaching assistants and the nursery nurse make very good contributions to teaching and learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for all age groups is of very good quality.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good arrangements support pupils to achieve their best.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision for the very small number of pupils is very good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good; there is a very good range of opportunities to support the development of positive values, self-esteem, care for others and respect for rules and cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are very well cared for. Child protection arrangements are very good.

The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented very effectively. Progress in developing ICT is also rapid but more time is needed before it impacts fully on the standards pupils achieve. The partnership with parents is good and parents receive good information that enables them to support their children's learning. Staff have a very good understanding of the needs of individual pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides leadership of a very high quality. She is very well supported by staff and there is a shared understanding and vision for improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors provide very good support and have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school plan identifies priorities accurately. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are very well organised and effective.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used effectively and support teaching and learning very well.

The headteacher, staff and governors have worked as a committed team and have been very effective in their drive to raise standards and the quality of education. The school plan sets realistic challenges and priorities are identified accurately. The building is well maintained and clean. The budget is very well managed and the principles of best value are applied well. The school's capacity to succeed is very good.

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 like school and make good progress • Teaching is good • The school is well led and managed • The staff are approachable and take concerns and suggestions seriously. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would like more extra curricular activities • A small number would like more opportunities to be involved in the school's work • Some parents are concerned about the safety of the school pond and the arrangements for administering medicines.

Inspectors support parents' strongly held view that the school provides a good quality of education. The range of clubs and educational visits is small but similar to most schools of this size. The governors have taken appropriate advice and action to ensure that health and safety issues are met fully. Risk assessments are meticulous and governors aim to exceed the local recommendations to ensure pupils' safety by the pond. Arrangements for administering medicines follow national and local guidance. They are very well implemented. The school is very happy to involve parents in a broad range of activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Test results for seven-year-olds show a steady upward trend over the last three years. Particular progress has been made in raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The national initiatives for literacy and numeracy are very well implemented.
2. The latest results for 2001 show seven-year-olds achieved standards that were above average nationally and above the average of similar schools in reading and writing. This reflects the success of the school's priority to raise standards in literacy. In mathematics, standards were average and the same as schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. Results show pupils are well challenged in these subjects; a well above average proportion reached the higher Level 3 in reading and an above average proportion did so in writing and mathematics. Teacher assessment in science show attainment was close to the national average with a well above average number of pupils achieving the higher levels. When the below average baseline assessment results are taken into consideration this represents very good achievement. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls.
3. Inspection evidence shows that pupils currently in Year 2 are achieving standards that are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Speaking skills are average and pupils listen very carefully, using the new vocabulary which teachers introduce and require them to use. While there are regular opportunities to practise speaking in a range of contexts pupils need support to speak to different people, especially in large gatherings, such as assembly. In all subjects the more able pupils achieve very well. The picture is similar for nine-year-olds. Pupils make consistently good progress throughout the school because the quality of teaching is very good. This enables them to continue to achieve above average standards in English and mathematics. More able pupils achieve standards well above those usually found for this age group because they are consistently well challenged. In science standards are well above average and pupils benefit from excellent teaching and a very practical approach to learning in the subject. This shows very good improvement from the previous inspection when standards in English, mathematics and science were average for both age groups and more able pupils were not challenged well enough.
4. The school has addressed the key issue to challenge more able pupils very successfully. Similarly the needs of pupils who are less able and those with special educational are now very well met. This also represents an improvement from the satisfactory provision previously described. The very small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language make very good progress because they receive the support needed to access the curriculum. The teaching assistants and nursery nurse enable the full inclusion of pupils in lessons. The careful analysis of pupils' individual needs and the ways in which they learn best enables teachers to plan activities that support pupils to make very good progress. The school has a very positive learning culture. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and enable them to succeed by raising their self-esteem and confidence. Consequently, pupils achieve their best and love school. The aims of the school and strong leadership underpin this success.

5. The movement of a significant number of Year 3 and 4 pupils to local independent schools, frequently pupils who are more able, and additional family moves away from the area make direct comparisons of progress of year groups from one stage to another difficult. However, when individual pupil progress is analysed through the school's clear tracking procedures, the progress of those who stay on at the school is very good.
6. Targets are set for each year group that are challenging and achievable. Individual targets, based on teacher assessments and test results, help the pupils to understand what they need to learn next to improve their work. This process is well managed and is a strong feature that underpins the very effective teaching seen in lessons. Pupils are very clear of the teachers' expectations and what they are to know by the end of the lesson. Learning is meaningful and pupils explain how they have improved because they understand how each lesson helps them to extend their skills and knowledge. Because learning is meaningful pupils apply their reading, writing and number skills well to other aspects of the curriculum. This reflects the very good quality curriculum planning that offers a broad range of structured discussions and practical activities to support teaching and learning.
7. By the end of Year 2 and Year 4, standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are above average. The school has effectively used funding to train staff and purchase resources of very good quality to support the development of the subject. Pupils have recently made very rapid progress. They have good knowledge of how ICT supports their learning and affects their daily lives. In art and design, design and technology, music, physical education and history standards are above the expected levels. The standards in these subjects have improved since the last inspection when they were average. In geography they continue to match age-related expectations. Geography was not taught during the inspection and discussions with pupils show that they find it hard to retain the depth of their learning during the lengthy periods of time when the subject is not taught. In subjects that offer a very good range of practical activities to support learning, for example, art and design and design and technology, pupils find it easier to recall their experiences. The school may consider reviewing the timetabling arrangements to raise standards in geography higher as a minor issue for improvement.
8. Children make very good progress in the reception class. By the end of their reception year most are likely to meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals in all aspects and the more able children are likely to exceed them. This is due to very good teaching, a well -designed curriculum and very well managed learning environment which promotes learning through play.
9. Details of pupils' achievements in subjects can be found in the subject paragraphs in 'Section D' of the report.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils have very good attitudes to school, behave very well and enjoy excellent relationships with staff and other pupils. Attendance levels have improved and are now above average and these strong features have a very positive impact on both academic achievements and personal development. Standards have improved since the previous inspection report.
11. Pupils are very keen to come to school and talk with friendly enthusiasm about their activities. The youngest pupils in the Foundation Stage have settled into school well, are developing very good attitudes to learning and are responding well to the wide range of interesting and challenging activities provided. Throughout the school pupils show very

good attitudes to learning in lessons and work very hard. For example in a Year 2 physical education lesson all pupils persevered to improve the quality of their movements, enabling them to develop increasing poise, control and confidence.

12. Behaviour is very good. No pupils have been excluded over the last two years, a figure well below the national average. Pupils have a very strong sense of fairness and are developing a very good awareness of the impact of their actions on others. No bullying, racist or sexist behaviour was observed during the inspection and pupils show no concerns in these areas. Behaviour at lunchtimes and in the playground is very good. Behaviour and attitudes were outstandingly good in an assembly where pupils produced a superb performance of a traditional spiritual song, which they learnt from scratch, with great enthusiasm and enjoyment.
13. Personal development is very good. All pupils undertake duties and responsibilities keenly. Their development as good citizens is a particularly strong and improving feature. Pupils have developed a very mature and responsive attitude to the recently established school council. They take on duties such as chair and secretary with relish and increasing skill and effectiveness. They have established a suggestion box, which gives all pupils opportunities to put forward ideas or concerns. Their concern that pupils might be laughed at by others if a Friendship Bench was introduced in the playground is a good example of their mature thinking and concern for others. Pupils' awareness of environmental issues is developed well in lessons; for example, in Year 2 pupils identified reasons for and against the development of a new housing development on the school field.
14. Relationships are excellent throughout the school. Interactions between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves both in lessons and around the school are most productive. For example, there was a very good rapport in a Year 3 history lesson during role play, which enhanced pupils understanding of the feelings and actions of both the Romans and Britons in the times of Boudicca.
15. Attendance rates are good, being above the average for primary schools. Pupils arrive promptly enabling lessons to start on time. The school has worked successfully to improve the overall rate and to reduce the level of lateness and unauthorised absences.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT

16. The consistently very good quality of teaching is a significant strength of the school. Over half of the lessons seen were of very good quality, a further four lessons in ten were good and the remainder, just three lessons, were satisfactory. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very good. Where teaching is satisfactory, staff who are new to the profession are still developing the broad range of teaching strategies consistently evident in lessons taught by more experienced colleagues. New staff receive very good support through structured induction procedures that ensure very good professional development opportunities. Pupils of all abilities are very well supported and receive a very good quality of education.
17. Teaching assistants support pupils very well and enable them to succeed to the best of their abilities. The emphasis placed on providing a broad range of practical experiences enables pupils to apply their knowledge and skills to other subjects. They are encouraged to make decisions independently, to work in small groups and to use the specific language they have been taught to explain their thoughts and ideas. Teachers use time very effectively and pupils remain motivated and interested. Time is set aside for pupils to discuss their ideas in small groups, for example in Year 4 the pupils predicted how much

salt or sugar would dissolve in 30ml of water and considered the reasons for their opinions. In Year 2 pupils evaluated the successes and disappointments of their designs for forms of transport and indicated how they could improve models they might make in the future.

18. Teachers have very good subject knowledge across the breadth of the curriculum and all lesson plans are based on the evaluation of prior learning and the setting of specific objectives. Tasks are well matched to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. Objectives are communicated clearly to pupils and written on the boards at the front of the classes. This ensures pupils understand the purpose of their learning. The consistent evaluation of pupils' learning at the end of lessons helps pupils' to have a very good understanding of what they have learned and what they need to do to improve. Pupils are encouraged to answer questions and to share their work with each other. This enables them to be constructively critical and to value the different opinions of their friends and teachers. Evaluation techniques are strong and teachers have a thorough understanding of the gains their pupils have made. Record keeping is systematic and thorough and across subjects teachers monitor pupils' performance against the objectives they have set, adjusting their planning where pupils need longer or shorter periods of time to consolidate their learning. Pupils are proud of their work. They eagerly share their successes and point out where they have made corrections and improved, for example when drafting poetry or adjusting designs because materials are not strong enough. Pupils' enthusiasm is very high and they benefit from structured practical activities that enable them to learn through experience and benefit from the interaction and support of their teachers.
19. The very skilled use of questioning, evident in all classes, encourages pupils to make decisions, talk about their tasks and work collaboratively with others. Because teachers ensure every pupil has the opportunity to both ask and answer questions there is a very strong culture of learning from experience and through mistakes. Pupils are valued and comments such as; 'Can we help?' or 'Let's think about that very carefully,' mean that errors are corrected sensitively.
20. Features of excellent and very good lessons are the way teachers inspire pupils with their enthusiasm, motivate them through their high expectations and use humour very effectively. Consequently attitudes to lessons are very good. In Year 2 a literacy lesson concluded with pupils singing a poem to a tune composed by their teacher and played on the guitar. Very good links were made to music as the pupils recognised rhythm and beat and joyously concluded their poetry writing and reading. No one wanted to go out to play and the song was repeated. This demonstrated real fun in learning. Pupils know they will receive the help they need to succeed and know their teachers value them as individuals. They say they cannot wait for design and technology, eagerly anticipate physical education lessons and highlight science, reading and ICT as some of their favourite lessons. Relationships are excellent. Teachers provide very good role models and ensure discipline is very well maintained. Rules are reinforced through positive strategies that remind pupils of the school's expectations, for example, to take turns to answer and listen carefully to others. Teachers model language clearly, using appropriate description to extend pupils' range and requiring them to use the new terms they have introduced in their responses.
21. Lessons have very good pace and timing. In almost all the lessons teachers tell pupils how long they have to complete their tasks and give them reminders of how much time is left. This maintains levels of concentration and ensures that tasks are completed in the allocated times. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson the teacher provided an excellent balance of discussion, practical tasks and extension for higher attaining pupils which

accessed the objectives of the Year 5 curriculum. All pupils knew how much work they were expected to complete and without exception all pupils met their targets and the higher attaining pupils exceeded them.

22. The teaching of reading is a strength. Teachers encourage pupils to read a range of texts such as poems, stories and instructions. The Bedfordshire Literacy Project is successfully supporting pupils to use phonics effectively to decode and spell words independently. Teachers model reading well, with very good expression, use of pitch and pace. Consequently pupils like books and read for information and pleasure at school. The very good introduction to reading in the Foundation Stage means that children have a very positive start to learning to read which is raising standards. Technical language is used well and from the earliest stages children are introduced to words such as 'synthesis' and pupils practise these sounds as a class, in groups and as individuals, recognising and repeating familiar words on a daily basis. Similarly, in mathematics and science, subject language is reinforced very well.
23. Teachers make good cross-curricular links in their planning. For example, in Years 2 and 3 the teachers require pupils to write sets of instructions to describe how to make their vehicles and moving parts of nursery rhyme cards. ICT is linked well to literacy and art and design as pupils create posters, write letters that are sent by e-mail and learn to punctuate text.
24. In the small number of lessons that were satisfactory, the use of timing and range of behaviour management strategies were not well developed. However, these are minor issues which improved during the inspection as the teacher relaxed and responded very positively to inspectors' suggestions.
25. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teaching assistants enable these pupils to successfully meet the challenges planned for them. Tasks are planned based on the very good assessments of prior learning. Teachers and teaching assistants regularly discuss pupils' progress and plan work that is based on the focus of learning for all pupils but adapted to meet their needs and targets in individual educational plans. This practice is very successful because the special educational needs coordinator takes a lead role in monitoring the school's provision and its effectiveness. Teaching assistants and the special educational needs co-ordinator provide valuable support for pupils and teachers and this enhances the quality of learning. There are very few pupils with English as an additional language but needs are analysed on an individual basis and support good levels of progress.
26. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Teachers' planning is now a significant strength of the school and the reason why standards are rising. Very good progress has been made.

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

27. The school provides its pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum and fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum for pupils of statutory school age. The Bedfordshire Agreed Syllabus forms the basis for teaching religious education and is well covered. For children below the age of six, the Foundations Stage curriculum is closely followed, being firmly based on the steps for children to reach the early learning goals in all areas.

28. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and supports teaching and learning very well. Consequently, almost all children in the reception class reach the expected goals in all areas of learning through a relevant range of activities that enable them to learn through play and direct teaching. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is well developed and prepares them well for later work in science, history and geography.
29. At the time of the last inspection, time allocated to the teaching of pupils in Years 3 and 4 was below that normally recommended. This weakness has been addressed and the timing now supports the full coverage of the required curriculum. Additional time is allocated to all age groups to prioritise the teaching of personal, social and health education and citizenship.
30. The curriculum for older pupils is relevant to their needs and interests. Schemes of work have been adopted from the programme of national guidance, the Qualifications and Curriculum Agency (QCA), in all foundation subjects except for physical education and music. In these two subjects well-trying and tested schemes of very good quality are in use. Units of work have been organised into two-year programmes for the infants and juniors. These programmes are planned in half-termly blocks and provide full coverage of the National Curriculum. Time is distributed according to national guidance. The gaps between teaching subjects such as geography and history mean that pupils have some difficulty recalling their depth of knowledge and this means that learning has to be revisited before introducing new skills and knowledge. This has a negative impact on standards and was particularly evident in geography, which was not taught during the inspection.
31. The school prioritised implementing the national programmes for literacy and numeracy. In addition, the school is participating in the Bedfordshire Literacy Project (BLP) to give extra support for reading, spelling and writing. The project is taught in three sessions per day, each approximately ten minutes long. The scheme is highly structured and effectively implemented. Pupils are increasingly confident in their spelling and writing.
32. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are extended well in other subjects, for example in history and science. Year 1 used the book about the Titanic, *The Disaster that Shocked the World*, to learn about voyages in the past, answering questions from the text and posing questions to their teacher who had taken on a character role of an Edwardian lady. In another lesson, Year 4 pupils wrote about Boadicca's revolt from two perspectives, those of the Romans and Celts. In a science lesson, Year 2 pupils used scientific terminology with confidence, extending their word knowledge skills. They also measured accurately and used their numeracy skills to tabulate findings clearly. The very good provision for literacy and numeracy has contributed well to the major improvements in standards overall since the last inspection, especially in reading and writing.
33. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. They follow the statutory curriculum and are fully included in all learning experiences. The revised Code of Practice has been fully adopted and all staff are aware of pupils who are causing concern and the level of school action being taken. Emphasis is placed on supporting pupils in their classes. At times, when it is necessary to withdraw pupils, sensitive arrangements are made in order to maintain self-esteem. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and a significant number are taken off the register because the approach is successful.
34. The school's provision for pupils with English as an additional language is also very good. Learning support assistants give extra help to ensure these pupils not only understand

the requirements of the lesson, but also that their English language competence rapidly increases.

35. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities to support the curriculum. Clubs for football, tennis and dance support the physical education curriculum and a recorder club enhances provision for music. These clubs are well attended. A gardening club meets regularly. Another important aspect of extra-curricular provision is the 'Sunshine After School Club', which caters for children each evening until 6.00pm. In addition, visits are made to a local museum in connection with work on World War 2, and to the local country park for environmental science. Representatives from the police and fire services also make regular visits to talk to pupils about their work. The local vicar visits regularly and the school visit the church for various festivals, for example harvest. Use is made of the local technology road show to enrich work in design and technology, and a local theatre company provides exciting opportunities for drama. The local authority peripatetic music team provides extra lessons in stringed instrumental teaching. Links with the community are good. Well-planned homework relevant to aspects of the curriculum also enhances pupils' learning. The record books that connect home and school do not reflect adequately the quality of this provision. The school has plans to introduce a more effective system.
36. The evolving scheme for personal, social and health education, followed only since last September, is well planned. The recent establishment of a school council, with representatives from Years 2 to 4, enhances social provision. Pupils act as chair and secretary, write their own minutes and agendas and display them on a central notice board. They discuss a wide range of issues, for example play equipment, snacks and the provision of a Friendship Bench. The establishment of the School Council is an important part of the development of the citizenship curriculum.
37. Links with the middle school are very good. The two schools are adjacent to each other and the regular meetings between them enable pupils to have a continuous curriculum experience; for example, in history and geography agreement has been reached with the contributing lower schools about the units of study to be covered prior to transfer. Co-ordinators meet regularly to discuss curriculum matters and there is a regular half-termly meeting with the headteacher of the middle school. There is a very good loan system between the two schools enabling resources and artefacts to be shared. Year 4 pupils also visit the middle school in October to participate in an expressive arts day. This arrangement helps to allay any worries pupils might have about moving to their next stage of education.
38. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. This is an improvement from the last report when the judgements were that spiritual, moral and social provision was good and cultural provision was satisfactory.
39. The personal, social and health education programme, the religious education curriculum and the collective act of worship provide pupils with opportunities to reflect on their own actions and to ponder on the wonders of nature and science, evident when they showed wonder at the correlation between hand span and foot length. In assembly, a lighted candle and a crucifix focus their attention. The pupils sing well reflecting the meaning and feeling of the words. Their work on anniversaries and celebrations illustrates care and concern for others and a desire to know more about customs from different cultures. In a religious education lesson in Year 1 pupils were asked to reflect on what makes people happy. When the candles were lit on the Menorah, the pupils were excited, understanding the purpose behind the Menorah during the festival of Hanukkah.

40. Pupils have a very well developed sense of right and wrong. The excellent relationships between pupils and staff are a powerful influence on pupils' moral development. Pupils' views are valued and respected. They fully understand the need for rules for good behaviour, which are posted in each classroom. The rules provide good reminders of what is or is not permissible behaviour. The school promotes well the values of honesty, respect and truth. Achievements are valued through the range of certificates presented weekly at assembly. This provision enables pupils to be proud of their achievements.
41. Older pupils have a well-developed sense of social responsibility, particularly evident in their work in the school council and in ways in which they work and play together. The youngest children undertake responsibilities within the classroom, taking registers to the office and clearing up after their work. Older pupils take the initiative in setting targets in their work and enjoy responsibility for daily duties such as setting out the hall for assembly.
42. Opportunities for pupils' cultural development are now very good. The school's provision for daily assemblies, religious education, art, music, history and geography enhance pupils' understanding of their own culture and those of others. Pupils have opportunities to listen to musical compositions and study the work of artists, for example painting in the style of Picasso. From their work in history, they have modelled a Viking man and made observational drawings of a very good standard. In geography, studies of other cultures have been made, for example of life in an Indian village. Their understanding of the similarities and differences between different faiths is also increasing. For example, when comparing Ramadan with the Jewish festival of Yom Kippur, pupils gained insights into the similarity in the values celebrated in these festivals. The library contains a good selection of books for pupils to explore a range of cultures and an appropriate CD-ROM is also used to help gather information. Provision for the personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS

43. Pupils are very well cared for. Staff provide very good personal support so pupils feel secure and develop confident attitudes to learning. Standards are now very good and have improved from the good level reported at the time of the previous inspection.
44. Procedures and awareness in relation to child protection are very good. The headteacher rightly recognises the importance of regular training to raise awareness of potential issues and to ensure careful and sensitive handling of any concerns. Pupils' personal development is monitored very well. Staff know the pupils and their backgrounds well and this enables them to give very good individual support. Personal needs are dealt with very effectively. Very good induction procedures and a warm, inviting environment help pupils to settle well in the nursery and reception class. At the end of sessions particular care is taken to ensure all children remain in the school until collected by a responsible person. Health and safety procedures and monitoring are very good. All appropriate risks are assessed very thoroughly; in particular procedures relating to the swimming pool ensure safety is given high priority. First aid and accident procedures are very good. The school is very clean, tidy and secure.
45. The school has a very good behaviour policy. The strong emphasis on developing pupils' self-confidence and awareness of citizenship is having a positive impact on their personal development. Procedures to deal with potential issues are very good and parents and pupils feel confident that the school handles them fairly and effectively. Monitoring systems are very effective and opportunities for staff training to enable them to deal with racial incidents are very good.

46. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very thorough and have contributed positively to the recent improvement in levels of attendance.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

47. The partnership with parents is good and contributes well to pupils' positive attitudes to school and their learning, Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Parents expressed very positive views at the pre-inspection meeting and responses to the parental questionnaires also strongly support the school's work. Parents feel their children like school, achieve high standards and behave well. They praise the leadership of the headteacher, the standards of care and the ethos of the school. In particular, they feel the school helps their children to become mature. Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. A very small number of parents wanted more activities to support the curriculum. Inspectors feel the school provides an appropriate range for the age range of the pupils and the size of the school. Governors have rigorously followed health and safety recommendations to ensure the area around the new school pond complies with requirements. Procedures for administering medicines follow the local and national guidance and are followed meticulously.
48. The school provides parents with very good information about their children's progress and the life of the school. Parents are also encouraged to be involved in their children's education, through the regular newsletters. Annual reports are very good, especially in relation to targets for improvement and comments on personal development. The school provides an 'open door' to parents, who feel they are made very welcome.
49. Most parents are involved well in their children's education by supporting homework, ensuring their regular and prompt attendance, providing help in the classroom, attending consultation sessions and fundraising through the Friends Association. The efforts of the 'Save Our Swimming Committee' ensures all pupils enjoy the use the swimming pool in the summer term. Parents of pupils with special educational needs attend regular reviews and are kept very well informed about their children's progress and are involved in identifying new targets.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED

50. The headteacher provides strong, effective leadership of the highest quality. Her high expectations and commitment to raise standards and develop good citizenship underpin the school's aims. The staff are very supportive and committed and teamwork is a strength. The school has a very caring ethos. Pupils are expected to behave well, work hard and achieve their best and parents reflect their support for these qualities in their responses. The headteacher and staff provide very good role models, consistently projecting positive values and a strong moral code. There is a shared commitment to school improvement, and the aims of the school are very well met. The headteacher involves staff and governors fully in decision-making. All staff feel included and valued because their strengths are utilised very well. These features enable staff and pupils to work in a happy learning environment. The school has successfully gained the 'Investors in People' award for these strengths.
51. Delegated responsibilities are well managed. Policies are clearly understood and well implemented and pupils benefit from consistent approaches to discipline and learning. The systematic and planned monitoring programme across subjects has effectively supported raising the quality of teaching and learning. Subject co-ordinators have time

allocated to enable them to observe lessons, review planning and sample pupils' work. The coordinator for special educational needs also provides very good leadership. She is well organised and has ensured that new national procedures have been adopted at the earliest stage possible. Good liaison with the SEN governor ensures monitoring of the school's provision is systematic and records track individual pupils' progress and reviews with parents. Systems to ensure the appropriate action is taken to meet pupils' needs are very well managed.

52. Governors play an important monitoring role. They undertake responsibility for subjects and classes, they hold discussions with co-ordinators and spend time in school regularly. They write evaluative reports, for example on ICT, and share their findings at governors' meetings. Governors have a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and their individual strengths are used well to support school improvements. For example, the premises governor spends time in school on a regular basis and conducts risk assessments. These procedures are very thorough. Governors know that improvements have been made to reading and writing and are aware of the reasons why there are minor variations between cohorts. They have also evaluated the impact of new ICT equipment on raising standards in the subject. Governors attend local training sessions and are well informed. The annual report for parents and school prospectus are of very good quality and provide useful information for parents. They fulfil their statutory duties fully.
53. The headteacher, staff and governors successfully bid for additional funds from industry, local and national government initiatives. These funds are used effectively to support the school's educational priorities and provide learning opportunities for pupils that would not otherwise be possible. The school has used funding to provide additional support staff who enable teachers to concentrate on their teaching duties.
54. The school improvement plan guides budget planning and is carefully costed. Priorities are identified based on monitoring and evaluation outcomes and progress towards achieving the success criteria is regularly reviewed alongside spending patterns. Effective use is made of computer tracking. The information helps governors and managers to ensure that principles of best value are applied effectively. The day-to-day administration and financial control are of very good quality. The issues raised in the last auditors' report two and a half years ago have been addressed well.
55. The school is well staffed and resourced. Accommodation is sufficient and well maintained through a rolling programme of redecoration and repair. The new ICT suite and library provide valuable learning resources. The very good quality of displays enhances the learning environment and celebrates pupils' work well. Very good induction procedures support teachers new to the school and procedures for performance management have been implemented effectively for staff, supporting well action planning, professional development and training opportunities. Effective leadership and management continue to be strengths of the school and have resulted in very good improvements being made since the last report.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

56. This is a very good school and there are no significant weaknesses that require action.

The following issues, of a minor nature, may be considered for inclusion in the school development plan:

- Reviewing the arrangements for teaching geography to provide more frequent and regular opportunities for learning.
(paragraphs 7, 30, 108)
- *Providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their formal speaking skills.
(paragraphs 3, 71, 74, 77.)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	32
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	13	11	3	0	0	0
Percentage	16	41	34	9	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 two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		128
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR-Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		26

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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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	13	16	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	12	11
	Girls	15	14	14
	Total	25	26	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (100)	90 (85)	86 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	12
	Girls	14	14	15
	Total	25	25	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (90)	89 (88)	93 (95)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	103
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.3:1
Average class size	25.6

Education support staff: YR-Y4

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	139

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.5
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.

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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	276,900
Total expenditure	256,335
Expenditure per pupil	2,101
Balance brought forward from previous year	20,119
Balance carried forward to next year	40,684

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	128
Number of questionnaires returned	54

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	19	6	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	69	20	6	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	43	4	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	41	9	2	4
The teaching is good.	74	19	4	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	39	7	0	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	26	4	0	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	28	4	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	54	31	13	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	57	35	4	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	41	2	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	31	9	4	13

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

57. Children have the opportunity to join the nursery and reception class on a part time basis in the term following their fourth birthday and attend on a full time basis from the term in which they become five. At the time of the inspection 16 children attended on a part time basis and 20 full time children were taught by a teacher, nursery nurse and teaching assistant. A further five of the more mature children were taught in the Year 1 class. The school's provision for children in the Foundation Stage of learning is very good. The assessment of children's development when they start school indicates a broad range of attainment but in language, mathematical and social skills they are below the local average. Teaching is consistently very good with features of excellence. The curriculum is very well planned to provide a broad range of exciting play opportunities that are very well linked to the nationally prescribed Early Learning Goals. Activities consistently encourage very good listening, concentration, independence and decision making. The classroom is very well organised and managed and the very good relationships between the teacher, nursery nurse and teaching assistant mean that children benefit from a consistently well structured approach to teaching and learning and, as a result, children of all abilities make very good progress. Assessment procedures are systematic and thorough. Records indicate the gains made in learning, and targets have been introduced which set realistic challenges. By the end of the reception year, almost all the children are likely to meet the expectations for their age group in language and communication, mathematics, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and personal and social development. About a quarter of children are likely to exceed these expectations.
58. The consistently very good teaching across all the areas of learning is based on thorough planning, the analysis of pupils' needs, partnership with staff and parents and very high expectations of what children can achieve. Activities are planned to provide opportunities for children to learn in large and small groups and as individuals. Objectives are specific and children are told exactly what is expected of them. Because all the adults reinforce these expectations, for example the structuring of sentences using new words, children are well challenged and fully extended. Relationships are excellent and children consequently work and play happily together knowing they are very well cared for. In the excellent teaching observed in literacy, the session enabled pupils to practise their phonics, recognise words and join in reading a Big Book with their teacher. The high level of excitement and personal achievement was exceptional and they made very rapid progress. Parents receive information and written reports of very good quality which help them to be involved in their children's learning.
59. The classroom and external environment are very well managed. Displays are bright and attractive and reflect the experiences the children have shared. They support learning in language and number well, and through skilful use of questions invite children to solve problems and investigate. Very good use of the creative aspects of learning such as colour mixing encourages curiosity and interest. Good use is made of the outside play area to extend activities beyond the classroom. Efforts were made during the inspection to begin to address the management of this issue.
60. The quality of provision for Reception children in the Year 1 class is good. They continue to benefit from a good range of play opportunities and access the early stages of the National Curriculum when appropriate. This ensures they are well challenged and their learning and social emotional needs receive the appropriate level of attention.

Personal, social and emotional development

61. Children love coming to school and enjoy the very good and well organised range of activities that support their learning. They understand the teacher's expectations and school rules and maintain them well. Even those with challenging behaviour make very good progress because the firm, calm insistence helps children to recognise the types of behaviour that cannot be tolerated. The emphasis placed on developing understanding of right and wrong helps children to recognise how their actions and words affect others and they behave very well. They eagerly listen to their teacher and concentrate well because she speaks very clearly and captures their interest. Staff answer children's questions sensitively and encourage them to consider the feelings of others. Children cooperate well, usually sharing and working happily together as they work on different tasks, such as painting, writing, listening to stories and playing in the sand and water. More able children work for longer sustained periods of time, for example when completing a writing task. Relationships are excellent and children are regularly encouraged to reflect on their actions and the feelings of others.

Communication, language and literacy

62. Children make very good progress in developing their language and literacy skills. This aspect of learning receives a very high priority. The Bedfordshire Literacy Project is very well taught and is supporting the development of reading, writing and spelling skills very well. The teacher plans a wide range of effective experiences that make learning fun and develop children's personal language. Very good emphasis is placed on listening and concentrating and following instructions. Children develop confidence to ask and answer questions and to use the new language they have been introduced to. They enjoy listening to stories and familiar fairy tales such as *Snow White and Seven Dwarfs* and join in enthusiastically. Children are encouraged to share their ideas and, with very good role models and encouragement, the development of spoken language is very good. Challenging questions and comments are used to promote children's thinking. This has a positive impact on the progress children make as they develop a broad range of vocabulary and enjoy using new words. Most children answer questions using phrases and simple sentences and a small number use single words or practically describe their knowledge. Structured play situations, such as sand and water, and writing areas provide opportunities for children to talk about their own experiences. Displays are clearly labelled and this helps children to develop their early reading and writing skills. Tasks link well to the stories they share and more able children create their own simple sentences with the support of adults. They are developing good knowledge of letters, sounds and words and more able children recognise the purpose of capital letters and full stops. A range of class books encourage pupils to revisit their learning and provide valuable evidence of their progress over time.

Mathematical development

63. There is a very good range of activities to promote mathematical understanding. These are frequently linked to stories and practical day-to-day experiences. Children in the Year 1 class learned the value of coins through their play in the class shop. In the nursery and reception class there was great enthusiasm to count Snow White's dwarfs and very good development of number recognition and ordering of numbers up to ten. They develop better understanding of position by discussing words such as 'next to' 'beside', 'in front of' and 'behind'. Children have opportunities to count, match, sort, compare, order and sequence through a range of games and activities. They explore patterns in their creative tasks, recognise shapes such as circle, square and triangle and can say whether

containers are full or empty, heavy or light. Water and sand play provide opportunities to investigate whether containers hold more or less than others and to order in relation to size and shape. Children understand the terms forwards and backwards when counting to ten and more able reception children count to twenty with help. Very good use is made of computer programs to provide additional opportunities for children to match shapes and count. Children enjoy these activities and work well together, taking turns and explaining their thinking using appropriate language such as shape names. Appropriate elements of the numeracy strategy, such as oral and mental calculations are implemented effectively and have a positive effect on children's achievements.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64. Children learn about plant growth through exciting opportunities to grow bulbs and watch how they change as they are carefully watered and nurtured. Activities encourage discovery. Staff consistently encourage children to talk about their experiences, asking questions such as 'why' and 'how' to promote careful reasoning. Children observe changes in the weather and describe how they need to wear different clothes in wet or cold weather from those worn on sunny summer days. Children talk about their homes and families, name family members who are the youngest and oldest and more able children recite their addresses. Most know the number of the house they live in. Birthdays are celebrated and through stories and pictures children begin to develop an understanding of their own community. They learn the days of the week, although many are not yet secure about the order. They know the weather changes with each season and describe some of the differences between summer and winter. Through play children learn about relationships, for example, acting out the roles of story characters and taking turns to help and organise their activities. Construction equipment is used well to encourage children to design and make their own models and to discover how things work.
65. The computers and tape recorders are used frequently and regularly and many children are competent using the 'mouse' and ICT programs to support their learning, for example in mathematics and language and literacy.

Physical development

66. The outdoor play area supports physical development well providing opportunities for children to play in small groups supported by an adult. They learn to jump and follow the leader and their skills in running, jumping and coordinating movements are promoted well through lessons and play activities. Children are encouraged to dress and undress independently and staff support this development well, intervening only to teach children how to manage buttons, zips and laces.
67. Children cooperate well together and enjoy the chance to play with others. Mid-day staff and older pupils also give very good support in this respect. Children move around the school sensibly, they line up in order to go to different parts of the school. Very good emphasis is placed on developing manipulative skills, for example, ensuring children hold pencils, brushes and scissors accurately. Very good attention is also given to health and safety ensuring that tools and equipment are used carefully.

Creative development

68. Children make very good progress as they learn the names of colours, mixing techniques and how to create pictures that are attractive and linked to their experiences. They are encouraged to use appropriate vocabulary and more able children confidently describe

how colours such as red and blue can be mixed to make purple. Younger children are encouraged to experiment independently. During the inspection one child discovered 'green' by mixing blue and yellow and was very excited, using the colour in her picture and eagerly sharing her discovery with other children and adults. The teaching of songs and rhymes helps to develop their understanding of sound, rhythm and pattern. Children successfully played untuned percussion instruments following the teachers' lead and enjoy singing familiar songs and rhymes.

69. Construction activities encourage and promote children to use their imagination as they make up stories about the environments they create. There are many opportunities for children to share books and to use language creatively. Staff encourage children to independently select their books, activities and colours to create their own designs, pictures and models. They work with a range of papers, fabrics and re-cycled materials to create pictures and models.

ENGLISH

70. National test results for seven-year-olds show a marked improvement since those at the time of the last inspection. In reading, the upward trend since 1998 has continued and, while the trend in writing is more variable, results have risen from well below average in 1998 to be above average in 2001. Comparisons over the three years indicate no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls. Inspection findings show standards are continuing to rise in all areas of English, especially since the introduction of the Bedford Literacy Programme for reading and spelling.
71. The good progress children make in the Foundation Stage is effectively built on in the following four years in all aspects, although progress in speaking is not quite as advanced. By the age of seven almost all pupils are reading to a good level. The majority of pupils competently split words into syllables when confronted with unfamiliar text. The extra help they receive from learning support assistants and the headteacher enables them to make good progress. Test results show that, by Year 4, reading skills are above average and more able pupils read very well. Almost all pupils are reading advanced texts, which are self-chosen. These are read with a very good level of understanding. For example, when a pupil was asked why he had chosen the book, *Blad the Drac*, he responded that he had read the information about the book from the cover and wanted to read the book because he had never heard of 'a vegetarian vampire'. Young pupils, reading a scheme book, readily turned to the cover to explain the story using the printed map. All pupils use intonation well in order to hold the listener's attention and know how to use punctuation marks appropriately. Reading is supported well in the home, with pupils reading to adults on a very regular basis. Comments are passed between home and school for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and by the home-school reading record, while pupils in Years 3 and 4 have a reading card. The school recognises the need to improve these arrangements and is about to introduce a 'reading booklet' across the school to further enhance the status of reading.
72. There is a core reading scheme, which is supplemented well by books from other schemes. Pupils know how to use the library to obtain new books and a careful record is kept of the books read. Reading scores across the local authority show that pupils at the school are attaining well above the county average.
73. Pupils' achievement in writing is good. After analysing the below average results in 2000, the school targeted the teaching of writing in 2001, particularly in the range of writing, its content and presentation. This, and the introduction of the Bedford Literacy Programme,

has been instrumental in raising standards. Writing targets are entered in writing books and a record is kept of achievements through termly unaided writing samples. In addition, QCA tests are given to all Year 3 and 4 pupils. In these ways the class teacher and co-ordinator closely monitor writing standards. All aspects of writing are covered, with particularly high standards in poetry writing. Older pupils, when reading the poem *Before the Hunt* were questioned on the text. The teacher asked demanding questions that required pupils to think carefully before responding. The structure and form of the poem were then discussed and reasons for the choice of structure were sought. Pupils gained advanced insights into form, structure and the use of lively and thoughtful expressions. Practice in extended writing is, however, more limited, partly due to time constraints within the overall timetable. Emphasis is placed on correct spelling, with most literacy lessons beginning with an activity relating to spelling patterns. This is reinforced by the three short sessions daily from the literacy project on spelling words through a clear understanding of phonics. In these ways, very good progress is being made with spelling and reading. Pupils know how to use dictionaries and they also have their own books in which to enter spellings. Attention is paid to handwriting and presentation and, by the time pupils are in Year 2, most have achieved a good standard. By the time they leave school, all have achieved at least a good or very good standard. Handwriting is practised regularly throughout the school. ICT is used well, especially by pupils to word-process writing.

74. Pupils listen well but their speaking skills, while at least average, are not as well developed as those in reading and writing. From an early age they concentrate over lengthy periods of time, make relevant comments and listen intently to their teachers and support assistants, as well as to others in the class. They take turns in group discussion, this aspect being particularly well taught. When speaking to an adult they do not always choose their words carefully, nor are they always able to organise clearly what they have to say. As they move through the school, with very good modelling by staff, these skills improve. Pupils require regular opportunities to practise a range of activities, contexts and purposes, including retelling of stories, describing events and experiences and in speaking to different people, especially in large gatherings, such as assembly. The school may consider extending the frequency of these opportunities as a minor issue.
75. English teaching is very good throughout the school. The daily literacy lesson is planned well and expectations of pupils' productivity and pace of work are high. Attention to English is extended to other subjects of the curriculum, for example in mathematics where pupils are expected to use appropriate language to describe number operations. In history, care and attention are given to spelling, punctuation and the use of appropriate writing structures. Homework is given regularly to all pupils, usually reading and spelling for younger pupils with more advanced work in Years 3 and 4, for example analysing poetry. All teachers have had training in the National Literacy Strategy and in the Bedford Literacy Programme and are very competent in their knowledge and understanding of these strategies. Assessments are now accurately predicting progress.
76. Pupils with special educational needs are given good quality extra support by learning support assistants, who work very closely with the class teacher and the special educational needs co-ordinator. Individual education plans concentrate on developing pupils in reading, writing and spelling and are well constructed, closely followed and reviewed regularly. These pupils, and the few with English as an additional language, make very good progress in their reading, writing and acquisition of language skills.
77. The English co-ordinator leads the subject well. She ensures that teachers know about new initiatives in language teaching and closely monitors planning, assessments and pupils' work. Recently she has monitored and evaluated the Bedford Literacy Programme and is able to show the improvement it has made. Resources are very good, especially

the library, which is incorporated in the computer suite as a learning resource centre. This room is very well furnished with very good quality areas for pupils to browse through books, all of which are colour-coded according to reading level or subject matter. Pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 know instantly where to find a book on a particular subject. The current school development plan already prioritises writing a policy for speaking and listening, and further developing opportunities for extended writing.

MATHEMATICS

78. Standards are above average at the ages of seven and nine and higher than those reached in the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2001. The number of pupils achieving the higher levels was well above average at the end of the infants last year. Variations in achievements from year to year arise from the different proportions of transient pupils, those with special educational needs and those who are more able in small year groups. Higher-attaining pupils are appropriately challenged and achieve standards that are, at times, well above average. This represents very good improvement from the last report when standards were average and more able pupils were not always challenged well enough. The subject benefits from the very good leadership of the co-ordinator who is also a leading mathematics teacher. She provides a very good role model for staff and the regular monitoring of teaching, learning and pupils' performance is successfully raising standards. There is very good consistency in the quality of teaching for all age groups and this is why pupils achieve their best. Bearing in mind the below average attainment of many children when they start school, they make very good progress over time.
79. In almost all the lessons teaching is very good and there are features of excellence, for example in Year 4. On the very few occasions when teaching is satisfactory, staff are new to the profession and are still acquiring the breadth of teaching strategies which more experienced teachers consistently draw upon to manage behaviour and adapt timing in relation to pupils' responses. In the most successful lessons the tasks are very well matched to pupils' needs. The more able pupils are consistently challenged to achieve levels that exceed those of their peers. In Year 4 the teacher adjusted timescales for task completion enabling her to spend specific time with this group. She developed further their knowledge of prime numbers and accessed the Year 5 curriculum appropriately.
80. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by skilled teaching assistants. Very good quality plans enable them to know exactly when to intervene and when to promote independence. All adults are skilled in their use of questioning. The responses of all pupils are valued and errors are corrected with sensitivity to ensure there is no loss of self-esteem. Provision for the very small number of pupils with English as additional language is also very good. The school's approach to ensuring the full inclusion of all pupils is very successful.
81. By the age of seven pupils have a secure understanding of number. They have a good knowledge of the 2 and 10 times tables in their calculations and learn to double and half numbers. Higher-attaining pupils use a range of strategies to add numbers to 10 and 100 and have a good understanding of place value. They plot directional movements on plans and have a good knowledge of positional language, checking their movements for errors when they realise they have not reached the expected destination. Higher-attaining pupils use terms such as right angles and accurately describe movement using right-angled turns to the left or right. More able pupils make very good progress because their teacher has high expectations and their work is more challenging but achievable.

82. Pupils continue to progress well in the junior classes. By Year 4, higher attaining pupils work with high numbers in their investigations; they have a good understanding of fractions and use multiplication to check the accuracy of division. Pupils have a good knowledge of shapes and record data from their investigations in suitable ways, using computer programs when appropriate. Numeracy skills are well developed throughout the school. The daily mathematics lessons support pupils well and the pace of mental mathematics is brisk. A wide range of practical tasks and games help them to apply their skills to problem solving. This is a strength of the teaching. Pupils also use mathematical language well because teachers require them to use the words they are taught
83. Teachers' planning is of very good quality and tasks are closely matched to the needs of the different ability groups. Very thorough analysis of how well the pupils achieve the objectives for the lessons enables the teachers to assess learning and plan the next steps. Teachers use their analysis of the pupils' abilities to set individual, group and year targets. Consequently, the pupils know what they need to do to improve their work. In addition, teachers make notes of pupils' achievements or difficulties. Annual tests taken from Year 2 onwards help teachers to measure achievements against national standards and to track the progress that the pupils make. These procedures are very good. The teachers know their pupils very well and have high expectations, which the pupils strive hard to achieve. Teachers have implemented the numeracy strategy very well and the impact is having a marked effect on raising standards.
84. Teaching is lively and planning has precise objectives that are very clearly explained to pupils. All pupils know what they are expected to learn and expect to evaluate how well they have achieved at the end of lessons. This is a very strong feature that enables the pupils to constructively analyse their learning and understand their strengths and weaknesses. Lessons are challenging, relevant to the pupils' experiences within and beyond school and fun. Pupils receive consistent encouragement to find their own ways of solving problems and to share them with their peers. Pupils are expected to check their results and to present their calculations neatly and logically. Those who find this organisation hard are well supported by staff and their friends. Homework supports the work in the classrooms. Tables are learned and checked regularly and frequently pupils are given questions to solve at home that involve investigation rather than written recording. The research approach to learning makes good links to subjects such as design and technology and ICT as skills are applied to other subjects.

SCIENCE

85. Teachers' assessments of Year 2 pupils in 2001 indicated that standards were average overall with a particular strength in investigative work. The proportion of pupils who achieved the higher levels was well above most schools. Inspection evidence shows standards of Year 2 pupils continue to rise and are above average. By Year 4, pupils attain standards that are well above average and make very good progress.
86. Standards in scientific enquiry and in physical processes are well above those normally found; they are above average in materials and their properties and average in life and living processes. Attention is being paid to the latter in order to further improve standards in this aspect. At the time of the last inspection, most pupils reached the standards expected nationally at both seven and nine years of age. Their present attainment indicates a good level of improvement has taken place since then. The issue of under-achievement and lack of challenge for more able pupils, highlighted in the last report, has been addressed with the latest assessments showing the proportion of pupils achieving

the higher Level 3 to be well above average. A significant number of Year 4 pupils are at present attaining the standard expected of eleven-year-olds in their work.

87. The very good standards attained are the result of very good teaching, especially of investigative skills. Pupils show enthusiasm in attempting to find reasons when answering questions. Their thinking skills are being developed well, especially through the questions their teachers ask. Year 2 pupils appreciate the importance of the control of variables, for instance when measuring feet. They knew they had to keep points of measurement constant if they were to obtain a valid result. Pupils are taught how to observe carefully, for example when attempting to answer the question, 'Are all plants the same?' they compared and contrasted different plants, showing an ability to observe and record accurately. In another lesson, Year 4 pupils were classifying liquids and solids and worked to a structured checklist, which included items such as; 'What do we need, what will I do, will I make a fair test and what do I think will happen?' This showed very good development of thinking skills and scientific concepts relating to change of state. Science is also linked to health education. Pupils are taught the importance of good nutrition and circulation as well as being helped to develop awareness of the effects of tobacco and alcohol on the human body. Results and diagrams from investigations are well presented and conclusions recorded thoughtfully.
88. Science is led well by the headteacher, who is acting as the co-ordinator. As the results for science have been very good the subject has not been part of the school development plan, although work has taken place to ensure teacher assessments are accurate, the tendency in the past being for teachers to be over-cautious. This work has been successful. Assessments now accurately reflect the progress pupils are making. They are made at the end of each unit throughout the school. Science is very well monitored, particularly ensuring investigative skills are taught well so pupils understand fully the scientific process. Checks are kept on the acquisition of knowledge and understanding and pupils' development of scientific vocabulary. Arrangements have been made with the adjacent middle school to ensure the units of work covered by pupils in Years 3 and 4 are not repeated and skills and knowledge develop progressively.
89. The QCA scheme has been adopted and is supplemented by the use of a commercial scheme. Both give teachers a very good framework on which to further develop their own subject knowledge, which is already strong. They also provide a structured approach to science, which is building logically on previous experiences. The quality of teaching is very good and instrumental in raising pupils' motivation, interest and involvement in science. All pupils attach a real interest in the investigations they are carrying out, concentrating well and working co-operatively with others when called upon to do so. A further feature that supports high achievement is the opportunities pupils are given to find answers for themselves and develop independence as learners.
90. Pupils with special educational needs work alongside other pupils who give their support. In addition, teaching assistants give assistance and guidance when needed. In these ways, pupils are fully included in science activities. A few pupils in Year 2 had some difficulty in expressing the results of their investigation in writing, especially arranging their thoughts in a logical order. They were well assisted and as a result, they succeeded and made good progress. The school prediction is that all Year 2 pupils will attain the expected level for their age in 2002, with two-fifths attaining the higher Level 3. Inspection evidence supports this prediction.
91. Resources are at least satisfactory for the units of work studied and, if there is a need for more advanced equipment, this can be obtained readily from the middle school, with which there is a very good relationship. Computer technology is being used increasingly

for information gathering and for the tabulation of results. Teachers show an impressive commitment to continue to enable pupils to attain high standards by their enthusiasm for the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

92. The new ICT suite and class based resources are supporting learning very well. The subject is very well led and managed and a well-designed curriculum programme, linked to national guidance and the school's needs, is supporting teachers and all pupils very well. Staff training and development has been successful, enabling teachers to improve their confidence, subject knowledge and expertise. In the two lessons seen, teaching was good and discussions with pupils show they are making rapid progress. Standards are now above expected levels at the ages of seven and nine. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last report when it was sound. Teacher assessments are completed at the end of units of work and displays and work samples record pupils' progress. Teachers use these assessments to help them to plan future lessons.
93. From the earliest days in the nursery and reception class children have regular opportunities to work with computers and equipment such as tape recorders and programmable toys. This enables them to become skilled in using the mouse and arrow keys. Through their play in the class shop they learn how bar codes and scanners help shop assistants to total bills. Computers for the youngest pupils are class-based. Some are old but nevertheless are used with confidence. Pupils use the mouse, keyboard and many simple screen tools with appropriate skill and control.
94. Standards for pupils aged seven and nine are rising rapidly. By the age of seven pupils word process with a good level of understanding of the functions of keys such as delete, enter and directional arrows. With support they use checks for spelling and quickly learn to edit text independently. They talk enthusiastically about the opportunities they have to programme the floor turtle and link this to their work on direction in mathematics. Older pupils still have to improve their keyboard skills, which remain quite slow, but they have a very good knowledge of how modern technology and methods of communication can support their daily lives, for example in the use of e-mail. Pupils sent thoughtful messages of sympathy to American children in New York by e-mail following the disaster of September 11th. They also have a well-developed understanding of how the Internet can be a valuable source of information that can support their learning. Pupils describe the ways in which technology supports our daily lives, for example, that cars have modern technical devices that enable the temperature, petrol consumption and mileage to be registered and that many modern pieces of equipment are controlled by handsets that can carry out many functions. ICT is well used to support pupils with special needs and English as an additional language. There are no differences between the standards achieved by boys and girls but pupils with home computers benefit from being able to practise their skills at home. The school does all it can to provide pupils with the opportunities they need to extend their skills.
95. Grant funding has been used well to provide the new facilities. Large close-circuited televisions in each classroom enable teachers to demonstrate new skills to large groups. Pupils then take turns to practise and apply the skills they have been taught using the suite. For example, in Year 4 pupils planned decision maps which they next presented as programs. There is good evidence of work which links to other subjects, for example designing posters, postcards, creating pictures and interpreting data. Displays provide good examples of how computers can be used to generate labels and instructions.

Pictures, posters and writing samples with computer generated designs show how lettering, colour schemes and other imagery can enhance pupils' work.

96. Older pupils are still catching up on some ICT skills but are quickening their pace as the level of first hand opportunities increases. The teaching staff use the new networked digital televisions for whole class ICT teaching. This is supporting teaching and learning well because teachers can highlight errors and sequences of directions and demonstrate clearly the task expectations. This is increasing confidence, accelerating the pace of learning and creating opportunities for open discussion. Effective support is available from the technician who is in school for an afternoon each week. Teaching assistants are well deployed to help teachers and small groups of pupils. Teachers plan tasks with great care, giving clear and precise demonstrations of new skills to the whole class. This is backed up by well timed tasks and adult support for small groups and individuals. Lessons conclude with helpful reviews and evaluations of the progress that has been made and indications of what will be learned in the next lesson.
97. The subject co-ordinator is knowledgeable, provides a very good role model and supports staff very well. The ICT development plan provides a clear long-term vision for developing the subject and making further links to subjects across the curriculum. The high level of staff enthusiasm and clear understanding of future developments is driving standards higher. The school has made very good progress in developing the subject since the last report.

ART AND DESIGN, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY, GEOGRAPHY HISTORY, MUSIC and PHYSICAL EDUCATION.

98. Eight lessons were observed in these subjects overall. Additional evidence was gathered by talking to pupils and teachers and looking at pupils' work and displays and teachers' planning.
99. Standards in music at age seven and nine exceed those of most pupils of these age groups and the quality of singing is a strength, enhancing the spiritual dimension of assemblies. The analysis of pupils' work shows pupils develop a good understanding of composing, recording and evaluating their work. They use percussion instruments, sound effects and alter the pitch of their voices to create effects. Listening skills are a strength across all age groups.
100. Standards are also above national expectations in art and design, design and technology, physical education and history by the ages of seven and nine. In geography they are average for both age groups. Standards have improved from the last inspection when standards were mainly average with weaknesses highlighted in the provision for higher attaining pupils in design and technology. This weakness has been addressed and current standards of work show good opportunities for pupils to generate design ideas, select materials, plan, create and evaluate their completed models, for example *Duck Trucks* in the infants and nursery rhyme illustrations with moving parts in the juniors. Pupils say they enjoy design and technology and have a good knowledge of the design process, happily describing the difficulties they have encountered and how they have been resolved.
101. In art and design displays are of good quality and show good attention to colour mixing, patterning and working in the style of other artists and sculptors, such as Monet, Picasso and Lowry. Good links are made with literacy and numeracy as pupils use poems and stories as the basis for their work and estimate and measure the size and

amount of materials needed to make their models. Skills are developed systematically and the revisiting of techniques enables pupils to improve on their prior learning. Pupils enjoy stories about how people lived in the past and have a good knowledge of famous people and the way people lived in the past, for example in Victorian times. These subjects also make a positive contribution to provision for cultural development.

102. Strengths in learning in these subjects are evident in all classes and reflect the very good quality of lessons observed across the age ranges. Pupils are consistently well challenged and make rapid progress. The teachers have very good subject knowledge and expertise across the breadth of the curriculum. Very good organisation ensures that learning is lively and interesting. On going teacher assessments of individual units of work are systematic and thorough. Information is used to support planning and to ensure that individual needs are well met. For example, very good differentiation in music in Year 1 enabled all pupils to perform a sequence of beats working as individuals, pairs and small groups in response to the teacher and recorded Chinese music. In Year 3 in design and technology tasks enabled pupils to practise their cutting skills while those already skilled in this technique recorded sequences of instructions and diagrams to be used for their next task.

103. In physical education pupils in the infants and juniors make consistently good progress, especially in dance and gymnastics. Pupils learn to move with poise and confidence, have good regard for health and safety rules and treat equipment with respect. Pupils work well with partners and in larger groups. They achieve good standards in their sequences of movements. In an excellent dance lesson in Year 2 the teacher skilfully planned the lesson to ensure pupils had opportunities to demonstrate their ideas within a well formed sequence of movements. The teacher encouraged pupils to demonstrate their achievements and discussed the strengths of their movements with the class. This very good technique resulted in pupils making rapid progress, learning from each other through structured self-evaluation. Very high standards were attained. In a gymnastics lesson in Year 3 pupils developed the ability to create a range of balances using different parts of the body; this was extended to create balances on apparatus. Again there was very good use made of evaluation to refine the balances, and pupils' learning improved through observing and constructively criticising each other.

104. Pupils with special educational needs achieve their potential because their needs are identified at an early stage in the reception class. Teaching assistants offer very good support and ensure these pupils are included in all the class activities. They raise self-esteem and confidence and consequently pupils feel valued and achieve well in relation to their prior achievements. Plans indicate precise learning objectives and tasks are structured to meet the needs of all ability groups.

105. Teaching was very good in over half the lessons and in a physical education lesson in Year 2 it was excellent. The remaining three lessons were good. Strengths in teaching are the clarity with which learning objectives are explained and the precise use of subject vocabulary which is consistently reinforced. This encourages pupils to broaden the range of words they use in their speech and writing. Past learning is reviewed at the start of lessons to ensure pupils understand the developments in their work. Teachers motivate pupils with their enthusiasm and high expectations. Activities provide many practical opportunities to enable pupils who have particular strengths and interest in these subjects to celebrate their achievements. Lesson endings are well organised and pupils expect to evaluate the extent to which they have met the objectives. They are also told how their knowledge and understanding will be extended in future lessons. Assessment is thorough. Teachers make good use of their on-going observations to judge pupils' progress at the end of each unit of work. Teaching assistants provide very good support

and enhance the quality of teaching and learning. They are well organised and know precisely the level of support they are expected to give. The learning partnership between teachers and assistants is very good. Very good relationships enable pupils to attempt difficult tasks and to ask and answer questions. Mistakes and errors are accepted as important steps in learning and this promotes positive attitudes.

106. The very good monitoring arrangements have enabled coordinators to support staff and this has improved confidence and expertise. This practice is very effective and supports the professional development of all staff very well. New staff have a full induction programme which is supporting well the development of a broad range of strategies across subjects to support pupils' learning.

107. Subject management is of very good quality across subjects and age ranges. All policies have been reviewed and provide very good guidance. They reflect the school's aims and the broad, balanced curriculum that encourages creativity, research and independent decision making. Very good links are made with literacy, numeracy and ICT. The school uses national guidance as the basis for curriculum planning and mixes this with a range of first hand experiences. There are a small number of educational visits that enhance the range of learning opportunities the school offers, for example Ashwell Museum linked to studies of the Second World War and Priory Country Park for environmental studies. A range of visitors including fire, police services, theatre company and puppeteers enhance these opportunities. Football, tennis, dance and recorder clubs provide additional opportunities for learning. A small number of parents were critical of the range of extra activities the school provides. Inspectors consider the range of clubs and activities to be appropriate for the age range and similar to the number that most schools of this size offer.

108. Cultural awareness, criticised in the last report, is promoted well through subjects such as art and design, music, history and geography. Displays draw attention to artefacts and life in different countries and periods of time. In discussion pupils have a good knowledge of the work of famous sculptors and artists. Colour mixing techniques are a strength and the quality of observational drawing is good in both age ranges. Reception aged children paint pictures linked to the poem 'Cold' by Shirley Hughes. Through careful observation and discussion they paint in the style of the illustrator. This piece of work is of a high standard for the age range. By the age of nine pupils understand how history has contributed to modern society and have an understanding of the lives of people who lived in the past and those who live in countries such as India. They have a sound geographical awareness of places they have visited and of their own locality but pupils find it harder to describe the depth of their understanding because there are half- termly gaps between lessons on the subject. This is a minor weakness for the school to consider. Displays are bright and attractive and the use of skilful questioning and labelling makes clear the intention of the work and celebrates the pupils' successes.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

109. At the time of the last inspection, standards of attainment in religious education exceeded the expectations of the local education authority's agreed syllabus throughout the school. The syllabus has recently been revised and standards continue to be above those expected. Pupils make good progress in understanding aspects of Christianity and world faiths and the subject makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Teaching takes very good account of the agreed syllabus' content and targets, which are all achieved well. Learning is strengthened by links to assembly themes and to other curriculum areas, such as 'Ourselves' in science.

110. Pupils make comparisons between different faiths, recognising their similarities and differences. In a Year 3 lesson on fasting the different practices of Ramadan from the Muslim faith, Yom Kippur from the Jewish faith and Lent from the Christian faith were examined. The teacher skilfully discussed the similarities and by the end of the lesson pupils understood the principles of patience, new beginnings and the virtues of not giving up because something is difficult. Pupils used a CD-ROM to find further information as well as a good selection of books. Some of the language used with the CD-ROM was difficult for the age group and required reinforcement. The teacher had carefully chosen a group with good language ability and ensured they were fully challenged.
111. Year 2 pupils have studied a selection of Bible stories, for example Noah and the flood. They recollect the story with accuracy. They have also made studies of festivals and celebrations, for example, Christian weddings. Their workbooks record the story of the first Christmas and show a good grasp of the sequence of events. Pupils also made Christingle candles and recorded carefully what the different parts signified. Year 1 pupils, having been told the story of Hanukkah as part of their work on 'special times', went on to role play the story and make 'Happy Hanukkah' cards. They showed real delight when, at the end of the lesson, the room was darkened and the Menorah candles were lit. The lesson was well executed and the pupils' interest was kept alive throughout.
112. The core values of the religious education syllabus of care, concern and consideration for others also make a major contribution to the very good quality ethos within the school. Pupils' respect for the views of others is clearly fostered by their studies of the Christian and world faiths. They have a good knowledge of the major festivals in the Christian calendar and also know when other festivals occur, for example Divali. Pupils know the local vicar who makes regular visits to the school. Pupils have a good knowledge of the layout of a church. They show interest in the subject and their knowledge is growing. Pupils have written prayers to use at home and school, and importance is placed on teaching the power of prayer and reflection. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress alongside their peers, being supported well by the teachers and classroom assistants.
113. Lesson planning is of good quality, a feature being the direct teaching. The syllabus is taught effectively in all classes and the subject is ably led by the well qualified co-ordinator. She teaches both the Year 3 and 4 classes. Work is monitored, along with planning, and regular assessments are made of pupils' progress. Much of the successful teaching is due to the interest and enthusiasm of the teachers, especially the good quality questioning techniques designed to develop pupils' thinking skills. Resources in school are adequate although there are insufficient Bibles for older pupils. Artefacts in school are supplemented with those from the resource unit in the middle school, as well as books and tapes.