

INSPECTION REPORT

TEMPLEFIELD LOWER SCHOOL

Flitwick

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109527

Headteacher: Mr C Farrow

Reporting inspector: Mr C R Phillips
15941

Dates of inspection: 11th – 14th March 2002

Inspection number: 195792

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
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Malham Close Flitwick Bedford
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C Mayhew
Date of previous inspection:	May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15941	Mr C R Phillips	Registered inspector	Science Geography History	Characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Leadership and management Key issues for action
9079	Mrs A Moss	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
23056	Ms T Manzi	Team inspector	Music Foundation Stage	
18340	Mrs M E Phillips	Team inspector	English Art and design Religious education Equal opportunities	Teaching and learning
20086	Mr D Speakman	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs	Quality and range of opportunities for learning

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 7
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?	8 - 10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	10 - 11
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	12 - 13
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	13 - 14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	15
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	15 - 17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	18
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	19 - 22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	23 – 38

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is an average size community school for boys and girls aged four to nine. It draws pupils from an area of mainly private housing and has 290 pupils currently on roll. At the time of the inspection, there were 70 children in the Foundation Stage, of whom 51 were below the age of five and 40 attended on a part-time basis. Overall levels of attainment on entry are usually above the national average. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals (3.6 per cent) is below the national average. At present, three pupils have statements of special educational need, and the overall proportion of pupils currently identified as having special educational needs (13.4 per cent) is below the national average. These pupils have a range of learning and behavioural needs. The school has six pupils from minority ethnic groups and there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. It achieves high standards by providing very well for the needs of all pupils. It is very well managed and the quality of teaching and learning are good throughout the school. It provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards of attainment by the time pupils leave the school are usually well above the national expectation in reading and writing, mathematics and science.
- All pupils learn well and make good progress, because the quality of teaching is good and they enjoy a wide range of stimulating learning experiences.
- The school has effective systems for the detailed and careful monitoring of all aspects of pupils' progress and development.
- The pupils respond very well to the high expectations the school has for them.
- The pupils' personal development, their attitudes to all aspects of school life and the quality of relationships throughout the school are impressive.
- The provision the school makes for pupils with special educational needs is excellent.
- The school has established a very good partnership with its parents, who hold it in high esteem.
- The headteacher, with the full support of the deputy headteacher and other managers, provides very good leadership for the effective and committed staff team and the well informed and involved governing body.

What could be improved

- The school's overall co-ordination of provision for the Foundation Stage.
- The opportunity for all children under the age of six to have equal access to the Foundation Stage curriculum.
- The recurring problems caused by flooding.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the school was inspected in May 1997, it received a positive report, although key issues for action were identified. These have been tackled very well and the school has continued to improve significantly. The results achieved by pupils in the national tests at the age of seven have maintained an upward trend, to a point where they are usually well above the national average in English and mathematics, in spite of a dip in the most recent results. The school reviews all aspects of its life regularly and it has the personnel and well established procedures to ensure that it should continue to improve. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and in 2001, the school received a Department for Education and Employment Achievement Award for improved standards in the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

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

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

This is a good set of results overall, with results in reading and writing in 2000 in the highest five per cent nationally. The results in the 2001 tests were not typical of the school's normal performance, but reflected the particular profile of the year group concerned and also indicated significant improvement on the standards with which those pupils entered the school. Evidence from this inspection confirms a picture for pupils in Years 2 and 4 that is more in line with that shown in previous years, with standards in English, mathematics and science that are well above the national average. In almost all of the other subjects, standards are above the level expected for both age groups. Pupils of all attainment levels make good progress overall through the school and many are making very good progress. Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress overall and are above the level expected at the start of Year 1 in all areas of learning.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils are enthusiastic and show very good attitudes in all aspects of school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Their behaviour is good and pupils of all ages relate very well to each other, both in lessons and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils' personal development is good and relationships throughout the school are very good.
Attendance	Attendance is very good. Lessons start promptly and little time is wasted.

The personal development of the pupils, their attitudes to all areas of school life, their high attendance and the quality of relationships are strengths of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching in all subjects, including English and mathematics, is good overall and is often very good. One quarter of the lessons observed were judged to be very good or excellent. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very well. Very good provision is made in each of the classes for the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the higher attainers. The teachers' classroom management is good, as is their subject knowledge and they generally have very high expectations for all pupils. They provide a good range of interesting and often stimulating learning activities, based on very good planning, that develop the pupils' imagination and creativity. The teachers use assessment well, enabling them to give useful feedback to pupils about the progress they are making. There has been significant staff absence during the present school year through long-term illness, but the school has worked hard to minimise the effect of this on the pupils. At the time of the inspection, several teachers were employed on a temporary basis, but it is clear that all of the teachers bring particular strengths to their work. All teachers know their pupils very well and the pupils respond very well to the experiences offered. They become confident and independent in their learning and develop a good understanding of how well they are getting on and what they need to do to improve. Pupils of all attainment levels are keen to do well and are given every encouragement to do so.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad, relevant and lively and the school provides a wide range of opportunities to enrich the pupils' learning through visits and extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent, their needs are identified and met, they are fully involved in the life of the school and their rate of progress is very good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision overall for the pupils' personal development and very good provision for their social development. They are encouraged to be responsible, to care and to be aware of cultural diversity.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares well for its pupils. It has good arrangements for the identification and monitoring of the progress made by pupils in all aspects of their learning and development.

Parents agree the school is doing a very good job in encouraging their children to do well and to develop well, both personally and socially. They feel they are well informed about the work their children are doing and most feel they are well informed about the progress they are making. The school offers a broad range of learning experiences for all pupils, within and beyond the school. All pupils are known and cared for well. Throughout the school, they are treated with respect and respond very well to being valued, becoming mature and responsible members of the school community. Present arrangements for admission to the nursery, which are determined by the local education authority, lead to inequalities in the experiences available to these young children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership, with the full support of the deputy headteacher and other managers. The staff team makes an important contribution to the continuing development of the school and to its management.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors provide very good support for the school, are thoroughly committed to and involved in its continuing development and have a very good awareness of its needs.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher, governors and staff review the school's performance continuously and always look for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	All resources are used efficiently for the benefit of the pupils in the school. In spite of some continuing concerns about the buildings, they are very well kept and provide a very pleasant environment for learning. The provision of learning resources is good.

Under the leadership of the headteacher, the school has a clear educational direction and is very effective. The teachers are very well supported by the classroom assistants and other helpers and all adults working in the school make an important contribution to the quality of pupils' experience. The school has faced particular difficulties in recruiting temporary teachers because of a general shortage and its work has also been affected by repeated flooding. The governors, headteacher and staff review all development priorities regularly, evaluating all spending decisions and the school applies the principles of best value well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school encourages parents to play an active part in its life, handles complaints well and is approachable. The school gives a clear understanding of what is taught and most feel they are well informed about their child's progress. Their children enjoy going to school and are able to achieve a good standard of work. The school encourages the children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons and almost all parents are satisfied with the homework given. The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on their children and it achieves high standards of behaviour. 	<p>A few parents indicated concern about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The information they receive about their children's progress. Homework. Provision for extra-curricular activities. Changes in staffing.

Parents have a very high opinion of the school and the opportunities it provides for their children. The inspection team agrees with this very positive view. It believes that the school provides ample information about the progress pupils are making, that arrangements for homework are good and that the pupils experience a wide range of opportunities beyond the classroom. The school has also done all it can to keep to a minimum any disruption in pupils' learning due to staff absence.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Overall results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests in reading and writing for seven-year-old pupils were above the national average and were broadly in line with the average for schools of similar intake. Results in mathematics were in line with the national average, but well below the average for similar schools. The proportion attaining the higher grade of Level 3 was above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. When compared with similar schools, the proportion of pupils at this level was average in reading, but below average in writing and mathematics. In the teacher assessments in science, the proportion of pupils attaining Level 2 and above was very high when compared with both national figures and those for similar schools. The proportion attaining Level 3 was in line with the national average, but below average for similar schools. These results were not typical of the rising standards seen in the school since the previous inspection, but were indicative of the nature of the year group undertaking the tests. Their levels of attainment on entry to the school indicated that a lower level of performance than that of their predecessors was to be expected. Nevertheless, the results did confirm the school's success in ensuring significant improvement on their entry levels. The school is confident that results in 2002 and 2003 should be more in line with the picture provided by the results of previous years, where, for instance, reading and writing in 2000 were in the top five per cent nationally. The evidence of the present inspection indicates that current Year 2 pupils are likely to attain in English, mathematics and science at levels that are well above average, which will confirm the marked upward trend in results since the time of the last inspection. There is no evidence of any significant difference between the results of girls and boys.
2. When children enter the school at the age of four, their standards of attainment are normally above the national average, although there are variations between year groups. However, it has been very difficult for the school to monitor such standards meaningfully over several years because of changes in expectations about when baseline assessment should take place. It is also difficult to derive useful information about overall standards at the time when pupils reach the age for compulsory schooling, since there are considerable variations in the length of experience children have had of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage, with the youngest pupils in the year group, for instance, having no time in the reception class. By the time they leave the school at the age of nine, inspection findings indicate that the number of pupils attaining the levels expected nationally is currently well above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This indicates that all pupils, including the higher attainers, make at least good progress through the school, particularly in Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards achieving the targets set for them, because of the quality of the extra support they receive.
3. Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress overall and most of the children currently at this stage of education are likely to be above national expectations by the time they enter Year 1 in terms of each of the goals for early learning, with some well above.
4. In their English work, because all pupils are taught throughout the school to think about what they are doing and to explain their thinking, by the time they are in Year 4 they are able, for example, to explore very well the meaning of what they read and to examine text carefully, showing a high level of skill as they discuss their findings. The quality of their creative writing is also very good. This reflects the overall standards of literacy that are developed very well across all curriculum areas throughout the school. The same sort of approach to mathematics, with pupils being encouraged at all points to think about and explain what they are doing, means that their numeracy skills also develop very well as they progress through the school. They then become confident and proficient in all aspects of mathematics and can also use and apply their skills in other areas of the curriculum, such as their science investigations. In science, standards are also very high, with pupils showing very good knowledge of the various aspects of the subject. Their

- understanding of scientific method is very good and by the end of their time in school, most pupils are on the way to becoming very capable young scientists.
5. Standards of attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) are presently above the level expected nationally by the time pupils are seven and nine, and for many pupils are well above. In religious education, standards by the time pupils reach those same ages are above the levels expected by the locally agreed syllabus. In art and design, geography, history, design and technology and physical education standards by the end of Years 2 and 4 are above the levels expected and in music they are in line with expectations. In each of these subjects, standards have been at least maintained, when compared with those at the time of the previous inspection, and those in art and design, design and technology, ICT and religious education have shown significant improvement since that time.
 6. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in relation to the targets set for them, as well as very good progress overall. They are provided with very good levels of support, their targets are regularly evaluated and reviewed and new targets are set appropriately to aid progress, when necessary. Similarly, the higher attainers also do well, as indicated by the proportions of pupils usually achieving higher grades in the National Curriculum tests and assessments in English, mathematics and science and the evidence of this inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. The pupils' attitudes to school and to learning have continued to improve since the last inspection and are now very good. The school works hard and successfully to create an ethos in which pupils acquire good attitudes and an appreciation for learning. All pupils are encouraged to develop a lively interest in what they are doing and parents report that their children enjoy coming to school. From when they first enter the nursery, they look forward eagerly to each day and its routines. In both the nursery and the reception class, the children settle well, understand the routines and are generally socially mature and confident. The children's attitudes to learning are good and they are happy and secure. Throughout the school, pupils are polite and cheerful, with a positive approach to lessons. They endeavour to meet the high expectations that teachers have for them, working enthusiastically and showing pride in their achievements. These positive attitudes were observed in many lessons, including a literacy lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, where the pupils maintained interest throughout the lesson and responded enthusiastically to questions and a Year 2 history lesson, where it was noted that there was 'not a flicker of inattention'. Pupils of all attainment levels are challenged to do well and almost all rise to this.
8. Behaviour in and around the school is good. The pupils' behaviour in lessons is good overall and is often very good or excellent. For example, excellent behaviour was seen during a registration session in Year 1 when the pupils answered very politely and settled down very quickly to their work. This purposeful and well-ordered session provided an excellent start for the day. Similar behaviour was evident in a session for a group of pupils with special educational needs, where the pupils showed excellent behaviour and motivation as they engaged completely in literacy activities. When there is a change of activities during lessons, pupils move quickly and with little fuss to their new tasks and little time is lost as they move about the school to other rooms or activities, such as their literacy or numeracy groups. Occasional indications of inappropriate behaviour are seen in a very few lessons, but these are usually dealt with well by the teachers. The system of rewards and sanctions is well established and understood by pupils and there is a noticeable absence of oppressive behaviour, including bullying and racism. Pupils trust adults, knowing they will react quickly and positively as soon as incidents arise or inappropriate behaviour is reported. There has been one fixed-term exclusion in the past year.
9. There are very good relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and adults. For example, pupils were seen to collaborate very well in a Year 1 literacy lesson, sharing what they know and listening intently to each other. They work and play together very well and they co-operate to good effect when opportunities arise. Several pupils work together each day counting supermarket tokens for free computers and it was noted that some pupils have given up, on alternate weeks, their much prized place at the lunchtime book club, so that a friend could also attend. There are common rules forming a code of behaviour for all pupils, which are displayed around the building.

Pupils know about these and almost all comply with adults' expectations. Those with special educational needs are fully integrated into all aspects of school life. Pupils throughout the school are becoming aware of the way their actions affect others and of the need to respect other's feelings, values and beliefs. Staff make a special point of explaining the reasons for the expectation of good behaviour and respect for others. Religious education lessons are being used effectively to reinforce this area and circle time is being used well in some classes.

10. The pupils' personal development is good. They show initiative and take responsibility. For example, they undertake many responsibilities around the school, such as helping to prepare the hall for assemblies and many were seen making independent use of the library, exhibiting good research skills. Their opinion is sought whenever possible. They support a range of charities, including a soup kitchen in Manchester. They also take turns to act as monitors for tasks such as gardening and collecting litter.
11. Pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes towards their learning and their behaviour is generally good, both when withdrawn for particular support and when working in class. They feel well supported by the staff and, in turn, become confident in their learning and develop a good sense of self-esteem.
12. Attendance levels are very good, being well above the national average. The school is aware of the importance of high levels of attendance and punctuality and continues to encourage children and parents to improve these figures even more. Registration procedures are documented properly and implemented effectively, meeting statutory requirements.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Of the lessons observed during the inspection, all were at least satisfactory, four-fifths were good or better and a quarter were very good or excellent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science throughout the school, the teaching is of consistently high quality, with teaching in English very good overall. In almost all other subjects, the teaching and learning are good. In the Foundation Stage, the standard of teaching observed in both the nursery and the reception class was good overall. The teaching and support teams throughout the school work well together and provide learning opportunities that are of high quality for all pupils. Although several of the classes at the time of the inspection were being taught by teachers on temporary contracts, all of the teachers bring particular strengths to their work, so that the pupils participate in an interesting and varied range of experiences as they go through the school. There has been significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection, when some teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory. This improvement is evident throughout the school.
14. The quality of planning for all subjects is very good and takes account of the range of capabilities in each class. The standard of planning is at the heart of the high quality teaching, because all teachers know what they want the pupils to learn. They have high expectations and communicate these clearly to the pupils. All teachers have the skills, classroom organisation and management to deliver lessons that motivate and engage and enable all pupils to work hard. Many have a very good understanding of how children learn and are able to teach effectively in steps that pupils can manage, so that the pupils acquire the required skills and knowledge and their interest is retained well. The teachers encourage the pupils to do well and all adults work well with the pupils, monitoring their progress effectively during lessons.
15. Teachers throughout the school show good knowledge and understanding of the various subjects, particularly in English, mathematics and science, although several lack confidence in the teaching of music. Teaching in the areas of using and applying mathematics and mental work is strong. In science, the use of investigative and experimental work is very effective. In English, the teaching of the basic skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling and a love of words and books are particular strengths. In all subjects, the teachers encourage the learning of the necessary vocabulary. The teaching of literacy and numeracy, in groups formed according to prior attainment, is an effective and established pattern for pupils each day. This has a positive impact on teaching

and learning in both mathematics and English. The literacy and numeracy strategies are being taught very well.

16. As a staff team, the teachers share considerable subject expertise and experience. When teachers plan, they identify clearly the specific learning that is intended; they then usually share this with the pupils and review progress at the end of lessons. In all lessons, the teachers' organisation is at least good and they engage the pupils' interest fully, providing high expectations for work and behaviour. The teachers provide clear explanations of the tasks required of the pupils and pupils of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs and the higher attaining pupils, are challenged well by the work provided. There is an effective pace to most lessons and teachers are confident and motivate the pupils well. Most use a range of perceptive questioning skills and generally reinforce learning well when they review work with the pupils. They know and manage their pupils very well. The teachers work hard to ensure that pupils develop good working habits and the pupils respond well. The pupils usually show attention to detail and complete their work diligently. They are always keen to learn and their eagerness is usually well handled. By the time they leave the school, most have an understanding of what they are learning and can talk about it in an increasingly mature way.
17. In the best lessons, such as a mathematics lesson in Year 4, a literacy lesson for a special needs group and a science lesson in Year 1, pupils are challenged to put maximum effort into their work and they make substantial gains in their learning because of the high quality of the teaching. Many lessons inspire the pupils to respond at a high level, particularly where there is a brisk pace and teachers use a wide variety of planned strategies to question, stimulate and check learning. The teachers know generally when to intervene and their questioning is usually effective in clarifying learning for the pupils and in assessing what is necessary for them to learn further. The teachers' high expectations, both for standards and behaviour, ensure complete attention and are reflected in the pupils' attitudes. The pupils' responses are usually handled very well. Sometimes, short, timed tasks are used, the regular completion of which provides pupils with a sense of achievement. Occasional lessons were seen where teaching was more formal and, although learning was satisfactory overall, the lessons required a less active response from the pupils.
18. Throughout the school, a good range of approaches to classroom organisation is used. Class, individual and group work are all used well, the pupils have opportunities to show initiative and a mature approach to learning is developed. They work with a partner, or in a group and respond well to opportunities to organise resources for their work. Work is marked regularly and marking often indicates how improvement can be made, as does the oral feedback given to pupils in the course of all lessons.
19. The overall standard of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good and ensures that pupils have work that is well matched to their needs, they make very good progress and their self-esteem is high. Individual education plans are of good quality and have clear targets, which are shared with pupils and reviewed regularly with parents. Teaching is particularly well focused on improving literacy skills. In an excellent literacy lesson, where a teacher supported a small group of pupils, an atmosphere of confidence was created and the teacher used a range of activities skilfully to consolidate knowledge. The teacher used time effectively, expectations were high and the pupils were successful. By the end of the lesson, pupils showed improving confidence in building up words with the identified sounds. The teachers are very aware of the specific needs of pupils in their classes. They are skilled at rephrasing questions to ensure that all pupils have understood and are able to take a full part in the lessons. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are handled sensitively and effectively. Pupils are placed in sets for literacy and numeracy work, according to their levels of prior attainment, which is very beneficial for those with special educational needs. Teachers write pupils' individual education plans in conjunction with the special needs co-ordinator. Teachers' expectations of these pupils are high and are made clear. Pupils receive very good support from the classroom assistants, who are well briefed and know the pupils well.
20. Homework is set regularly and most parents are satisfied with the provision. All pupils take home reading books each day and have spellings and mathematical tables to learn. Pupils are also

given further work to do linked to what they are doing in school. The concerns expressed by a number of parents about the provision of homework were not substantiated by the inspection team.

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

21. The school provides a broad and well-balanced range of relevant experiences that meets the needs of all pupils effectively. It meets fully the statutory requirements to teach the National Curriculum and the quality of curriculum planning has improved significantly since the last inspection. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage follows the early learning goals and covers in full the recommended aspects of the areas of learning for children of this age, although provision across the two classes in that stage and liaison with Year 1 are not yet co-ordinated fully.
22. Effective lessons for personal, social and health education have been introduced across the school to supplement the good work reported at the last inspection as already happening in this area, but the school has identified this as an area for further development. Suitable policies are in place for sex education and drugs awareness. Although the school does not teach sex education formally and there is an arrangement that the middle school covers this, they have a policy that teachers will answer honestly the questions that pupils ask. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been introduced very well and have helped to maintain the high standards pupils achieve in English and mathematics as they move through the school.
23. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when provision was judged to be good. Pupils' needs are identified at an early stage and they receive very good support. Individual education plans contain very specific targets for pupils to achieve. These targets are reviewed regularly. All pupils have full access and entitlement to the National Curriculum. Very careful consideration is given when adapting the curriculum to meet the specific needs of pupils. For instance, when they are working in class, work is targeted carefully to their level of need and when groups are working with the special needs co-ordinator in literacy lessons, careful attention is given to ensuring that their work meets the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy.
24. The school makes good provision overall for pupils of all attainment levels, including those who are potentially higher attainers. As part of its inclusive approach to the opportunities it provides for all pupils, it monitors carefully the performance of individuals and of different groups, so that, for instance, it can be sure that there is no significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls. However, it has particular concerns about the lack of equal access and opportunity for children to experience the full range of the Foundation Stage curriculum. This is caused by the particular admission arrangements required and funded by the local education authority and many children are clearly disadvantaged as a result. A significant proportion of the pupils entering Year 1 do not have the full opportunity to learn and to develop, for example, the social skills of their peers. As a result, some take longer in Year 1 to adjust to the necessary organisation and routines.
25. A very good range of extra-curricular activities takes place during the school day, at lunchtimes and after school. These include sports, such as netball and football and creative activities, such as book club, recorder and dance. Reflecting the school's strong commitment to personal development, no pupils are excluded by gender, ethnicity or age. Many other opportunities are provided to broaden the experience of all pupils by means of visits and visitors, including a residential visit for pupils in Year 4.
26. The school works very well with other schools to ensure a smooth transition to the next stage of education. This is very important, as pupils transfer half way through Key Stage 2. A good network of strong subject liaison groups ensures that all National Curriculum requirements are met within Key Stage 2 and that there is a good level of continuity of curricular provision throughout the junior years. Staff work closely with local middle and other lower schools in the same pyramid.
27. The school has extensive links with the local community, which broaden successfully the range of learning opportunities for pupils. Pupils visit the local library to learn library skills and to take part in story and poetry sessions. The 'Life Bus' visits the school and pupils take part in activities

related to caring for their bodies and raising their awareness about the dangers of drugs. Visits to art galleries, museums and nature parks enliven the curriculum and the school welcomes many visitors to the school, providing much enrichment of the pupils' learning.

28. The provision the school makes for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and has improved since the last inspection. The school provides well for the development of the pupils' spiritual awareness, with many opportunities provided for them to reflect on the non-material aspects of life, including personal values, beliefs and concern for others. Parents comment on the caring ethos of the school, where the achievement of all is valued and celebrated. In the daily acts of collective worship, the headteacher and others talk about important biblical themes and also introduce stories and ideas from other religious traditions. Music is often used to good effect to create an appropriate atmosphere for assembly times and pupils of all ages are encouraged to reflect on important matters. The assemblies provide a calm and thoughtful start to each day and are an important feature of the life of the school. Whole class discussions are sometimes used during circle time to explore feelings and emotions, although this is usually in response to something happening at lunchtime, for example, rather than a planned provision. Many opportunities also occur in the course of the pupils' learning for them to reflect and to delight in, for instance, the wonder of language or the thrill of discovery and these moments are used well by the teachers.
29. Provision for pupils' moral development is good and for their social development is very good. This is evident throughout the school, because of the high level of consistency in the lead provided by all adults in the school community. Pupils are provided with clear messages in terms of right and wrong and about personal attitudes and behaviour. They are encouraged to think and decide for themselves about what is right. Achievement is celebrated and rewarded. Teachers offer constant guidance relating to the need for tolerance, consideration for others and the development of pupils' own confidence and self-esteem. Pupils are encouraged actively to show care and respect for others, for property and for the environment. They are provided with opportunities to work and socialise together, both in school and in out-of-school activities, including residential visits. Independence and initiative are promoted actively in the way pupils are encouraged to work. Well-supported extra-curricular activities provide pupils with the opportunity to develop personal skills, to persevere and to be part of a team. Many opportunities are provided for pupils throughout the school to take responsibility.
30. Provision for the pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils of all ages visit places of interest, including museums and art galleries and these visits are an established part of school life. Visits to places of worship are a feature of religious education. The school's provision for music and art enhances pupils' cultural awareness. Performances in school and in local festivals and involvement in community activities, such as the carnival, reinforce the values of the school and make a good contribution to the personal development of pupils. The exploration and awareness of other cultures has improved since the last inspection. Art, music and religious education give pupils an insight into the traditions and values of those cultures whilst promoting racial awareness and the pupils' understanding of life in a multicultural society. The school has had a link with a city school in Luton that has a very high proportion of ethnic minority pupils. It has been possible in the past to exchange visits and see contrasting areas, learning about how people from other backgrounds live. A day of African dance and music is planned for the near future.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. The school has good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare. Its standards of pastoral care are high with a good level of care for pupils as individuals.
32. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. There is a shared understanding by all members of the teaching and support staff of the need to promote consistently the guidance given in the school policies. All staff make a significant contribution to providing a supportive atmosphere and a safe environment for all pupils. Procedures for monitoring the pupils' personal and social development are good. Strengths are seen in the way staff monitor children informally to support their learning needs.

They know pupils and families well and respond sympathetically to individuals, taking good account of personal circumstances that may affect learning in school. Lunchtime arrangements in the dining hall are well supervised, promoting a well-ordered atmosphere in which pupils can enjoy their meal in one another's company.

33. There is a strong emphasis throughout the school on the raising of pupils' self-esteem and enabling pupils of all attainment levels to contribute purposefully in lessons. Pupils are confident in their dealing with each other and with adults. Teachers praise and give encouragement during lessons and achievements, both large and small, are celebrated. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility with daily routines around the school.
34. There are satisfactory systems in place for child protection. Attention is paid to ensuring sufficient staff receive up-to-date training in giving first aid and to the general care and welfare of pupils. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy and regular risk assessments are carried out.
35. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance and punctuality are good. The administrative staff follow up promptly any unexplained absence or lateness. Attendance figures are entered and checked regularly and the school works closely with the education welfare officer. Registration sessions provide a calm and efficient start to the day.
36. Effective assessment systems are in place to enable the school to identify the progress being made by individual pupils and to give feedback and encouragement to pupils and useful information to their parents. The systems established are clear, realistic and manageable and are, therefore, followed by all staff, including the temporary teachers currently working in the school. There have been many improvements since the last inspection. The teachers' planning is now more detailed and highlights clear learning aims for each lesson and ways in which assessment is to take place. There are thorough arrangements for assessment in English and mathematics. Regular assessments in science are to be augmented by the use of moderated tasks to provide a clearer picture of pupils' progress in investigative work. A thorough system for assessment in ICT has been adopted recently. In the other subjects, arrangements for assessment and the recording of pupils' progress vary. Most use opportunities for checking pupils' learning at the end of units of work and contribute to a whole school approach to the identification and recording of the progress being made by individuals and groups.
37. Good procedures are in place for assessing the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and work is planned carefully to meet their needs. Individual education plans are well written and contain realistic targets, so that pupils' specific learning needs are met and their learning is built on step by step. The plans are reviewed very regularly and are shared with all staff, parents and pupils. Good use is made in the Foundation Stage of assessments and observations to identify clearly, at an early stage, pupils who are likely to require additional support.
38. All pupils have individual targets for their English writing, which have been introduced recently, so that they can concentrate on the best way to improve. The specific nature of the targets indicates the great effort the school makes in meeting the needs of all pupils and reflects an inclusive approach; there is a concern to help all pupils of all abilities and backgrounds to make gains in their learning.
39. Assessments, made at the end of units of study, together with yearly standardized tests, are used to allocate pupils to groups of broadly similar attainment for English and mathematics, so that their needs may be met. These arrangements are proving successful at keeping standards high.
40. Teachers know their pupils well and do not simply rely upon formal testing. They also use their own knowledge of each pupil to plan work to meet their needs and much of the assessment that takes place happens informally and productively in the course of lessons. The school reviews its systems constantly in order to improve pupils' progress and has rightly identified the need for greater continuity between the nursery and the reception class as an area for improvement.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. The school continues to work hard at fostering very good relationships with parents. Almost all have very positive views and speak warmly about what the school achieves. They value its caring attitudes and are satisfied that their children make good progress. They believe teachers know their children well and that such secure personal relationships help pupils to want to succeed. All parents responding to the questionnaire stated that their children like school and those seen during the inspection said their children are eager to come to school. They feel their children respond very well to being valued and that they are becoming mature and responsible members of the school community. However, a few parents were concerned about the information they receive about the progress their children are making. The inspection team believes that, taking into account the quality of the end-of-year reports, the number of parents' meetings, both formal and informal and the 'open door' policy of the school, parents are generally well informed about progress.
42. Most parents are happy with the homework that is given to pupils, but a few expressed concerns about aspects of this provision. Opinions are divided between those who wish to see more homework and those who want less. The inspection team, however, judges the use of homework to be good overall. A few parents also had concerns about the provision for extra-curricular activities. The inspection team found that the pupils experience a wide range of opportunities beyond the classroom, such as the book club, dance club, sports clubs, visits to museums and concerts and visitors coming into school. Year 4 pupils also benefit from a residential visit each year. There were also some concerns that changes in staffing were having a negative effect on particular groups of pupils and on individuals. The inspection team recognises and sympathises with this concern, but believes the school has done all it can to keep to a minimum any disruption in pupils' learning due to staff absence.
43. The school works very closely with parents in their children's education. Parents speak very highly of the good informal links with the headteacher and staff. They feel welcomed in the school and see the link as a two-way process, ensuring pupils' interests are to the fore. There are very effective mechanisms for exchanging information between school and home. Parents appreciate the informative, regular newsletters and they are very well informed about the curriculum and topics that their children will be studying. There is a home/school agreement. Annual written reports are good, containing useful information on pupils' progress and parents say that they describe their children accurately. There are also regular, well attended parent/teacher consultation evenings and an open afternoon each term when parents have access to classrooms. The school makes every effort to arrange appointments to suit individuals.
44. The parents' involvement in the work of the school is very good. Many parents come into the school to help in classrooms, for example, or to hear the children read. This all makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' learning. There is a very active, dedicated band of parents involved in the 'Templefield Association'. They organise social and fund-raising events to provide extra equipment for the school. The money raised has been used, for example, for the ICT suite and they are currently buying more books for the library. The school has its full complement of parent governors.
45. Induction procedures for children entering the school, including the use of home visits, are very good. Parents are pleased at how their children settle in and enjoy school. They also like the way pupils are expected to work hard and they appreciate the care taken when the oldest pupils transfer to the middle school. These transfer procedures are also very good.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The school has a clear sense of educational direction and is very well managed. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is very well supported by all staff, teaching and non-teaching. All of the co-ordinators currently in post have clear ideas about the continuing development of their subject or other area of responsibility. The co-ordinators support their colleagues well. They play

an important part in the school's management and planning processes and their role has continued to develop well since the last inspection. They and the headteacher undertake useful monitoring of teachers' planning. Some subject co-ordinators, particularly those for English, mathematics, science and ICT monitor classroom practice and undertake regular reviews of pupils' work and this has proved effective in raising standards. The teaching of physical education has also been monitored to good effect. As part of the arrangements for performance management, the headteacher also monitors teaching. At the time of the inspection, several subjects were without their normal co-ordinators because of staff absence and the headteacher and the key stage co-ordinators were providing general cover for these subjects. There is a need, which the school has identified, for closer working across the Foundation Stage, including the nursery unit and the reception class, in order to ensure the necessary continuity in planning, assessment and provision for younger children. The headteacher monitors the school's performance thoroughly against national and other statistics.

47. All members of the governing body are firmly committed to the support and development of the school. They are very well informed about the relevant aspects of school life, the standards being achieved and the progress made by pupils. Several have served the school well as governors for a considerable period. They discharge their duties effectively through a system of committees, and all meetings of the governing body and its committees are minuted properly. Responsibility for monitoring and supporting the provision for pupils with special educational needs, literacy, numeracy, the Foundation Stage and health and safety has been allocated appropriately to individual governors, each of whom provides a useful link with developments in these areas. Many governors, including the chair of governors, have regular contact with the daily life of the school. Statutory requirements for the National Curriculum, the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and other aspects of school life are met.
48. The quality of financial planning is good. The school manages its budget efficiently and spending is related clearly to the raising of educational standards. Careful records of expenditure are maintained and the most recent audit, which took place in 1998, indicated that procedures were satisfactory; the school has addressed the minor issues raised. The governors and headteacher monitor the school's financial position carefully and are well supported by the school secretary. They are aware of the need to ensure best value and to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of spending decisions. All specific grants given to the school, including those for the support and training of teachers and for the raising of standards, are identified appropriately and good use is made of the various elements of special funding the school has attracted.
49. The school improvement plan is a practical document, which is focused appropriately on the raising of standards. It provides reasonable detail about the priorities agreed. Most items are costed, but the success criteria identified are not always sufficiently specific. It is proving effective in helping the school to meet its goals. The plan includes a review of the previous year and deals in detail with the present year, but does not include outline plans for subsequent years. Responsibility for the approval of the plan lies clearly with the governing body and governors and staff are involved well in monitoring its progress and in its subsequent evaluation. There is an appropriate system of consultation during the preparation of the plan.
50. The management, by the special educational needs co-ordinator, of the provision for pupils with special educational needs, is excellent. Pupils are identified through a variety of procedures and placed on the special needs register. Pupils at Stage 2 and beyond are provided with individual education plans, which set clear targets for improvement. These plans are reviewed each term, with new targets being set if appropriate. The special needs co-ordinator keeps extensive records and the progress made by the pupils is checked carefully. The governor appointed to monitor the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well informed and provides high levels of support and guidance. The school has not yet had the opportunity to receive training for the new Code of Practice, although it is planned, so provision at present is in line with the previous expectations.
51. The school is well staffed with suitably qualified teachers to teach the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education effectively and to meet the needs of all pupils. The teachers

have a good balance of expertise and experience. Good use is made of visiting specialists in music, although the school is currently awaiting the arrival of a new member of staff to co-ordinate the subject. The school has encountered significant difficulties this year in recruiting teachers for temporary contracts to replace members of staff who have been on leave for maternity or long-term sickness. These difficulties reflect national shortages. Parents, although appreciating the problems the school has faced with its staffing arrangements, have been concerned about the effect of these changes on their children's learning, particularly in classes that have experienced several supply teachers. At the time of the inspection, the situation was relatively stable, although three classes still had teachers on a range of short-term contracts. It is clear, however, that the school has in place the necessary systems and practices to aid the teachers who have been in the school on a temporary basis, particularly in terms of curriculum planning and much support is provided by key stage and subject co-ordinators and by the teachers of pupils of the same year group. The inspection team believes the school has done all that could be expected to support the temporary teachers and to minimise the effects of the disruption for the classes affected, but there are indications that the experience has been unsettling for some pupils.

52. The qualifications and experience of the support staff are well matched to the demands of the curriculum. The partnership between teachers and classroom support staff has a positive impact on the learning of pupils and contributes to the continuing improvement in standards. The administration of the school runs smoothly and unobtrusively, not least because of the efficiency of the school secretary and all the adults involved in its life work very well together as a supportive team for the pupils. Correspondence is dealt with promptly, although the school finds it frustrating to have to supply very similar information to various bodies at different times. Systems and practices are effective in ensuring that the school's day-to-day life is well ordered, providing a calm and pleasant atmosphere in which pupils can learn. Relationships between the staff and the pupils are very good.
53. The school has good arrangements for meeting the professional development needs of all staff. The training undertaken is clearly focused on supporting the priorities of the school improvement plan and improving the quality of teaching and provision. For example, the school has made effective use of training opportunities to prepare staff for the national initiatives in literacy and numeracy and for the development of the Foundation Stage, providing the basis upon which standards in these areas have improved significantly. There are good arrangements for the induction of new staff, including a new deputy headteacher and those on temporary contracts and the scheme for performance management is in place.
54. The school makes efficient use of the resources available to it. The school's accommodation and grounds are pleasant and very well cared for. The buildings are clean and bright and they provide a very pleasant environment for learning. Planning is at a preliminary stage for the possible provision of a building that will link the present nursery unit and reception classroom, to facilitate co-ordinated provision for the Foundation Stage. There are attractive displays throughout the school, which celebrate good work and enhance the quality of learning. However, the school has significant and justified concerns about some aspects of its physical environment. The governing body is concerned, for instance, that a programme for the replacement of suspect flat roofs to parts of the building is being downgraded as a priority, with the likelihood of significant problems in the future. Of more immediate concern, however, is the fact that the school has experienced several flooding incidents in recent years, causing significant damage to furniture and other resources. This is a result of inadequate arrangements for surface water in the locality, but the necessary remedial work has not been put in hand with sufficient urgency or effectiveness and the problem continues to be a major concern for the headteacher, governors and site manager, involving a lowering of morale and the loss of inappropriate amounts of time in dealing with the results of the flooding.
55. Overall, the provision of learning resources is good. The Foundation Stage is generally well resourced, although some resources, including books, are well worn and in need of replacement and the reception class does not have full access to the enclosed play area. The provision of the ICT and music suite and the availability of at least two computers in each class have meant that provision of ICT hardware is very good and good software resources are being developed. The

quality of the library provision means that pupils in both key stages are able to have proper access to and make good use of an attractive resource for learning. The library has recently been reviewed and is currently being restocked. Resources for most subjects are good in both quality and quantity, although several areas have identified development needs. Good use is made of loan services. Very good use is made of visits and visitors and of the school's immediate environment, to extend the pupils' learning and enrich their experience. Resources to support the work with pupils with special educational needs are very good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. In order to raise standards further, the headteacher and governors should:

- (1) review immediately the school's arrangements for the co-ordination of the Foundation Stage to ensure a common approach to the planning of learning, assessment and provision for children of this age across both the nursery and the reception class, prior to the possible addition of a new building to link the two teaching bases (see paragraphs 21, 46, 58, 66);
- (2) in consultation with the local education authority, examine arrangements for admission to and transfer between the nursery, the reception class and Year 1, in order to provide equality of access to the Foundation Stage curriculum for all children (paragraphs 24, 58); and
- (3) seek assurances from the relevant bodies that the necessary remedial works to ensure the removal of the flooding problem are put in hand as a matter of urgency (paragraphs 54).

The school is already aware of these needs, several of which appear in its improvement plan and is working towards their resolution.

Other issues which should be considered by the school for possible inclusion in the action plan:

- Providing further training to increase staff confidence in the teaching of music.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	57
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	11	32	11	0	0	0
Percentage	5	19	56	19	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. When the total number is substantially less than 100, care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

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)	31	241
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	44

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.0

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

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	31	29	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	30	28
	Girls	27	28	27
	Total	53	58	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (96)	97 (94)	92 (98)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	28	31
	Girls	27	24	29
	Total	55	52	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (96)	87 (98)	100 (98)
	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	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	235
Any other minority ethnic group	6

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)	10.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.7
Average class size	26.8

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	8.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	95

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	31
Total number of education support staff	2.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2.0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1.0

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	1	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	2000-01
	£
Total income	548,360
Total expenditure	550,738
Expenditure per pupil	2,033
Balance brought forward from previous year	19,201
Balance carried forward to next year	16,823

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	290
Number of questionnaires returned	134

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	28	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	35	4	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	54	7	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	43	13	4	4
The teaching is good.	56	37	1	2	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	41	16	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	23	3	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	34	1	3	3
The school works closely with parents.	47	39	7	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	56	37	1	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	46	3	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	39	10	6	17

Where lines do not total 100, this indicates the effect of rounding and/or a proportion of nil responses against that question.

Other issues raised by parents

In addition to issues identified above, parents expressed their concern about the effects of staffing disruption on individuals and groups. The inspection team's responses to the issues raised are to be found in the summary report and in the commentary section of the main report.

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. The children start school when they are four years of age. There are two classes, a nursery unit and a reception class. In both classes, the children are taught the appropriate curriculum. All staff work well together to create an environment that fosters learning. Good relationships are formed with parents and a wide range of practical activities is provided that covers all the areas of learning. The teachers also monitor the children's progress well and ensure that they start working on the National Curriculum when they are ready.
58. There are currently 51 children enrolled for the nursery unit, of whom 40 attend on a half-time basis. The unit has spaces for the equivalent of 39 children full-time. The reception class currently has 19 children, who will be joined next term by the 11 children presently attending the nursery full-time. At the moment, the reception class has part-time support, but when the new children arrive extra support will be needed to help the teacher meet the needs of all the children. The nursery has one teacher and two trained assistants on a full-time basis, assisted by student nursery nurses. Several parents and volunteers currently help in the reception class. The children are taught the appropriate curriculum for the Foundation Stage. This curriculum covers six areas of learning and development and, as the children reach the early learning goals or targets within this curriculum, they are introduced to the National Curriculum. There is good provision for these children except that the two classes are located in separate buildings and the reception class does not have easy access to and does not normally use, the enclosed play area with its good outside play equipment. There are plans to link these two areas soon. All children attend the nursery at first on a part-time basis. After two terms, almost all attend for the whole day for their last term. Most, but not all, then attend the reception class. The youngest children move straight into Year 1. Thus, not all children benefit equally from the Foundation Stage provision, with some children having five terms and some having three. This arrangement clearly disadvantages those who miss the opportunities provided by the reception class.

Personal, social and emotional development

59. The teachers and their assistants create a calm, secure and ordered environment and the quality of teaching and learning in both classes is good. Children understand what is expected of them and respond well to the consistent expectations of staff. Almost all children make satisfactory progress and meet the early learning goals before the end of the Foundation Stage. Their positive self-esteem is developed by the allocation of responsibilities, such as clearing-up after activities. Many children start school with generally good social skills. These are fostered and developed further by the good role models provided by the adults and by the way they listen to and value each child's answers, giving regular praise and encouragement. The children are very considerate and polite to each other. In a drama lesson in the nursery, for instance, a child said, 'Don't worry, I shall pick up the chair.' In a music lesson, the children organized themselves quickly into a circle and waited their turn. In the reception class, the children follow the teacher's directions well and make choices as to the independent activities they will undertake. They are friendly and confident with visitors and are keen to show them their work. The children are keen to undertake responsibilities, such as caring for their part of the garden. They also seem very happy in the playground at lunchtime when they mix with the whole school. Most children are competent with meeting their own personal needs, such as dressing and undressing for physical education lessons. Overall, the children's personal and social skills are above the level expected by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Communication, language and literacy

60. Good teaching and relationships between all staff and the children build on the broad range of confidence in language that most children have when they join the nursery. The children make satisfactory progress and most achieve the early learning goals before the end of the Foundation Stage. During the inspection, it was evident that all children were developing confidence in speaking to an adult, within a group and when talking to a whole class. Their good vocabulary enables the children to answer the register in sentences and say something about the weather, such as 'I noticed that our whole car was covered in rain'. Most children in the nursery recognize and write their first name. They also write recognisable words. In the reception class, most children write both their first name and surname and their writing is neat. Although there are usually no children who start school able to read, all have the appropriate skills for enjoying books. The oldest children in the nursery are very interested in books. They retell stories and use good expression when describing the pictures, such as, 'Look he's going to take all those home!'. Many children are ready to read books with words. They know several sounds of letters to help them decipher words. In the reception class, all children are interested in books and listen carefully in order to answer questions on both fiction and non-fiction books. The teacher knows the children well and gives the more able children books that are suitably challenging. These children read most words confidently and with expression. They give good reasons why things happen such as, 'She likes that chair because it is soft.' However, there is a limited supply of good quality books and some of the books are rather worn. Parents generally give good support to develop their children's reading skills.

Mathematical development

61. Children make satisfactory progress in their mathematical development and are on course to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Most children know their colours. Many understand the mathematical language of 'bigger' and 'smaller.' In the nursery, they are encouraged to weigh clay so that it balances and are introduced to large numbers such as, 'We need 70 grams to make our eggs.' Most children count reliably to ten by the end of the nursery. In the reception class, many count reliably to 40. They recognise and match numbers to objects and add two numbers to make nine. These children also name different shapes, such as triangle, circle and square, as their teacher makes mathematical activities practical and interesting by linking them to art and games, such as by making circular pigs and rectangular dogs. The quality of teaching and learning in the nursery and the reception class is good.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

62. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good. They make at least satisfactory progress and most will exceed the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Their early experiences and good vocabulary are developed well by the teachers and their assistants and teaching is good in both classes. In the nursery, the children are attracted to the discovery table and are pleased to show that magnets attract and hold materials. They are keen to show that a magnifying glass makes the plastic spider 'look bigger.' The children understand that different materials have different qualities. They use the computer to 'drag' and 'drop' shapes and colours to complete their pictures. There is very good equipment in the nursery for making large models. Boys made complex models during the inspection and were very pleased with the results. Their skills could be improved if they worked to a plan. The school has these, but they were not used during the inspection. Girls need to be encouraged positively to undertake this activity. In the reception class, the children quickly understand that the bar chart describing their shoes and produced on the computer showed that most of them wore shoes with Velcro. They were then challenged to compare this with a line graph and 'pie chart.' They also monitor the rate of growth of plants and seeds they have planted and are encouraged to develop a good awareness of the world around them, when, for instance, building control towers or playing in the veterinary surgery.

Physical development

63. Children's physical skills are generally good. Good teaching ensures that pupils have ample opportunities to develop skills in the manipulation of tools and using construction toys and make

at least satisfactory progress in their learning. Teachers plan for the outside play area and, consequently, the children in the nursery display good physical skills. They ride tricycles and scooters competently and confidently. Several children skip through hoops and balance well. Although the children in the reception class do not usually have access to the dedicated play area they demonstrate good skills in the school hall during physical education lessons. They have a good understanding of space and are able to make several interesting wide and narrow shapes. They move around the hall using different parts of their body. In the nursery, the children's smaller movements, such as holding pencils and using scissors, are less well developed and are as expected for four-year-olds. Currently, many children are left-handed and several have an unusual pencil grip. They hold large crayons reasonably well and use scissors with some accuracy, but by the reception class their cutting skills are good, as, for instance, when cutting fine feathers. Almost all will exceed the goals for early learning before the end of the Foundation Stage.

Creative development

64. Children's creative skills are as to be expected for children of this age. They are improving as they are being successfully nurtured by the provision of a range of appropriate practical activities, including music that focuses upon the learning of a variety of songs, role-play in the 'home corner' veterinary surgery and painting and printing. The reception class teacher gives the children many opportunities to use their creative skills. She provides a good range of materials to help the children make interesting pictures. In the nursery, the children mix paints to make different colours. The teachers and their assistants in both classes value the children's own work and note how this is developing and teaching in both classes is good. For instance, a nursery child started a picture of her mother but because an interesting transparent wrapping paper was available the child used this for wings. Thus the picture became one of fairies, to the delight of both child and teacher.
65. The quality of teaching observed, both by class teachers and their assistants, was good overall and the children made good progress in all of the lessons seen. This is a significant improvement on the previous inspection. Samples of children's work show that they make satisfactory progress overall during their time in the Foundation Stage in all areas of learning. The teachers' planning is good, classes are well organized, the teachers have good relationships with their children and sensible routines that the children understand are established. The staff set a good example of calmness, care and co-operation. Teaching is best when there is a good range of practical activities that stimulate the children to be involved actively, ensuring that learning is play, fun and challenging. The teachers know their children well and keep good ongoing assessments of their progress, starting with the baseline assessment made when they first join the nursery. It is school policy not to move children on too quickly in their preparation for reading, but, at the time of the inspection, several children knew many sounds in words and were ready to move on from picture books. The pace of lessons and the making of assessments could be speeded up if teachers worked with small groups of children rather than on the one-to-one basis observed. Currently, teachers check that all the children undertake the directed activities, but in the nursery there is no clear system for checking that the children's free choice is varied and balanced.
66. Management of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, but the co-ordinator has not yet had the opportunity to develop a sufficient overview of both classes. The teacher in charge has helped to introduce the correct curriculum in the reception class, but is still acting more as the nursery co-ordinator. She does not, for instance, see the plans or observe the teaching in the other class, although these are monitored by way of whole school systems. The school is already aware of this and has identified it as priority for further development. The teachers' assistants are well trained and make a valuable contribution. A good team has been established. The children with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. The staff work hard to build positive relationships with the parents and provide homework matched to the children's individual needs. Consequently, the parents support their children's work well. Good relationships develop good attitudes to learning and the children are happy to work hard and to learn. Resources for the Foundation Stage are generally good, although the limited access for reception children to the enclosed play area is unsatisfactory.

ENGLISH

67. The results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests showed that the pupils achieved standards in reading and writing, by the age of seven, that were above the national average overall and in line with the average for pupils in broadly similar schools. These results represented good progress for the pupils concerned, although they were not as high as those of previous years. There were no significant differences between the results of boys and girls. Since the last inspection, results have continued to improve and in the previous year were in the top five per cent nationally. The school is confident that the present and subsequent year groups will again show high standards and this is confirmed by the standards seen in the school during the inspection. The progress made by pupils throughout the school is now at least good and sometimes very good. Progress in reading, said to be satisfactory in the previous inspection, is now consistently high and there is a wider range of reading material. Pupils with special educational needs now make impressive progress. The attitudes of pupils show improvement and are of a consistently very high quality. The quality of teaching has improved significantly and is now very good. These improvements are a direct result of improved co-ordination, monitoring, development and assessment procedures. The assessment and teaching of reading, seen to be a key issue at the last inspection, have improved impressively. Resources for reading have also improved. The subject guidance for the National Literacy Strategy provides improved support for teachers.
68. From the time they enter school with skills above those to be found nationally, most pupils gain confidence quickly in speaking in front of small and large groups of children and with adults. They usually listen attentively and with an excitement and eagerness to contribute their own thoughts and feelings in lessons, particularly pupils in Years 1 and 2. Many Year 2 pupils already understand the main points in discussions and talk relevantly, for instance, about the differences between hospitals now and at the time of the Crimean War. Most Year 4 pupils speak with confidence and a precise vocabulary to develop their ideas, when, for instance, discussing their observations of solids that act like liquids. By the time they are seven and nine, most year groups usually show standards well above those found nationally and use standard English increasingly well. Opportunities to develop the skills of speaking and listening are not developed in a progressive way through the school and brief guidelines based on the good practice that takes place would improve this.
69. Most of the pupils in each class read with fluency, accuracy, expression and with great enjoyment. They read a range of non-fiction texts, including plays and much poetry and have good opportunities to choose literature of their own, within a very useful structure set by the school. There are well-planned opportunities to develop research skills and the accessibility of the library is good, as is pupils' learning in this area. Book stock is satisfactory and constantly improving. Standards in reading are well above the level expected by the time pupils are seven and nine and the co-ordination of this element of the school's work is impressive and most effective. All teachers and assistants, guided by the co-ordinator, ensure that reading is a high priority and show much commitment. They motivate parents, often through their children, to hear reading each day if possible. The success of the teaching and learning of reading lies in the strategies taught, the motivation and enjoyment gained and in the ability of all the teachers to develop the pupils' literature and to teach comprehension well. All pupils take note of punctuation when they read, which aids their comprehension and writing and reading are linked usefully. Most Year 2 pupils are fluent, accurate and confident and use a range of phonic skills well. By the time pupils are seven, most read independently and with enjoyment, expression and understanding. The pupils in Year 4 are accurate, fluent and well motivated. Most use punctuation very well and can already select essential points when discussing a book and its characters. A significant number are able to use the text to provide reasons for their comments. There is much very good teaching of reading, individually, in groups and as a class during literacy lessons.
70. By the time they are seven, most pupils are likely to be well above the standards expected in writing. Already, many Year 2 pupils are able to answer questions by writing in a punctuated sentence, with correct capitals, generally spelt well, using increasingly complex words and in a joined handwriting style. Most of the present year write in a lively and interesting manner and choose interesting, descriptive words regularly. In each class, the pupils build on their key word

knowledge and use of phonics gained in Year 1 and before. Most Year 1 pupils wrote several sentences or more, in comic strip form. It was usually punctuated with capitals and full stops and speech bubbles were used effectively. A few write at a level well above that expected, with interest and good description and showing an understanding of verbs. In Year 4, by the time they are nine, most show levels that are very high, in a wide range of interesting writing activities. All enjoy the challenge of writing poetry. In an acrostic poem about owls, most use phrases such as 'Owls can turn their heads round and round, waiting for night to come again'. In work on the retelling of fairy stories, the oldest pupils show imagination and use of punctuation in 'For Sale' notices which carry messages such as, 'Green beanstalk planted in March. Growing strong. Giant load-bearing.' Most Year 4 pupils write stories in a mature and fluent style, spelt and punctuated accurately, with an awareness of setting and a suitable introduction. They develop the story of a 'Secret Passage' well to a climax and sustain interest by a lively use of words. Most Year 3 pupils show a growing use of story structure and interesting words and strategies to encourage more accurate spelling are having a positive impact. Extra support for pupils with additional needs in Years 2 and 3 enables small groups of pupils to consolidate and speed up their sound and word work and meet challenges set by their teacher. The Year 3 pupils are enabled to write stories independently and in sentences, with some use of adjectives and to read them back. Throughout the school, handwriting and presentation are generally good, but the sample of work shows variation of quality in each year group. Some of this is attributable to teacher absence, but not always. There is regular handwriting practice in each class, but this does not always transfer to other work. Some pupils in Year 1 do not always form their letters carefully. By the end of Year 2, a joined handwriting style is emerging for most pupils, fluent for some. Presentation is usually very good in Year 4 and most pupils are already writing with a fluent joined style in all work. They also show good ability to word process their work.

71. In spite of a lack of continuity recently in some classes, the quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Most lessons seen during the inspection were at least good and many were very good, with adventurous and imaginative teaching and a clear understanding of how children learn. Evidence from other sources, such as planning and work completed previously, confirms the judgement that the overall quality of teaching is very good. In the very best lessons, the teachers share the enjoyment of learning with the pupils and challenge them to be readers and writers. The use of teaching in groups according to prior attainment has a positive impact on the standards and progress of all pupils, including the higher attaining and special needs pupils. All are challenged appropriately according to their current needs. The planning and organisation of lessons are very good and the literacy strategy is taught very well. All of the teachers are specific about what they are going to teach, communicate this very well and have the knowledge and understanding to teach the basic skills required. The teachers have high expectations for all elements of pupils' work, the pace of lessons is swift, with perceptive questioning and the pupils apply themselves well immediately. So they become confident and well motivated independent learners, putting in maximum effort. All of the teachers form good relationships with their pupils and manage them well, establishing a positive working atmosphere. Occasionally, further strategies are needed for younger pupils to find words independently. The teachers check the understanding of their pupils during and at the end of the lesson and assess key words, spellings and phonic work very well, using this information to help plan future work. The marking of work is of consistently high quality, helping pupils to improve. Specific individual targets have been introduced recently for English and are shared with parents. They are useful in assessing and ensuring specific progress and motivating pupils. The work for lower attaining pupils is very carefully structured to their needs and provides maximum motivation. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent, as is at least some of the teaching and learning, which inspires pupils to meet the challenges set with maximum confidence. Useful homework is provided systematically in each class.
72. The response the pupils make in lessons is very high overall. They show themselves to be keen, enthusiastic and confident workers who are highly motivated and concentrate well. There are occasional indications that, where relationships between pupils and teacher are still being established, a few pupils are lacking in confidence to respond successfully. However, almost all pupils enjoy their work and most are challenged by it. They take pride in their achievements and put care and effort into their work. In each class, they are developing as independent learners.

They work together well and there are many times of wonder at words and books, at an element of teaching, at their own learning and at the feelings evoked by poetry.

73. Literacy is developed well in other subjects. In mathematics, for instance, Year 4 pupils explained the strategies used when working mentally. They also used text to discover a key word in a science lesson about materials. They were also able to research in the school library, using the Dewey classification to find other books. Research skills are used well in geography and history as pupils find out more about the topics they are studying. In religious education, pupils in Year 2 wrote thoughtfully about how the Kings felt when visiting the baby in Bethlehem. Design and technology processes are recorded systematically and groups discuss their roles in the work. Computers are used for research activities and word processing.
74. English is given a high priority in the school. There is a commitment to high standards and the management of the subject is excellent. Monitoring and tracking procedures are well established and the school is constantly evaluating and improving its practice. The support provided for members of staff by the co-ordinator is impressive. The systems highlight any strengths and weaknesses in the subject and these are acted upon immediately. The subject is well resourced. The value added to the pupils' learning is clear and very well documented. There is much very good assessment of where children have reached in their learning. This stems from the understanding that all staff have of their pupils' needs, the records of skills achieved in reading and writing and the close monitoring of progress.

MATHEMATICS

75. The standards in mathematics observed during the week of the inspection were consistently well above average compared with those expected from most seven and nine-year-olds. The achievement of all groups of pupils is good. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress. All pupils benefit from the provision that takes place from Year 2 onwards for the teaching of mathematics in groups formed on the basis of prior attainment in the subject. A high proportion of higher attaining pupils and those of average attainment for this school are attaining levels above national expectations. Lower attaining pupils are broadly in line with national expectations, so attainment at the end of Years 2 and 4 is judged to be well above average overall. This represents a good level of improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be above average. Current standards also reflect the upward trend in National Curriculum test results, which were previously reaching levels well above the national average. The results of the 2001 cohort, which were in line with the national average but well below the average for similar schools, were commendable for the pupils concerned but were not typical of the normal standards now being achieved in the school.
76. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding of all aspects of mathematics. Their numeracy skills are well advanced and most pupils have a quick and accurate recall of simple multiplication bonds. Pupils link their knowledge and understanding of multiplication competently to the division of numbers. This is a skill that might be expected from older or more able pupils of this age. They recognise odd and even numbers and work out quickly whether larger numbers are odd or even by looking at the last digit. They have a good understanding of place value in numbers up to 1000 and they use this well in working out sequences. They use addition and subtraction competently and when solving problems. Pupils develop a good knowledge of shapes in both two and three dimensions. They identify right angles clearly and name a good range of shapes according to the number of sides and angles. They develop their knowledge and understanding of shape into working with reflections in symmetry and show a good understanding of balance in shape. The proportion of pupils working at levels either at or above the nationally expected level means that attainment is well above average.
77. By Year 4, pupils' knowledge and understanding of number are very good. Pupils can calculate, using all four operations, with numbers to two decimal places and they apply these skills well when solving problems. Higher attaining pupils have built a very secure knowledge and understanding of number and they investigate factors of numbers very well. They develop good strategies for finding the complete list of factors of numbers such as 144. They start with a pair

and then, through their own initiative, use the method of doubling and halving to find out the rest of the pairs of factors. Some can use their list of pairs of factors of 72, for example, to find the list of factors of 720. This illustrates their good knowledge and understanding of place value in number.

78. By the time they leave the school, pupils have a thorough understanding of shape and angle. They can draw and measure angles to the nearest degree and have a very good knowledge of the properties of different triangles and quadrilaterals for their age. Pupils are able to find the perimeters of shapes by counting the units around the outside. Their good knowledge of the properties of shape and angle was seen in information and communication technology lessons in both Year 2 classes when they used logo commands to estimate distances and angle to move a frog around a pond and in Year 4 when they drew some complicated shapes. Whilst working across the mathematics and numeracy curriculum, pupils show that they have very good skills in using and applying their knowledge and understanding to solve problems and work out strategies to answer questions.
79. There are examples of good levels of numeracy in other subjects. Pupils use graphs to display their findings in science, measure accurately in design and technology and show good knowledge and understanding of shape and angle in information and communication technology and in studying modern art.
80. Pupils work hard at mathematics throughout the school. They enjoy the challenges set by their teachers and find mathematics stimulating and enjoyable. They behave well in lessons and pay full attention to their teachers at all times. Even when the pace of the lesson and the rate at which new ideas are being introduced are rapid, their levels of concentration enable them to keep up with the teacher. This has a positive impact on the quality of learning. Pupils work well together and share ideas to good effect.
81. The quality of teaching is good and often very good. The quality of teaching seen during the week of the inspection was never less than satisfactory and an excellent lesson was seen with Year 4 pupils. The quality of teaching has been at least maintained since the previous inspection, when the teaching of mathematics was a strength throughout the school. Opening activities are effective at focusing on the main learning objectives of lessons and in directing pupils' attention appropriately. Lesson planning is very good. The teachers' very good use of day-to-day assessment ensures that activities meet the requirements of the full attainment range in each class successfully. These also show the high expectations that teachers have of their pupils. They move pupils on at a quick pace whilst ensuring that pupils are capable of taking the next step. This ensures that pupils of all attainment levels achieve well. A wide variety of methods, such as whole class discussion, group work and individual tasks are used to suit the activity in different parts of the lesson. Teachers have good subject knowledge and explain procedures and how to solve questions confidently and clearly. Behaviour management techniques are good, with, for instance, teachers always settling classes before talking to them.
82. Curriculum co-ordination is satisfactory. The curriculum subject leader is new to the role and has other significant responsibilities. However, he has clear plans and intends to produce a subject development plan for mathematics. Assessment procedures provide good information about the progress pupils are making and this data is used well to ensure that all achieve highly. The curriculum is good. It is based on the local education authority's interpretation of the National Numeracy Strategy and also provides a good balance of other aspects of mathematics, such as using and applying mathematics, shape, space and measure and handling data. Good use is made of ICT. Resources are good and are used effectively by the teachers.

SCIENCE

83. The teachers' assessments of the number of pupils aged seven attaining Level 2 in 2001 were very high when compared with national figures and the number of pupils gaining Level 3 was in line with the average. Compared with previous results, this represented less pupils attaining the higher grade, but was an indication of the nature of the year group, rather than a change in the overall upward trend in the subject. There is no significant difference in the results of girls and boys. Since the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be above average for pupils aged seven

and by the time pupils left the school, there has been continuing improvement in the standards achieved. The present inspection confirms the school's judgement that standards this year in Years 2 and 4 are well above the national expectation. The subject has continued to develop well since the last inspection and the standards achieved have improved significantly.

84. By the time they leave the school, it is clear that pupils have a very good understanding of the various elements of the science curriculum and are making good progress in the investigative element of the subject. Pupils throughout the school enjoy the investigative and practical aspects, which bring it alive for them. They cooperate very well with each other, sharing ideas and resources and are very well motivated. The attainment of older pupils was typified by a lesson in which pupils in Year 4 explored the features of several substances, such as sand and salt, which they had identified as having some of the features of liquids. They recorded their observations with great care, co-operated very well in their groups and showed absolute delight when seeing the substances under a microscope for the first time. Pupils in Year 2, in their continuing work on electrical circuits, showed the ability to set up circuits with a variety of features, including simple switches and to discuss what they were doing, using appropriate vocabulary. When their bulbs grew brighter because of the inclusion of extra batteries in the circuit, they were equally thrilled and were able to suggest sensible reasons why this had happened. Younger pupils are encouraged to explore the world around them and to ask questions about how it is made and how it affects them, as for instance in their termly visits to Flitwick Wood to note the features of this type of habitat in the different seasons. Since pupils of all ages approach the subject through investigation, they regard this as the normal way of working in science and by the time they leave the school, are able to make realistic predictions about the likely outcomes of their investigations, showing very good knowledge of the necessary vocabulary and recording their observations with care. Most already show a good understanding of how to conduct a scientific investigation and ensure that their testing is fair. The quality of the pupils' language skills as they go through the school means that they enjoy discussing their findings with others and drawing conclusions based on the evidence they have gathered. They are able to describe with care what they have observed, to write clearly about what they are learning and to present their findings well.
85. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. It is based firmly on scientific investigation, to which the pupils respond well and through which they learn effectively. Above all, the teachers make science exciting. They plan interesting and relevant learning activities, in which the objectives are always clear and are sometimes shared with the pupils. There is a good match between the activities provided and the various levels of ability within each class. The teachers' subject knowledge is good and often very good. Almost all make good use of questioning to challenge the pupils to think. They usually check their pupils' existing understanding before moving further into a topic and make good use of summary sessions to reinforce learning. In the best lessons, such as the investigation of various solids in Year 4, work on circuits in Year 2 and an adventurous exploration of hamsters' preferred foods in Year 1, learning is very well structured and all pupils are challenged to learn at an appropriate level. As a result, the pupils are totally absorbed in the completion of their work and make clear gains in their learning. This happens particularly where the teachers have sufficient confidence to allow the pupils the freedom to investigate. Less effective learning was seen in a Year 4 lesson, however, where a potentially exciting investigation into how heat changes everyday substances, such as chocolate or candle-wax, was presented only as a demonstration.
86. Since the teachers make science an interesting and often challenging activity, the pupils' attitudes to their work are very good. Consequently, pupils of all attainment levels, including those with special educational needs and the higher attainers, make good progress in their learning. The pupils enjoy the work they are doing and make the most of the interesting opportunities provided for them. They work well together and share resources sensibly. They record work in a variety of ways. At present, limited use is made of information and communication technology to aid this and the possibilities provided by the school's new facilities for ICT have not yet been explored fully. All pupils are encouraged to develop useful questioning skills, which are a basis for good investigative work. They make good gains in their observational skills and are encouraged throughout the school to become familiar with and use the appropriate vocabulary. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' personal development as they explore the world and

delight in discovery. The development of the pupils' skills in literacy is supported by the regular opportunities provided for the recording of investigations. There are occasional examples of how pupils' work in literacy can be used to benefit their work in science, as when pupils in Year 1 wrote about things they had tasted, but more development of such links is possible. The subject also contributes to the development of pupils' skills in numeracy through the recording, analysis and presentation of information.

87. The co-ordinator is very experienced, has a clear idea of the development needs of the subject and undertakes the regular monitoring of teachers' planning and pupils' work. Monitoring of teaching has also taken place. The scheme of work, based on the local authority's scheme, ensures the necessary coverage of the National Curriculum and is adapted by teachers for their classes. Planning is thorough and opportunities for assessment are identified clearly. They are to be augmented by the termly moderation of investigative tasks, in a well-targeted effort to increase still further levels of attainment in this aspect of the subject. The subject is well resourced and good use is made of the locality and of visits further afield. Health and safety issues are addressed well.

ART AND DESIGN

88. The standards of work achieved by the time pupils are seven and nine are above the level expected nationally. The high standards of the previous inspection have generally been maintained, although the demands of other aspects of the National Curriculum do not make it easy within the time allocation available. Teaching has improved and is now generally good and the pupils overall, including those with special educational needs and the higher attaining pupils, make consistently good progress. The arrangements for teaching art as a whole class topic are working well and, within this structure, ample opportunities are provided for learning at different levels and for individual creativity.
89. Although only two lessons were seen, one in each key stage, it is clear from the sample of work and other evidence that, by the age of seven, the pupils show confidence, increasing attention to detail and knowledge of colour, line and tone in their art work. For example, in a group picture of pansies in a bowl, made up of individual flowers, Year 1 pupils learn how to achieve the desired effect by mixing paint to obtain a varying range of shades of pink and red. Their paintings of trees show good understanding of colour and effective use of brushes and other art tools. The pupils' appreciation of art is developed well in Year 2 in impressive work in the style of Monet. Year 3 pupils each make their own original three-dimensional sculpture from paper, wire or stone successfully and are happy and proud of the outcome. It is clear that, by the age of nine, pupils are beginning to explore their own ideas creatively, gaining confidence in doing so and taking great delight in their efforts, as when making intricate découpage calendars of space landscapes, or in the imaginative carnival masks, produced by Year 3 pupils, which show an effective knowledge of texture. Throughout the school, the pupils choose from a wide range of media to express their feelings and use pastels, crayons, charcoal, natural and other materials and a range of textiles, with skill. They have opportunities to build up a true appreciation of art and show an appreciation of a wide variety of artistic styles. Teachers develop this awareness systematically, with work such as that in Year 3 about Mondrian and in the opportunities provided for pupils to reflect and make their own sculptures by arranging shells on slate.
90. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with examples, in both key stages, of very good teaching, where high quality planning has produced work of a high standard and developed an appreciation of art and artists. The teachers have clear ideas about what they want the pupils to understand to develop their appreciation of art techniques and their making and designing skills. Lessons are taught knowledgeably and perceptive questioning assesses what the pupils know and develops both their understanding and their confidence in the techniques taught. All pupils learn much about art, because skills and techniques are taught thoroughly and time is used effectively so that they can practise and develop them. In a Year 2 lesson, for instance, the pupils practise the skills in small steps, with regular feedback from the teacher and this is very effective. This leads to the pupils' showing attention to detail in their work from an early age. Their overall attitudes appear to be at least good and, because of this and of the way in which the teachers are successful in encouraging all pupils to show imagination in their work, they are confident in being creative. One Year 3 pupil, working in a new medium, explained that she 'just did her own thing, with her own ideas'. In both lessons seen, the teachers were able to harness the pupils' natural enthusiasm and abilities and ensure that they understood that the art process was the important aspect. The pupils are highly motivated and work with concentration. The teachers stimulate the pupils' imagination, encourage close observational skills and set high expectations for work and attitudes. A precise art vocabulary is taught well. There are opportunities for thinking and reflection and cultural and multicultural elements are developed well. Resources, including ICT, are used well, as in Year 3 starry night pictures. The local art loan service materials are used to good effect. Art helps in the development of knowledge and understanding in subjects such as history and geography, as shown in carefully detailed pictures of Tudor houses in Year 2 and in Caribbean posters in Year 3.
91. The subject has been co-ordinated well, although the co-ordinator is currently absent. Planning is monitored and the teachers are well supported in their work. Consequently, teaching and learning have improved. The teachers continue to display work to great effect and the whole school benefits from the pleasant environment this helps to create. The range of artists studied has been

extended since the last inspection and now includes Russian and African art and, therefore, makes a greater contribution to multicultural development than previously. There is a clear overview of needs in art. Although it has not been possible to monitor teaching, useful samples of work are kept from each class. Some of these are framed and exhibited throughout the school in the form of an attractive art gallery, valued by children and adults. At present, the sketchbooks in some Key Stage 2 classes have limited use. The use of these as an assessment tool could be extended. There are plans to record the pupils' progress more consistently in each class in a newly developed way. Resources are good and are used well and the school is always looking to make further purchases to support effective learning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

92. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in design and technology and standards at the end of Year 2 and in Year 4 are above those expected for pupils of the same age. This represents an improvement since the last inspection.
93. The pupils understand that design and technology is about developing ideas for making things and that they make models as well as other objects for a purpose. Pupils' ability to generate and communicate ideas for making things improves appropriately over time. They progress well to learning to modify ideas when necessary and to evaluate the end product against original intentions. As they get older, the pupils develop their skills through experimenting with different ways of cutting, shaping and joining components. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop useful design skills. They share ideas for making things and communicate through simple drawings. They evaluate the finished product by seeing whether it fits the purpose and compare it with their original intentions. Pupils in Year 1 have designed and made a playground with different structures for swings and slides. They made an evaluation of what they found easy or difficult, the most difficult part being the slide. They have also produced Red Riding Hood books, with moving features for aspects of the story.
94. In the Year 2 classes, pupils learn about a winding mechanism by investigation. This is part of a larger project in which they make a model of a well. Pupils looked at the patterns in a brick wall and the colours of the bricks. They experimented with paints to get the best colour and made paintings of the well walls and the tiled roof. They used a variety of methods to join the parts to construct the well, the roof and the winding mechanism to raise and lower the bucket. The finished product is of good quality and because of its complexity and the scale of the whole project, standards are above those expected for seven-year-olds. Similarly, all pupils in Year 3 have built their own powered buggies, showing considerable skill and great enthusiasm in their production and in the explanation and evaluation of their designs.
95. This good progress continues through to Year 4, where pupils make large-scale models of dragons, using 'junk' materials and with mouths that open and shut using pneumatics. Each of the elements of the design and technology curriculum, planning, designing, choosing materials, making prototypes, making, finishing and evaluating is well represented in this project and the pupils are encouraged to think of the quality of finish throughout the process. The scale of the project exemplifies design and technology work in the school and it is this aspect that raises standards above those that are typical of this age group.
96. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils enjoy design and technology, are interested and behave well. This is a result of the good teaching seen throughout the inspection week. The teachers are knowledgeable and choose activities that help pupils understand the reasons for the design of things. For example, in Year 2, pupils looked at ways of joining the glove to the head of a hand puppet. In the best lessons, teachers respect pupils' ideas and applaud creativity. Tasks are challenging and provide good opportunities for independent and collaborative work, to which pupils respond with enthusiasm.
97. Design and technology makes an important contribution to the development of pupils' social skills. They are enabled to work in teams, to make decisions and solve problems. Good opportunities also exist for employing literacy and numeracy skills in the exchange of ideas, evaluation of products and in measuring components. The school has a scheme of work based on national

guidelines. There is a good range of tools and equipment, all of which are suitable for use by pupils of this age and good use is made of ICT. Curriculum co-ordination is good, supports the good quality provision and leads to good standards.

GEOGRAPHY

98. Levels of attainment by the time pupils are nine are above those expected nationally, as are those attained by pupils at the age of seven. This indicates that standards in the subject have been at least maintained since the time of the last inspection. Although it was only possible in the present inspection to observe one lesson, for younger pupils, it is clear from planning, work already completed and informal discussion that pupils of all attainment levels, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress in their learning. By the time they are nine, the pupils have a good understanding of their own locality, of other localities in this country and in other parts of the world, such as the Caribbean. They develop an appreciation of the significance of key physical features, such as islands, of which they make their own three-dimensional examples and their map work and enquiry skills at this age are developing well. At the age of seven, the pupils are already gaining a sound awareness of the area in which they live and are beginning to identify some of the similarities and differences between it and other areas, such as the neighbouring village of Steppingley. They are familiar with simple maps and plans.
99. The constant emphasis throughout the school on the use of the correct geographical vocabulary means that most pupils develop a good awareness of the language needed to describe different localities. From their early years in the school, all pupils become familiar with basic ideas about maps. In Year 1, they begin to identify particular physical features of the locality, as they observe carefully different types of houses, roads and footpaths and are introduced to simple mapping skills by, for instance, drawing plans of the school. They also begin to explore the changes in the seasons and to keep their own records of the weather. Pupils in Year 2 continue to develop their awareness of their own locality as they undertake a detailed study of Flitwick. They begin to appreciate the nature of the information contained in maps as they compare aerial photographs of the school and its surroundings with outline maps of the area. During Years 3 and 4, pupils continue to develop their familiarity with maps, whilst pursuing a series of geography units and develop an awareness of the physical and human features of differing regions. The topics covered throughout the school help to build up the pupils' knowledge of their own surroundings and of other areas, countries and cultures, as well as providing opportunities for them to practise their skills. Recent work in Year 3 on the Caribbean, for example, has helped them to appreciate the similarities and differences between where they live and a village in Jamaica. In Year 4, they begin to develop further their awareness of the environment and also consider ways in which it is polluted. Good use is made of the school's own locality and clear progress is seen across the year groups in the pupils' awareness of the world around them and of how aspects of it might be improved.
100. The standard of teaching and learning is good in both key stages. The teachers' subject knowledge throughout the school is good. The teachers use questioning well and encourage pupils to use the correct language in their work. Lessons are very well planned and the pupils respond very well to the opportunities provided, showing a lively interest in what they are doing. They work well together and show very good attitudes. The teachers' classroom management is good and they make good use of the time available. The subject makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills through the opportunities it provides for research and for different sorts of writing. The school is making some use of the possibilities of teaching much of the content of the geography syllabus through literacy sessions to the mutual benefit of both subjects. The pupils' development of numeracy is supported by activities in geography, such as the recording of weather information and the findings of a litter survey. Some use is made of information and communication technology, in, for instance, research activities, but this is an area for further development now that the school's computer suite is established. Planning for the subject is now more thorough, with good arrangements for the full capability range in each class.
101. The scheme of work provides a clear programme for the subject and ensures that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. The pupils' progress in some aspects of the subject is

assessed at the end of units of work, but only limited recording is made of their progress in the development of geographical skills. There is at present no co-ordinator for the subject because of the long-term absence of a member of staff. Although the headteacher and key stage co-ordinators maintain general oversight of the subject, there is at present little development taking place. The topics studied are resourced well and good use is also made of loan services. Very good use is made of the locality and of visits further afield, such as the residential visit that takes place each year for older pupils.

HISTORY

102. Levels of achievement are above national expectations by the time pupils leave the school and at the age of seven. There is ample evidence from lessons observed, planning and work already completed that, as pupils go through the school, they make good progress overall in the development of historical skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils throughout the school enjoy history, with many indications in work on, for example, the Romans and the Aztecs that they are making good gains in knowledge of the periods being studied. They begin to develop a good understanding of the key people and significant events that have shaped history. In these and other topics, they learn to identify similarities and differences between their life now and life in past times and they enjoy the opportunity to explore many of their own ideas and values. The work produced by older pupils shows good levels of knowledge overall and good development of historical skills. Pupils throughout the school are introduced carefully to a range of historical sources and are encouraged to ask questions about the evidence they provide and about its reliability. Pupils in Year 1, for instance, are already familiar with the detective work that goes into the study of history and have been introduced to some of the appropriate vocabulary for the subject. Their ideas of 'now' and 'then' and of how things change over time are stimulated by the work they are doing currently about themselves and their families. They enjoy the opportunity to consider the family history of parents and grandparents and to think about things they used when they were babies. As they go through the school, pupils of all attainment levels, including those with special educational needs, make good progress as they become used to dealing with a variety of historical sources. All of the historical topics the pupils study are carefully linked to a clear timeline for the period and the pupils show a developing sense of chronology. Older pupils, for example, in their study of Britain since the 1930s and their current work on the Second World War, show a good grasp of how life in this country has changed over comparatively recent decades and can locate key events and people on their timeline.
103. Throughout the school, work in history is linked well to other areas of the curriculum, including geography and art. The work produced by pupils as a result of their studies is well displayed, helping to create an interesting and stimulating learning environment and celebrating good work. The subject makes a good contribution to the development of literacy through, for instance, opportunities for empathetic and extended writing. Older pupils are able to engage in independent study or research activities of the kind that will extend learning, particularly for the higher attaining pupils. They enjoy gathering information from the books available, or through their access to CD-ROMs and the Internet and the finished work they produce is often very good. Good opportunities have been taken to use literacy sessions as a vehicle for the delivery of historical knowledge, through, for instance, the use of non-fiction books related to topics in the history syllabus. Pupils throughout the school are encouraged to develop a good awareness of the appropriate vocabulary for historical study and the subject also makes a good contribution to their social and cultural awareness.
104. It is clear from all the evidence available that the quality of teaching is good. Consequently, the quality of learning throughout the school is also good. The teachers' subject knowledge is good and often very good and they convey well to pupils their own enthusiasm for the topics being studied. The pupils respond well, gaining considerable pleasure in the work they do and enjoying the things they learn about the past. Good use is made of questioning and of the time available. Younger pupils, in particular, enjoy the dramatic telling of the stories and events they are learning about, as when Year 2 pupils were fascinated by the account of what life was like in a hospital in the Crimea, showing good levels of language skills as they compared that with their own knowledge of modern hospitals. The teachers' classroom management is good and the learning

experiences provided are very well planned. Planning for the subject is good. The use and adaptation of the national scheme of work is supported by the school's own policy. Regular assessment of historical knowledge takes place, but there is at present only limited recording of the progress pupils make in the development of historical skills. The co-ordinator is absent at present, but general oversight of the subject is maintained by the headteacher and the key stage co-ordinators. The subject is resourced well and good use is made of loan services. Good use is made of the locality and of visits to places of historical interest, such as the Royal Air Force museum. Good use is also made of visitors, such as the Roman soldier who helps to bring history alive. The subject has continued to develop appropriately since the previous inspection in, for instance, the improvement in the quality of planning and standards have been at least maintained by the time pupils leave the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

105. Standards are higher than those at the time of the last inspection and are clearly above the levels expected for pupils of Years 2 and 4, with many pupils well above those levels. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher attainers, achieve well. The provision of a computer suite and training for all staff, which has raised the level of expertise, has had a significant impact on pupils' learning.
106. By the time they are seven, most pupils access the relevant systems, understand that a variety of information can be entered and stored on the computer and save and print their work. They enter and organise text, using the shift key to produce capital letters and are becoming familiar with the positions of letters and numbers on the keyboard. They use an appropriate art program to produce simple designs and pictures. They are also competent with a logo program in which they give a series of commands to move a frog from one lily pad to another to move through the pond. Pupils grasp these ideas quickly and soon become competent. This activity is typical of those for older pupils and, therefore, attainment is above expectations.
107. By the end of Year 4, pupils use a variety of font styles and sizes in the presentation of their texts and can combine appropriate text with pictures, using cut and paste techniques well. In Years 3 and 4, they are very competent in saving and printing their work. Year 4 pupils use logo commands to draw some complex shapes, through the use of a more difficult repeat command. They access the Internet and search through the local education authority's web site for information. Discussions with Year 4 pupils indicate that they are able to highlight text on a web page, download this into text and then edit. This is a skill typical of older pupils.
108. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school, better than at the time of the previous inspection. The teachers plan lessons well and they explain and model tasks clearly on the classroom computers. Teachers make good use of their timetabled lessons in the computer suite to raise the skills of the pupils and also ensure that the use of the computers available in each classroom is well planned. Pupils are expected to work well together in pairs when this is appropriate and they generally do this well. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology in support of other lessons, with, for example, good research activities undertaken in science, geography and history and useful word-processing skills developed in some religious education tasks.
109. The ICT curriculum is broad and balanced and is based on a national scheme. The co-ordinator is well organised and has worked well with other members of the senior management team to develop staff training and confidence. Resources have been improved and are now very good, with an attractive information and communication technology suite and at least two compatible computers in each classroom. The school has worked hard and successfully to improve aspects of the subject provision since the last inspection.

MUSIC

110. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, the standard of their work in music is broadly in line with the levels expected nationally for pupils of this age, as it is at the end of Year 2. This indicates levels of attainment that are similar to those at the time of the previous inspection and confirms that pupils continue to make satisfactory progress overall through the school.
111. In class, pupils in both key stages sing in tune and rhythmically. They make their singing louder and softer and their articulation is clear. This skill, however, is not always transferred to whole school assemblies, where singing is sometimes quiet and less confident. However, all Year 2 pupils learn to play the ocarina and they did so in assembly competently and steadily. The pupils read the music and follow the teacher's directions well. All pupils also listen carefully in assemblies to the music of famous composers.
112. Year 1 pupils learn new songs quickly and can name a variety of instruments, such as the tambourine. They tap out the rhythm of a nursery rhyme and others listen very carefully to identify the song, although several pupils find this very difficult. In Year 2, pupils work together to record their own notation and all understand that pictures can represent sounds. In Years 3 and 4, all pupils learn to play the recorder. Most know that minims represent two beats and a few pupils recognize quavers. By the end of a lesson in Year 3, all pupils are able to use the correct terminology. At the start of the lesson, a few pupils pointed out to the teacher that the musical score had a repeat in it.
113. The quality of teaching and learning seen is satisfactory overall and is sometimes good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teachers in Key Stage 1 find it difficult to sustain the pupils' interest for lessons that are an hour long. All teachers plan their lessons well and a few teachers have good subject knowledge, but several lack confidence in the subject. There are good relationships between the teachers and pupils and teachers are able to give clear indications of how pupils can improve their performance. In the best lessons, the teachers share their enthusiasm and enjoyment of the subject and provide much praise and encouragement. Pupils with special educational needs have their talents in music recognised and are included in all activities.
114. Many pupils in Years 3 and 4 have instrumental tuition. This provides a valuable opportunity for pupils to develop their skills with violin, cello, guitar or keyboard. Both boys and girls are offered these lessons, but most places are usually taken by girls. These lessons are taken by visiting specialist teachers and the pupils make good progress and enjoy playing. Each year, the oldest pupils take part in a 'leavers' concert'. This is well attended by parents and the quality of music and dance evident in last year's concert was particularly good. The school is also involved in a local arts festival.
115. The curriculum is satisfactory and the teachers are supported by a commercial scheme of work that provides much lesson material on CDs. This is helpful, particularly where teachers' subject expertise is limited. The school does not currently have a music co-ordinator to provide support, but a new teacher has recently been appointed to take on this responsibility. The subject is well resourced and benefits particularly from the provision of a pleasant music room that is also the ICT suite.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

116. Standards by the time pupils are seven and nine are above national expectations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. At the time of the previous inspection, physical education was a strength of the school and this has been maintained.
117. By the end of Year 2, pupils are competent in moving confidently around the hall, running, skipping and hopping and showing suitable awareness of space and of other pupils. They perform a range of gymnastic movements successfully, including jumps, rolls, stretches and balances and they develop these movements readily both on the floor and on an appropriate range of apparatus. They develop actions and balances into more complex movements and shapes. In Year 3, pupils introduce good levels of control into their movements, by accelerating and slowing down their

movement. They develop interesting sequences that show that their physical skills are better than those expected from most seven-year-olds.

118. Pupils in Year 2 and above are taught to swim at the nearby leisure centre. Their attainment in this aspect of physical education is well above expectations, as most pupils reach the expected Year 6 standards well before they leave the school at the end of Year 4. In team games, such as football and netball, standards are also above the level expected.
119. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Some very good teaching was seen in Year 2. The teachers plan well and they make suitable use of an appropriate range of resources to develop pupils' skills. Clear instruction and demonstration are provided, allowing all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make good gains in their skills. Teachers have good subject knowledge and make suitable demands of the pupils' performance. Teachers often use pupils to demonstrate good performance and the chance is often taken to discuss the quality of their work. This helps pupils identify the areas where they might improve themselves. The teachers show good behaviour management skills and achieve good standards of behaviour in their lessons. Pupils usually join in appropriately, enjoying themselves and making a good, physical effort. The pace of lessons is generally brisk. Teachers provide help and support to pupils in all aspects of their work and, in particular, they emphasise the need for safety. In turn, pupils generally show good attitudes, behave well overall and work well alone and with a partner or group.
120. The school has a good scheme of work, based on a commercial scheme and all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered suitably. The co-ordinator is new to the post and is enthusiastic. She has already assessed where the development areas are and she is currently developing provision for dance. Resources are good overall, although some of the heavy wooden benches are difficult for smaller pupils to move. Physical education is supported well by the very good provision for extra-curricular activities, including netball and football practice and the opportunity for regular competitive games in these sports.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

121. Standards of attainment by the time pupils are seven and nine are above the levels expected by the local education authority's agreed syllabus. By the time they are nine, many pupils are beginning to acquire an appreciation of some of the stories, practices and beliefs of Christianity and the other principal religions of Britain, such as Islam and Judaism and are becoming familiar with some of the festivals celebrated by these religions. They are beginning to understand what it means to take a religion seriously. For instance, pupils in Year 4 show a good understanding of the symbolism of the Jewish Seder meal in their detailed and carefully labelled drawings completed previously.
122. Good work is taking place in all year groups in developing the pupils' ability to reflect on what they are learning and to respond thoughtfully to the ideas and experiences they are encountering. This reflective response was evident, for example, in a lesson in Year 2 about 'What makes a good friend?' The pupils thought carefully and considered the story of the man with four friends and the qualities of friendship and decided that they had shown care, love and support to help him. Younger pupils are introduced to a range of stories and practices from the various traditions, the knowledge of which they build on as they go through the school. They develop a good awareness of themselves and the world around them and show sensitivity to the needs and beliefs of others. The pupils are often encouraged to relate what they are learning to their own feelings and experiences, as in Year 3, when role-plays, developed about the story of the Good Samaritan and performed for the whole class, showed both good understanding of the story's meaning and of how it related to the pupils.
123. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs and the higher attainers, usually make good progress and are beginning to develop a good awareness of some of the people and practices of the various religious traditions. Because of the support they receive and the careful planning of learning activities, there is clear development in the religious education

skills, knowledge and understanding, on which the pupils can build as they begin to form their own ideas.

124. The quality of teaching and learning is generally good throughout the school and the teachers' subject knowledge is usually good. In lessons their questioning encourages the pupils to reason and reflect. They handle the pupils' questions sensitively, encourage an open approach to the topics studied and use a wide range of interesting activities. The use and display of artefacts help to explore the celebrations of religious groups, such as at Chinese New Year. Stories are used well to develop the pupils' religious understanding, as when, in Year 1, pupils heard about the calling of the disciples. Work in books records carefully the concepts that are being developed, such as in Year 4 work on Hanukkah. The teachers' planned assessments are used effectively. The pupils' attitudes to their work are good. They respond well to the learning opportunities provided, show interest and are eager to contribute ideas, as, for instance, in Year 2, about their friends, where they are considerate of others and understand that words can often hurt more than actions. Pupils of all age groups show a willingness to be open-minded and to value the beliefs of others and the teachers show sensitivity in encouraging the pupils to be aware of differing faiths. Most pupils in the school are developing the ability to share important feelings with their teachers and other members of the class.
125. The teachers are well supported by the co-ordinator and thorough planning ensures that the subject meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Resources for the topics being studied are adequate because of the co-operative use made by teachers and visits and visitors are used well. Useful visits are made to local churches and a range of other visitors help to show the importance of religion. The subject provides good support to the development of pupils' literacy, through, for example, using speaking and listening skills in discussion and role-play and in the use of creative writing. It clearly makes a substantial contribution to their spiritual and cultural development. Some use is being made of ICT, mainly for word-processing. Good use is made of displays in classrooms and corridors to create a positive atmosphere for learning by showing pupils' work and ensuring they are aware of the colour and variety of living religions.