

INSPECTION REPORT

EDITH CAVELL LOWER SCHOOL

Bedford

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109433

Headteacher: Mrs L Holdsworth

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Catlin
21685

Dates of inspection: 15 - 17 April 2002

Inspection number: 195813

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Lower
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Manton Lane Bedford Bedfordshire
Postcode:	MK41 7NH
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs H Mitchell
Date of previous inspection:	2 June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21685	Jenny Catlin	Registered inspector	Foundation stage Mathematics	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school managed? What should the school do to improve further?
14756	John Lovell	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23054	Graham Johnson	Team inspector	English as an additional language English Geography History Religious education	
28065	Alex Miller	Team Inspector	Equal opportunities Design and technology Physical education Science	
22274	Vera Rogers	Team inspector	Special educational needs Autistic support facility Art and design Information and communication technology Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Edith Cavell Lower School has 215 pupils on roll and is about the same size as other schools of this type. Pupils come from a wide variety of backgrounds and attainment on entry to the school is slightly below that expected for children. There are over 27 per cent of pupils with English as an additional language and of these almost 4 per cent are at an early stage of English language acquisition. This figure is higher than that found nationally. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is over 13 per cent; this is broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, including statements, over 27 per cent, is above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school that provides a caring, supportive and secure learning environment for its pupils. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are very good and their personal development and relationships are also very good. Standards of attainment are rising across the school and most pupils make at least good and often very good progress. The school is successful in achieving its aim of meeting the needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs. As a result, all pupils achieve well and make good progress during their time in the school. The quality of teaching is good overall with some very good features. The leadership and management by the headteacher and key members of staff are good overall. The slightly below average attainment on entry to the school, the overall good progress of pupils in the Foundation Stage and both key stages, the improvements in the school since the previous inspection, the higher proportion of good teaching and the school's average expenditure per pupil, when taken together, indicate that value for money is good.

What the school does well

- Very good provision in the Foundation Stage which helps children to get off to a good start.
- Above average reading, and speaking and listening skills by age seven.
- The above average standards in literacy, numeracy and religious education by the end of Year 4.
- Improved overall attainment and progress in science across the school.
- Teaching is good and therefore pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Leadership by the headteacher is very good.
- There is a high priority given to pupils' welfare and their attitudes to school and their behaviour are very good.
- Children enjoy very good relationships as a result of the very good provision for pupils' social and moral development.
- The very good parental involvement in the work of the school.

What could be improved

- The learning of geographical and historical skills and the use of information and communication technology.
- Regular access to outdoor play for children in the reception classes.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1997. It has made good progress since then and the areas for development identified at that time have been effectively addressed. Standards have risen in reading, writing, mathematics and religious education as a result of improved teaching. The school was required to improve its assessment procedures and now makes good use of its formal assessment outcomes. The school was also required to enrich the curriculum and since then has reviewed the curriculum offered and introduced a range of strategies, such as inviting a variety of visitors to school, arranging educational visits and reviewing methods of teaching. The school has fully implemented the national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy and schemes of work take into account the recommendations of national guidance. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is now good with particular strengths in the provision for pupils' moral and social development.

Priorities identified by the school at the time of the last inspection have been effectively addressed and the school is on course to achieve the challenging targets set. Subject co-ordinators are given time to monitor their curriculum areas and there is a planned programme for them to work alongside teachers in the classroom in order to share their expertise. The school's links with parents are very good and make a positive contribution to the work of the school.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
Reading	C	A	B	B
Writing	C	B	C	C
Mathematics	B	B	C	C

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

The above table shows that standards in reading were above the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2001. In writing and mathematics, standards were in line with all schools nationally and similar schools. When results in earlier years are taken into account they show consistent improvement. For pupils currently in Year 2, standards in reading are above those found nationally and in writing and mathematics they are average. For pupils currently in Year 4, standards in English and mathematics remain above average. Standards in science have improved since the last inspection and now match those expected for pupils at age seven and nine. By the end of Year 2 and Year 4, standards in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education are in line with those expected for pupils of these ages. In religious education, standards at age seven are average and by age nine they are above those expected. There are no significant differences in achievement by pupils with English as an additional language and they make good progress. Progress for all groups of pupils is good, both in the lessons observed and as seen in previously recorded work and pupils achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them. Overall, attainment on entry to Year 1 is slightly below expectations.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	All pupils have very good attitudes to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is very good and most pupils are self disciplined. Pupils understand that high standards of behaviour are expected and they respond very well to these.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of pupils is very good. From an early age pupils relate very well to each other and to adults.
Attendance	Overall levels of attendance are satisfactory and have improved on those found at the time of the last inspection.

Very good attitudes to school, very good behaviour, very good relationships and the good initiative and personal responsibility which show in the life of the community of the school are very significant

strengths of the school and make an important contribution to pupils' learning. However, in their work, there are limited opportunities for them to show independence although, when opportunities are provided, they respond satisfactorily and often well.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	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.

Across the school, the quality of teaching is good and has improved since the previous inspection. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. The quality of teaching in both literacy and numeracy in all classes is good in both key stages and this is a strength of the school's provision. The quality of teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is good overall and has been maintained since the previous inspection. The teachers have a clear understanding of how children learn and they plan work carefully to meet the needs of each child. Teachers' expectations are high for all children and their management of children's behaviour is very good, which results in positive attitudes to learning. Across the school teachers have a good command of the subjects to be taught and the planning for lessons specifies the content to be taught to the whole class, to specified groups and to certain individual pupils. Virtually all lessons incorporate appropriately high expectations and challenge for pupils with different levels of attainment. There are effective links with what pupils have already achieved and new learning makes progressive demands on them. A strength of the good teaching is the sharing of the aims of lessons with the pupils. This enables them to have a clear understanding of what is to be covered during the session and for them to recognise what they have learned.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum planned for pupils is broad and generally well balanced and meets statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teaching support for these pupils is generous and pupils receive good support from the teaching assistants. As a result, these pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes good provision for pupils who have English as an additional language, and as a result, these pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is good. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is good and it is very good for their moral and social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are very well cared for and there is very good provision made for their general welfare.

The effectiveness of the school's care of pupils and the close monitoring of personal development ensure the high standards of behaviour and very good personal relationships have a positive effect on both attainment and progress. Partnership with parents is very good and makes a positive contribution to the work of the school. As a result of the school's arrangements for teaching geography and history there is some imbalance in these subjects. Consequently, pupils do not develop their knowledge, skills and

understanding at an even pace. The school does not use information and communication technology sufficiently to improve learning in other subjects.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The very good leadership of the headteacher ensures clear educational direction in the school. She is supported effectively by senior staff. There is a very positive and caring ethos in the school, which is reflected in all its work.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is effective in carrying out its statutory duties. It is clear about its role to ensure that the pupils in the school receive a good education and that the school continues to strive to raise standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's aims of improving standards and providing a caring community are reflected effectively in the work of the school.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes appropriate efforts to seek best value when purchasing goods and services and all specific grants have been used appropriately for their intended purpose.

The leadership of the school is very good and this was well maintained by the acting headteacher during the recent secondment of the headteacher. All key members of staff are effective in their management roles. Staffing levels are good and teachers' individual qualifications and expertise are well deployed. Classrooms are large and good use is made of the space to accommodate areas for oral teaching and written work. Resources for learning are satisfactory and good quality displays of work throughout the school celebrate pupils' achievement. The school holds an above average surplus budget from the last financial year. It has suitable plans to spend this figure for the benefit of its pupils.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and are making good progress. • Behaviour in the school is good. • Teaching is good. • They are comfortable about approaching the school. • Their child is expected to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is well managed. • Their child is becoming mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework. • The range of activities outside lessons.

Inspectors' judgements support parents' positive views of the school. The minority concerns were not confirmed by the inspection. Homework is set regularly and for a school of this size and age range of pupils it is considered that the number of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The majority of children, by the time they enter Year 1, meet what are known as the early learning goals in many areas of their learning. Some children exceed this expectation in mathematical understanding and the majority makes such good progress in their personal, social and emotional skills that their attainment in this area exceeds the expectations normally seen. Overall attainment, on entry to Year 1 is slightly below expectations although some children are above this. This indicates that these children make good, and often very good progress, in the nursery.
2. At the end of Key Stage 1, the average National Curriculum points scores for 2001 show that in comparison with all schools nationally and also with schools in a similar context, the school's performance in reading is above average and in writing and mathematics it is in line with the national average. There are variations in test results from year to year but the overall trend shows considerable improvement since the last inspection, most notably in mathematics. There is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys in any of the three tests. There is also no significant difference between the performance of pupils belonging to different ethnic groups. Attainment in science, based on teacher assessment, is below average at the expected Level 2 but above average at the higher Level 3.
3. For pupils currently in Year 2, evidence during inspection confirms that standards in reading are above those found nationally and in writing and mathematics they are average. For pupils currently in Year 4, the inspection confirms that standards in English and mathematics remain above average, as shown in 2000, when these pupils took the national tests. In science, standards have improved since the last inspection and now match the average for pupils at age seven and nine.
4. By the end of Year 2 and Year 4, standards in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education are in line with those expected for pupils of these ages. In religious education, standards at age seven are average and by age nine they are above those expected.
5. There are no significant differences in achievement by pupils with English as an additional language and they have made good progress during their time in the school.
6. In all classes, progress and achievement for all groups of pupils, regardless of gender or ethnicity, is at least satisfactory and often good, both in the lessons observed and as seen in previously recorded work.
7. Pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them. The extra support that these pupils receive during lessons enables them to make good gains in the development of basic skills and they achieve well.
8. Most pupils' standards of literacy are slightly above national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 4 and are sufficient to support learning in subjects across the curriculum. Across the school, writing is often used well to support development in other subjects, for example, in geography and history. However, on occasions the over-use of commercially produced worksheets restricts the nature and length of response that pupils are expected to make to the tasks they are set. Standards of numeracy are satisfactory overall, although they are good in Year 4, and are used effectively in subjects such as science and design and technology.
9. Links between subjects are well developed and pupils are given the opportunity to apply the skills they have learned in literacy, numeracy and science. For example, in Year 2 there are good links with physical education to their work in science as they understand the effects of exercise on

their bodies. In art and design, pupils link their learning in mathematics to their design of a sequence of patterns. Older pupils use a word processing program to write book reviews.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Attitudes and behaviour show a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy school and this is borne out by their parents. Very good attitudes to school, very good behaviour, very good relationships and the good initiative and personal responsibility which they show in the life of the community of the school are very significant strengths of the school and make an important contribution to pupils' learning.
11. Pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is very good and most pupils are self disciplined. Pupils understand the high standards of behaviour that are expected from them and respond very well to these. Pupils have a very good understanding of the school's rules and have been involved in drawing them up and reflecting upon the impact of their actions on others. Parents believe that the school achieves high standards of good behaviour and that the school's values and attitudes help pupils to become mature and responsible. During the last school year there was one fixed period exclusion. The very high standards of behaviour, throughout the school, have a positive effect on learning and standards.
12. Pupils with special educational needs show positive attitudes to their work and good levels of concentration when they are well supported and involved in group or individual tasks. They try hard and take a pride in their achievements, particularly in the small group situations.
13. The personal development of pupils is very good. In their work, there are limited opportunities for them to show independence although, when opportunities are provided, they respond satisfactorily and often well. Pupils relate very well to each other and to adults; for example, children in the nursery happily worked together to build a pirate ship and a plank, taking turns and sharing resources. Pupils are involved in the daily routines of the school, undertaking class responsibilities and whole-school duties with maturity, care and pride. Pupils regularly volunteer to help around the school and undertake tasks such as looking after the play equipment, provided by the Parent-Teacher Association, which is available at lunchtimes. Lunchtime is a social occasion when pupils share activities. In the dining hall, pupils take an interest in each other's news and interact very well. They have a very good understanding of the needs of others and are involved in supporting charities such as 'Jeans for Genes' and 'Red Nose Day'.
14. The school functions as a very orderly community with a very positive ethos in which everyone is valued and everyone values each other. Pupils value recognition of good behaviour, work or effort. Relationships within the school are very good between pupils and between pupils, teachers and adults such as learning support staff. Pupils are courteous and respectful to adults and show an appreciation of each other's success. They listen attentively to their teachers and other adults working or helping within the school and show respect for each other's feelings, beliefs and values. For example, at lunch time, pupils readily include each other, and visitors who are on their own, and listen and treat each other with great sensitivity. Pupils take very good care of school equipment and resources and keep their school clean and tidy.
15. Overall levels of attendance are satisfactory and have improved on those found at the time of the last inspection when attendance was judged to be unsatisfactory. The school is able to identify the positive effect of good attendance on pupils' learning and standards of attainment. Punctuality is satisfactory with a very small number of pupils arriving late on a regular basis.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. Across the school, the quality of teaching is good and has improved since the previous inspection. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The quality of teaching in literacy and numeracy across the school is good in both key stages.
17. The quality of teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is good overall and has been maintained since the previous inspection. The teachers have a clear understanding of how

children learn; they plan work carefully to meet the needs of each child. Teachers' expectations are high for all children and their management of children's behaviour is very good, which results in positive attitudes to learning. They develop children's understanding of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour very well. The children are actively encouraged to share their work and successes. Children are continuously assessed and this, together with the results of their initial assessments and ongoing testing, forms the basis of a very good range of assessment data. This information is used very well to set individual targets and inform future teaching plans. Learning support assistants and nursery nurses are well-managed and consequently they make a good contribution to the assessment and recording of children's progress.

18. Throughout the school the quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a good command of the subjects to be taught and the planning for lessons specifies the content to be taught to the whole class, to specified groups and to certain individual pupils. Virtually all lessons incorporate appropriately high expectations and challenge for pupils with different levels of attainment. There are effective links with what pupils have already achieved and new learning makes progressive demands on them. Relationships are very good and pupils are expected to have high standards of behaviour. Pupils demonstrate very good attitudes to their work and most are keen to complete work in line with teachers' expectations within set time limits. Pupils are, on occasions, given choices about how the work is to be done and this makes a positive contribution to their independent learning skills. Most lessons have a brisk pace, and resources, grouping of pupils and adult assistance are all well managed and are used to promote the learning of specific knowledge or skills and to keep pupils on task. Teachers know their pupils very well and their lesson planning identifies how particular aspects of the work will be assessed and the evidence that will be gathered in order to measure attainment and progress. Appropriate homework, particularly reading, is set and caters for pupils of differing abilities.
19. When teaching is satisfactory rather than good, some of the above features are not so well developed, particularly the aspect of ensuring sufficient pace to lessons to ensure all pupils remain on task. The weaknesses in teaching identified at the time of the previous inspection are no longer evident, particularly the issue linked to teachers not always helping pupils evaluate their work or share progress or achievement. This aspect of their teaching is now a strength and includes teachers identifying what progress individual pupils have made and how the methods and content for the next lesson need to be adjusted as a result. A further strength of the good teaching is the sharing of the aims of lessons with the pupils. This enables them to have a clear understanding of what is to be covered during the session and for them to recognise what they have learned. When marking pupils' work, teachers assess the work constructively and their comments are usually sufficiently diagnostic to help pupils know what they have done well and what they need to work on to improve.
20. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is also good. The pupils are well supported in lessons by well-trained learning support assistants who are involved in planning with the teachers. The quality of individual education plans is good with clear targets that are staged appropriately to enable pupils to make progress.
21. There are good quality, long-term written curriculum plans to provide a framework for teachers' lesson planning, and ensure progression across and through year groups. Across the school, there is good development of literacy skills and these are taught effectively, with a specific emphasis on phonic skills. The numeracy sessions are well taught and teachers question pupils carefully to check their understanding of the work covered. Overall, the use of learning support assistants to support pupils in their learning is good.
22. There is a good working partnership between class teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator, which facilitates the prompt identification of pupils with learning or behaviour difficulties. Their needs are efficiently assessed and an appropriate level of support is provided. The individual education plans, which are drawn up for all pupils on the register, are used effectively by class teachers to guide lesson planning, providing a good blend of help and challenge, and a range of graded tasks are matched to their needs. Targets are clearly defined and regularly reviewed. Work is set at an appropriate level across the curriculum and pupils receive good in-class support from teaching assistants. The co-ordinator and learning support

assistants provide well-planned and clearly-focussed teaching for pupils who are withdrawn for additional work in literacy and mathematics. Progress is carefully monitored against the targets set on the individual education plans.

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

23. The curriculum planned for pupils is broad and generally well balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the local agreed syllabus for religious education. The curriculum planned for the nursery and reception classes provides a broad range of opportunities and experiences for children to meet the early learning goals. There are concerns about the frequency of geography and history coverage in Years 3 and 4 as a result of the school's arrangements for these subjects and whether pupils develop their knowledge skills and understanding at an even pace. The school ensures full access to the curriculum for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, irrespective of gender, race, ethnicity, disability or life style.
24. Since the previous inspection, the school has reviewed the curriculum offered and introduced a range of strategies to enrich the it, such as inviting a range of visitors to school, arranging educational visits and reviewing methods of teaching. The school has fully implemented the national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy and schemes of work take into account the recommendations of national guidance. The school has also used blocks of time to focus on the arts within an 'Arts Fortnight' and 'Food Weeks' when visiting experts and parents have worked with the pupils on a range of projects.
25. The school's long term planning is based on a two-year rolling programme for subjects other than English and mathematics, to ensure full coverage for all pupils. Teachers' short-term planning is good. The school has adopted a common format, which clearly identifies learning objectives. Teachers plan together and this ensures that pupils from each year group have similar access to the curriculum.
26. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. Information about drugs' misuse is taught as part of this programme as well as during science sessions. Visitors such as the 'Lifebus' also teach pupils about drugs' abuse. It is the school's agreed policy not to teach sex education.
27. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils' individual education plans state clearly what they need to learn next to make progress. Targets set are achievable and realistic. Work set is matched closely to their needs and they are very well supported by suitably trained learning support assistants.
28. The school makes good provision for pupils who have English as an additional language, and, as a result, these pupils make good progress. Those in the early stages of language acquisition receive good support. This is because the school uses relevant strategies to identify their particular needs and takes care to match these to the provision it makes. The school tailors its provision well to the need of individual pupils, and they consequently make good progress.
29. The school is committed to equal opportunities and the inclusion of all children in its activities. All children, regardless of gender, race or ability have equal access to the curriculum. The school places a high emphasis on the social and moral development of all pupils and, as such, any acts of perceived racism or sexual inequality are addressed. The school welcomes its cultural diversity and it works effectively in promoting all cultures represented in the school. This raises the self-esteem of all its pupils and assists in ensuring academic achievements are gained.
30. Learning is supported well by a range of educational visits to the local area including places of worship and areas further afield. Visitors to the school include authors, poets, artists and musicians, theatre groups and also the local police and fire service. The school provides a good

range of extra-curricular activities, which include art, choir, dance, football, gymnastics and recorder groups. Pupils also have opportunities to learn French and to play the guitar.

31. The school has good links with other schools within the area, including the independent school nearby. There are a number of inter-school visits including activities such as school productions. The school has good links with local colleges and the university and regularly helps with the training of teachers and nursery nurses.
32. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall with particular strengths in provision for pupils' moral and social development. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The planned daily assemblies provide good opportunities for pupils to reflect on a wide range of issues and include a daily act of collective worship. Religious education lessons also make a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Through an understanding of the meaning behind religious practices, pupils are helped to value the opinions and beliefs of others. Within other areas of the school's curriculum, teachers provide some opportunities to promote a sense of wonder.
33. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school places a great emphasis on high expectations of pupils' behaviour by all staff. These help the pupils to understand the difference between right and wrong. Teachers place a strong emphasis on rewarding good behaviour and there are very few disruptions to the process of learning. Each class sets up a clear code of conduct at the start of each term with their teacher and these are displayed in classrooms. Teachers employ a range of reward systems that encourage good behaviour and celebrate achievement. Clear procedures are in place for dealing with any persistent, unacceptable behaviour. Opportunities are provided for pupils to explore moral issues during class discussion times, religious education and assemblies. Relationships between pupils and staff are very good and from this relationship, pupils develop an understanding of what the school expects from them. Members of staff present good role models as to how pupils should relate to other people both in and out of the classroom.
34. The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development. The quality of relationships among pupils and teachers is very good with each pupil equally valued. All pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all activities. In most lessons, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work together and co-operate and they are encouraged to share their ideas and equipment with each other. The extra-curricular activities provide opportunities for pupils to mix with each other and pupils from other schools socially, such as when joining with other schools at a singing festival and in team games. Pupils are given some responsibilities within school, such as operating the compact disc player in assemblies, collecting registers and tidying up.
35. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good overall. Pupils gain a good appreciation of their own culture. In history, pupils develop a sense of how people in the past contributed to today's lifestyles and customs, whilst in geography, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to understand how different people live. Music contributes positively to pupils' cultural development, particularly in singing, where they learn a wide range of songs. Since the last inspection, the school has worked hard to develop pupils' understanding of a variety of cultures through focusing on improving its provision within lessons, such as music and art as well as a number of visitors to school such as an African dance group.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. The school's ethos and the very high expectations of teachers and adults working in the school are successful in promoting pupils' very good standards of behaviour both in and around the school and during lessons. The school has a very effective behaviour policy, which is consistently applied by staff and well understood by pupils, who value the praise and recognition of staff. They readily recognise that staff are fair and feel a responsibility towards them to behave well. Neither pupils nor parents identify bullying as a problem and the ethos of the school promotes a sense of community with which pupils identify very closely. Pupils have pride in their school. The very

good role models provided by staff promote very good relationships in a school that is free from oppressive behaviour. Pupils are confident that if they take concerns, including those about friendship breakdowns, to any member of staff, they will be listened to and the issues will be addressed sympathetically and effectively, involving parents fully when necessary. The effectiveness of the strategies employed and the close monitoring of personal development ensure the high standards of behaviour, absence of oppressive behaviour and very good personal relationships, which together, have a positive effect on both attainment and progress.

37. The school has very good procedures to monitor attendance and punctuality and seeks to encourage parents to ensure that their children attend school regularly, arrive punctually and that holidays are taken outside term time. In those cases where concerns are identified, the school seeks to work in partnership with parents and outside agencies to address them, but has been unable to reduce the high levels of absence of a small minority of pupils. All parents are contacted on the first day of their child's absence if they have not notified the school of the reason. The school is very rigorous in following up any unexplained absences.
38. Child protection procedures are satisfactory and have been reviewed since the last inspection. They comply with requirements. The school is vigilant and sensitive in exercising its responsibilities and there are good liaison arrangements with outside agencies. The headteacher is responsible for child protection and has undertaken appropriate training and is up-to-date with current practice. All staff are familiar with the procedures to be followed in the case of any concerns and these are reinforced through the staff handbook, during induction for new staff and through staff meetings.
39. The school has satisfactory procedures for monitoring and promoting health and safety. There is a good awareness of safety and the school acts promptly when any concerns are identified, although risk assessments are not formally recorded. Physical education apparatus and electrical and fire equipment are regularly tested and fire drills conducted. Safe practice is promoted in lessons and teachers are successful in ensuring that pupils understand the need to behave and act sensibly for the safety of themselves and others.
40. The arrangements for providing first aid are satisfactory. Throughout the day, an adult with experience in first aid is available to deal with emergencies. Pupils are looked after well and any accidents are appropriately recorded and informally reviewed to identify any risks.
41. The school has worked hard in its approach to assessing the academic progress of the pupils and in assessing the development of their social skills and behaviour. For example, records of observations undertaken by nursery practitioners are made and these build into a good profile of the child. This assists both with reporting to parents and with deciding what needs to be provided next for the child. Another good feature is that from reception to Year 4, the key learning intentions in mathematics are tracked to judge whether or not a pupil has attained these. Social skills and behaviour are monitored well as the school believes high standards in these areas are needed for good teaching and learning to take place.
42. The school makes good use of its formal assessment outcomes. For example, the end of Key Stage 1 national test results and optional tests in Year 4 are analysed to determine whether or not the school needs to address issues on differences in the attainment between boys and girls or between different ethnic groups. They are also used to modify aspects of the curriculum such as giving pupils more opportunities to study non-fiction texts. From the analysis of results the school sets targets for future improvements.
43. Across the school, teachers regularly assess and evaluate the impact of their planning. Teachers make day-to-day assessments on the progress of pupils as a natural part of the teaching and learning process. These are used effectively to support the planning of future lessons. Teachers keep day-to-day assessment records of significant issues in pupils' learning and social development as well as formal records in most aspects of the curriculum. This all contributes well to good practice within the school.

44. The work of pupils is marked regularly by staff. The school has yet to ensure that these comments are more consistent in helping to promote pupils' learning. This includes whether or not a pupil has achieved the objectives of the lesson and what the pupil needs to do to improve their work.
45. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early. Those pupils on the school's register of needs are assessed thoroughly and their progress well monitored. Reviews are carried out appropriately in order that they make good progress towards their targets. The on-going assessment and the monitoring and review of the progress of these pupils with special educational needs is an important factor in ensuring that their needs are well met.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Partnership with parents is very good and makes a very positive contribution to the work of the school. The school has successfully developed the good partnership which was noted at the time of the last inspection. The effective partnership between school and home is promoted through good information about how parents can actively involve themselves in their children's learning, good information about pupils' progress and satisfactory communications about the life and work of the school. The school has a home/school agreement, completed by three-quarters of the total number of parents, which reinforces the partnership between school and home.
47. The school seeks to encourage parents and the wider community to involve themselves in its life and work. A small number of parents help in classes with activities such as reading, whilst others provide practical support such as helping to run football training for boys and girls and improving the school environment through projects such as hedge planting. The parent-teacher association raises funds through various events to support the work of the school. In the last year, they have arranged events such as a private screening of 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone', a visit to Tchaikovsky's ballet 'The Nutcracker' and a plant sale. The money raised through such activities has, in the last year, provided books and outdoor play equipment. The support and assistance of parents is valued by staff and pupils.
48. Parents have very positive views of the school and the education which it provides. They particularly appreciate that their children like school and are pleased with the progress which children make, the good quality of teaching, the ease with which they feel they can approach the school with any questions or problems and the help which children receive to become mature and responsible. A small minority of parents, particularly of pupils up to the age of five, do not believe that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons and a small number of parents would like to see improvements in the arrangements for homework. Inspectors support the positive views of parents and evidence shows that there is a good range of extra-curricular activities undertaken by just over one half of the pupils and a significant number of pupils in Years 3 and 4. Homework is used well to extend pupils' learning. Good quality curriculum newsletters provide parents with good information on the work being undertaken during the term. This enables parents to involve themselves in their children's learning at home.
49. The school involves well the parents of pupils with special educational needs in discussions about their children's progress. Parents are kept well informed and invited to attend review meetings; they are also made aware of targets set in pupils' individual education plans.
50. Parents are very supportive of the work which pupils are expected to do at home. All parents are actively encouraged at the start of the school day to become involved in their child's learning and to feel part of the school. The support of parents for children's learning at home, homework and regular reading at home have a very positive impact on pupils' progress and attainment and provide opportunities to reinforce knowledge and understanding and to support pupils' learning.
51. Annual progress reports, supported by three consultation meetings, provide good information for parents about pupils' progress. The reports are written with care and show very good knowledge of pupils as individuals. They contain information about pupils' knowledge, understanding and attitudes and provide clear targets, which enable parents to support pupils at home and to help move them to the next stage of their learning. Targets are discussed with parents at consultation evenings. The school seeks to ensure that all parents attend consultation meetings and monitors attendance to enable staff to offer alternative opportunities to those parents who are unable or fail to attend. Parents also receive regular information about their child's work through the home/school book, which is used very effectively. A particular strength is the accessibility of the headteacher and staff to parents. This is recognised by parents. Satisfactory, regular newsletters and letters about specific events are provided to parents and they are invited to attend events and performances.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The leadership of the school is very good and this was well maintained by the acting headteacher during the recent secondment of the headteacher. All key members of staff are effective in their leadership and management roles and make a positive contribution to the good management of the school. The headteacher provides very clear educational direction to the school and shares a commitment to improving standards with the staff and governors. She has also established very good relationships in the local community and the school. As a result, there is a high level of commitment from parents, many of whom help in the school. The procedures for determining priorities of the school have been improved to ensure that raising standards is the basis of improvement. The school has established a good assessment system with the potential for raising standards; this is beginning to have an impact on standards, particularly in mathematics. Its aim is to support staff in both tracking pupils' progress and revising school targets to ensure pupils are challenged to improve on their previous best.
53. The system for monitoring and evaluating teaching is effective in supporting the raising of standards across the school. Performance management has been introduced and is linked to job descriptions and subject co-ordinators' action plans. The headteacher and teaching staff have had appropriate training and are now embarking on this year's performance management review cycle. The school's aims of improving standards and providing a caring community are reflected effectively in the work of the school and, as a result, the school provides good value for money.
54. The school improvement plan reviews effectively the aims of the school and sets out the long-term strategic view of staff and governors, as well as short- and medium-term priorities. The plan is presented in a clear format with initiatives aimed at improving standards. All teaching staff have the opportunity to make an input to school development planning and policy development. Funds are allocated to individual priorities appropriately in consultation with the finance committee of the governing body, and specific staff responsibilities are outlined. There is a suitable time-scale for each priority and initiatives are evaluated against the stated success criteria. Governors and staff are consulted by the headteacher as the plan is being drafted and reviewed and the final plan is presented to the full governing body for ratification. Financial management is very good and is effectively supported by the school's high quality administrative staff. There is a surplus balance in the school's budget. There are detailed plans, shared with the local education authority, for the spending of this. Information and communication technology is used to support financial planning and regular budget statements are monitored by the school. The school makes appropriate efforts to seek best value when purchasing goods and services and all specific grants are used appropriately for their intended purpose.
55. The governing body is effective in carrying out its statutory duties. It is clear about its role to ensure that the pupils in the school receive a good education and that the school continues to strive to raise standards. It is well organised in that appropriate committees have been set up to carry out its statutory duties. It has a rolling programme of reviewing subjects and they receive reports from the headteacher and subject co-ordinators. Governors have been trained for performance management and are fulfilling their statutory duty in terms of performance review of the headteacher. She encourages governors to take an active role in the management of the school and as a result governors have a good, long-term strategic view of the school. She also ensures that they are well informed through formal reports at governors' meetings where they are able to raise questions; they make regular visits to ensure the school's activities are monitored effectively.
56. Staffing levels are satisfactory and teachers' individual qualifications and expertise are well deployed. New teachers receive appropriate induction by being linked with another teacher in the same year group. Class teachers are well supported by the generous number of support staff. These, and teachers who support their colleagues in the classroom, make a significant impact on the standards achieved by pupils with special educational needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator works closely with class teachers to ensure that pupils' needs are met effectively. The school has a high level of commitment to all pupils and, as a result, most make good progress.

57. The management of special educational needs is very effective in maintaining good levels of provision for pupils with special educational needs. Communication between staff and the support staff underpins the good work. Procedures are systematic, organisation thorough and records maintained well. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs carries out his duties well and provides good support to the school.
58. Subject co-ordinators are given time to monitor teachers' planning and the coverage of their curriculum area and there is a planned programme for them to work alongside teachers in the classroom in order to share their expertise. The headteacher and senior teacher are responsible for monitoring performance management, which involves observing teachers' work in the classroom. Further staff training is arranged on a whole-school basis and usually involves experts from within the school or local schools. Pupils are well supervised at lunchtime by the midday supervisors employed for this purpose, and they are supported by teachers and the systems in place.
59. The school is well provided with staff to support pupils learning English as an additional language. Two learning support assistants have been appointed, both with good knowledge of mother tongue languages and prepared to offer translation services to assist parents. The school also has at its disposal support from the local authority peripatetic team. The headteacher and staff are committed to providing relevant opportunities to enable pupils to access the curriculum and in this they are well supported by the parents. As a result, these pupils are rapidly integrated into the life and work of the school.
60. The school's accommodation is satisfactory. Classrooms and the separate nursery are large and good use is made of the space to accommodate areas for oral teaching and written work. The school recognises the need to plan well for the use of its open-plan classrooms. Displays of work throughout the school celebrate pupils' achievement and are of a high standard. Some illustrate events within the life of the school and others prompt reflection. Resources are satisfactory. The well-resourced library area with books labelled for easy access is, on occasions, under-used by younger pupils. Outside both the hard play area and large field provides good facilities for physical education and recreation.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. In order to build on the existing standards in the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- (1) Review the curriculum in order that:
- The planned curriculum time given to geography and history is suitably balanced; (*paragraphs 22, 118 and 122*)
 - More use is made of information and communication technology to assist learning across *all subjects*. (*paragraphs 98, 104, 121, 126 and 136*)
 - Ensure that all children in the reception classes have regular access to planned, high quality outdoor play provision. (*paragraph 66*)

In addition to the key issues above, the following minor areas for development should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- (1) Ensure, as already outlined in the school's development plan, that teachers' oral and written feedback of pupils' work is linked to lesson objectives and shows them how they can improve. (*paragraphs 44 and 103*)

- (2) Plan more opportunities for pupils to build on the independence developed in the nursery by providing a greater range of investigative work in mathematics and science. (*paragraphs 13, 91 and 100*)

AUTISTIC SUPPORT FACILITY

62. The school is one of three within the local education authority which provide for pupils with disorders on the Autistic Spectrum. It offers provision for six pupils who have a diagnosis of autism and have the ability to access lessons. These pupils have full and equal access to the mainstream curriculum with modifications to meet their individual needs. The teacher and nursery nurses are responsible for the work of the unit and plan alongside mainstream teachers.
63. The unit is well staffed with a teacher in charge and two well-trained nursery nurses. They provide good support within lessons both in the unit and within class situations. Pupils have clearly targeted individual education plans, which are clearly set out in achievable steps. As a result of the good support they receive, these pupils are making good progress.
64. The service within the school is managed effectively. The accommodation within the special unit is generous and resources are good and match the needs of individual pupils. The team has close links with parents, who are fully involved at all stages of the statementing and review processes. There are good links with a range of outside agencies, who visit school as appropriate to provide the necessary support to individuals.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

48

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

32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	21	21	0	0	0
Percentage	0	12	44	44	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	46	215
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	30

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	56

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	59

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	24	23	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	21	23
	Girls	21	22	22
	Total	43	43	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (94)	91 (94)	96 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	22	21
	Girls	20	21	20
	Total	40	43	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (97)	91 (97)	87 (94)
	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	22
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	3
Indian	30
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	2
White	134
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	144

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	150
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

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	558,558
Total expenditure	536,696
Expenditure per pupil	2,129
Balance brought forward from previous year	25,924
Balance carried forward to next year	47,786

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	232
Number of questionnaires returned	50

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	32	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	36	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	64	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	42	10	4	18
The teaching is good.	60	40	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	34	8	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	32	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	34	6	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	50	44	2	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	44	46	6	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	48	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	54	16	0	6

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

65. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. At the time of the last inspection this provision provided a sound start to children's education. Since then the hard work and commitment of staff have ensured that the provision has been considerably improved and it is now a significant strength of the school. Children are admitted part-time into the nursery after their third birthday and transfer to a reception class in the term before their fifth birthday. An effective programme of meetings and visits prior to starting school ensures they have a confident, happy start to their school life. At the time of the inspection, there were 38 children in the nursery, attending either the morning or afternoon session, and a total of 42 children in the reception classes. The school provides them with a very secure and caring environment, with daily routines firmly established. The programme of activities is well planned on the basis of the recommended areas of learning for this age and fully supports the children's intellectual, physical and social development. More formal work, linked to the literacy and numeracy strategies, is phased in as the children enter the reception classes. Attainment on entry to the nursery varies considerably but, overall, is below that expected for children of this age, particularly in early language development. For a significant minority of children, attainment is well below that expected. From this starting point, the great majority of children, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. The majority of children, by the time they enter Year 1, meet what is known as the early learning goals in many areas of their learning. Some children exceed this expectation in mathematical understanding and the majority make such good progress in their personal, social and emotional skills that their attainment in this area exceeds the expectations normally seen. However, although these children make very good progress in their speaking and listening skills, some enter Year 1 with attainment below that which could be reasonably expected of children of this age. Overall, attainment on entry to Year 1 is slightly below expectations although some children are above this.
66. Accommodation is good. The nursery is reasonably spacious, which allows for the easy movement of children, and provides sufficient quiet areas for them to read books, act out role-play and to make large constructions. The reception classrooms also have sufficient space. Classrooms provide an exciting and stimulating environment, where children's work is given prominence and is effectively displayed. There is a good outdoor play area, which allows for the development of children's physical skills. However, there is restricted access to this area for reception age children. The overall accommodation allows the development of children from the early learning goals to the full National Curriculum. The quality of teaching is good overall. Assessment of children's attainment is mainly judged against the early learning goals, which it is expected most children will achieve by the end of their reception year. However, the 'stepping stones' for learning, as outlined in the curriculum guidance for this age range, could be more formally highlighted in the day-to-day lesson planning which would enable teachers to record progress throughout the year.

Personal, social and emotional development

67. Teaching is good in the nursery and children's personal and social development are given a high priority, to very good effect. Children are happy and content to be in school. They play well together, share resources and take turns. Children work happily on their own and alongside others, as well as in groups. They are interested and responsive, taking part in all the activities provided for them with enjoyment. Free play is planned very effectively and gives children very good opportunities to select and pursue an activity of their own choice. Children show a natural curiosity in all activities, are very interested in visitors to their room and, for example, want to know if they have come to read them a story or to play with them. They choose wisely from activities on offer with the positive encouragement provided by the adults. There is good use of praise from all adults and children are encouraged to be independent and show this; for example, by choosing and dressing themselves in the appropriate overall for water investigations or painting. They choose with confidence a number-rhyme tape to dance and count to and know how to

switch the tape recorder on and off. They have yet to learn how to rewind the tape if they wish to repeat the activity. Children achieve very well in this area of their learning.

68. Teaching is good in the reception class. The children continue to be happy and content in school. In whole-class sessions, most children listen with considerable interest to instructions for planned activities by the teacher and respond positively. Many work independently and show concentration and perseverance in their learning. All staff act as very good role models for the children, helping them to form positive relationships and to care about others. In a physical education lesson, one boy spontaneously praised another for throwing and catching the ball while moving. They are curious about new learning and are keen to talk both to their friends and adults about what they are doing. All children show independence in dressing and personal hygiene. All children will meet the early learning goal in this area of their development and many will exceed this.

Communication, language and literacy

69. As a result of good teaching, nursery age children are provided with a wide range of activities, which support the development of language and literacy. From the start of their school life they begin to develop their personal and social skills alongside those for speaking and listening. Staff offer frequent opportunities for children to talk with an adult and actively seek to extend the children's vocabulary. Through participating in role-play situations, such as acting out the part of a pirate, staff encourage and extend the children's use of language. Children learn to listen attentively, follow instructions carefully and develop a growing vocabulary, enabling them to speak with increasing confidence in a variety of situations. There are well-planned activities to encourage the development of their emergent writing skills when they record their favourite part of a story. All listen quietly and with concentration to the class story, although many have not yet developed the skills to predict how the story might end. There are good opportunities provided for early phonic learning, with children encouraged to hear and say the initial and final sounds in words. Higher attaining children experience considerable success in this activity. Many can identify sounds that are the same. Children achieve well in this area of their learning.
70. The reception teachers work effectively within the structure of the literacy strategy and their teaching is good. Many children soon develop an understanding that words and pictures carry meaning. They know how books are organised and, with support, recognise some familiar words in simple texts. Good use is made of the literacy strategy to introduce children to phonics, for example, recognising the initial sound of a selection of toys and objects. The development of early reading skills is very good with many children using different strategies to recognise key words such as, 'see', 'up', 'and', 'mum' and 'said'. Many recognise initial letters and use early reading skills such as predicting what the next word is likely to be or getting clues from pictures. Higher attaining children can recognise letter sounds at the beginning, middle or end of simple words. Most children are aware of the purpose of writing and can write their names. Many children can identify missing words in a story and higher attaining children can recognise rhyming words. Children are introduced to a cursive-style of writing from an early age. This is effective and some children, with support, quickly develop this style and attempt to write in short sentences. The children make good progress overall and by the time they enter Key Stage 1 many are likely to attain the expected standards in reading and writing. Their skills in speaking and listening have improved considerably and often match those expected for children of this age. Children achieve well in this area of their learning.

Mathematical development

71. In the nursery, most children make good progress in their mathematical development due to the quality of teaching they receive. They are provided with a good range of practical activities for the development of their mathematical skills and there is good quality direct teaching. They gain a good foundation for future mathematics work through play in the 'restaurant' and with activities involving pattern making. Many work in pairs on the computer to differentiate between different shapes and use their early mouse skills to click and drag on their chosen shape. Children work well with the nursery nurse and can count to four when cutting their sandwiches. Although most identify half of their sandwich they are unable to say what a quarter is. Higher attaining children

use and understand one more or less when comparing two numbers and begin to count beyond ten.

72. Teaching is good in the reception class and consequently children build effectively on their early number skills. Many count numbers up to 20 and are making good progress in reciting number names in order from one to 20 and beyond. The higher attaining children show an appropriate understanding of addition and subtraction when solving problems involving nine objects and can find one more or less than a number up to nine. They are aware that it is easier to count objects in a line rather than jumbled up. When using the computer, they match correctly the number of items with the appropriate number. There is good development of children's literacy skills. They can use language such as more or less, heavier or lighter to make direct comparisons of two lengths or weights. These children are achieving well, are on course to achieve the early learning goal in this area, with a few already working within Level 1 of the National Curriculum.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

73. Most of the children enter the school with sound general knowledge and with the benefit of good teaching most children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goal for this area of learning by the end of the reception year. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developed well through relevant topics such as that connected to the story "The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch". Children name fruit and vegetables in a basket and try out a range of tools and techniques to master a pulley system to deliver the lighthouse keeper's lunch. They know their learning environment well and move confidently and with independence around the different areas on offer to them, both inside and outside the classrooms, the practical area and the shared room. They talk about where they live and are knowledgeable about how seeds grow into plants. They understand that plants have leaves, flowers and roots. Children's progress is good and they are achieving well.
74. Teaching is good in the reception class: children find out about their local area and how this differs from a coastal resort. They develop a growing awareness of differences between natural and man-made materials. They know the routine for the day and understand there are different times for daily events. They all enjoy making models using construction apparatus and use the tape recorder confidently to listen to story tapes. They are familiar with the people in their school who help them, such as the dinner ladies who serve their meals and look after them during lunchtime and the caretaker and cleaners who look after their classrooms, keeping them clean. Most children are achieving well and will achieve the early learning goal in this area.

Physical development

75. Teaching in the nursery is good and children's physical development is in line with that expected for children of this age. Manual dexterity is satisfactorily developed through their play with table-top games and jigsaws and many opportunities are provided for children to develop their skills of cutting, sticking, and using construction kits. They use modelling materials, pencils and brushes and show a growing ability to manage small items. Fine motor control is well developed in children's use of play-dough, construction kits and 'small world' toys. Children in the nursery use the outdoor space with an awareness of others, and travel around the hard paved area without collisions. Their skills of balancing, climbing and riding two- and three-wheeled toys is that expected for their age. Children have good opportunities to play on wheeled toys, to climb and balance.
76. In the reception classes, physical education is time-tabled and planning shows a good range of gymnastic and games activities that promote the larger-scale movements of the children. Already, they have good control over their bodies, have a sense of their own and other people's space and most will achieve the learning goal for this area by the end of their time in reception. Children have good ball control through well developed skills of touching, pushing, throwing and catching. They find different and imaginative ways of moving with the ball while keeping it under control. There are good links with earlier learning and children handle tools, objects and pencils with growing confidence and skill. Physical skills are well developed through good teaching.

Achievement in this area of learning is good and most will attain the early learning goal in this aspect of their learning.

Creative development

77. Teaching is good in the nursery. Children experiment with clay to make models and learn to cut and stick paper with some skill. They have the opportunity to express their own ideas through painting and enjoy using colours. Through role-play situations the children develop their own situations spontaneously. This makes a good contribution to their speaking and listening skills. Progress is good in most of the creative areas of learning and children are achieving a satisfactory standard.
78. Teaching is good in the reception class with children working well towards the early learning goal and in some aspects they are already near to achieving it. They respond enthusiastically in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell, touch and feel. All children enjoy singing, recognise familiar songs and number rhymes and sing with enthusiasm. They recognise and many can name a variety of percussion instruments, such as castanets and tambourines. Children are achieving well and most will achieve the early learning goal in this area of learning.

ENGLISH

79. Standards in English are in line with the national average for pupils aged seven, and above those expected nationally for nine year-olds. Pupils make good progress in the subject as they move through the school; this is because teachers have high expectations for pupils' achievement and because they are constantly looking for ways to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
80. For seven year-olds, the findings of the inspection are similar to those suggested by the school's test results in 2001. These indicated that standards in reading are above average, and those for writing are in line with national averages. The inspection found that some pupils achieve above average standards in writing when they retell real or imagined events, but that they are less confident when asked to write for a particular audience or a different purpose. Among nine year-olds, standards in writing are just above average. The slight difference in standards of writing between the two age groups is not due to differences in the quality of teaching, but relates to the impact of the effective measures the school has introduced to broaden the range of writing opportunities for all pupils. These have had a more immediate impact among older pupils than younger ones simply because of their greater maturity. Standards of reading across the school are above average because pupils are taught the right skills thoroughly and systematically, and because there are well-established procedures to ensure that these are regularly practised. Because the school has looked critically at how teaching and the curriculum might be improved, standards in English have risen since the last inspection.
81. Across the school, standards in speaking are above those seen nationally. From the time they enter Year 1, pupils make good progress in developing their speaking skills because teachers encourage the participation of all in classroom discussions, and because they are given sufficient time to speak at length. Teachers often pose open-ended questions that do not anticipate the length of pupils' responses. Pupils are often given opportunities to address the class; in Year 2, for example, they sometimes give information and answer questions about a book they have read. Across the school, lessons are well planned so that pupils make unhurried contributions to discussions and have enough time to pursue questions. Sometimes, pupils speak at length on matters of personal interest or debate. As a result, many develop into confident speakers by the time leave the school. Pupils develop equally good listening skills. Their powers of concentration are generally good, and teachers manage lessons well so that their interest is sustained. Sufficient time is allowed for pupils to discuss work with each other, so that even those in Years 1 and 2 are able to discuss a task in a relevant way. Pupils generally listen attentively to the views of others, and learn to respect them.

82. Building on the good start they receive in the Foundation Stage, pupils make good progress in reading as they move through the school, so that pupils at the ages of both seven and nine reach standards above those seen nationally. Reading skills are taught and practised systematically across the school, and teachers have high expectations that pupils will learn the necessary skills rapidly and thoroughly. By the age of six, many pupils read simple stories and appreciate that certain letters, used singly or in combination, invariably represent particular sounds. By seven, a few are reading fluently and expressively, and most have developed a good sight vocabulary and established effective strategies for tackling previously unseen words, although they sometimes ask for help with a word before they have properly tried to sound it out for themselves. Older pupils build on these firm foundations so that, by the time they leave the school, many are confident readers. Many are familiar enough with texts to be able to predict the structure of sentences and to guess unfamiliar words. Some nine year-olds recognise nuances in a story such as humour or sarcasm, and are able to give sound reasons for enjoying a particular character or passage. Older pupils attempt a wide range of fiction texts, but there is scope to encourage pupils to read factual books with greater frequency. Pupils across the school are well supported in learning to read, both at home and at school. Home-school contact books are used regularly to communicate pupils' progress, and a love of reading is encouraged through regular book weeks, and sometimes by visiting authors. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, make good progress in their reading and are well supported in their efforts.
83. Standards in writing are in line with national averages for seven year-olds, and are just above those expected nationally by the age of nine. Pupils generally make good progress as they move through the school. By the age of six, most pupils write captions to explain the pictures they have drawn, and many begin to link two or more ideas in the correct sequence. By seven, those of greatest aptitude and ability write plausible accounts of real or fictitious events, some showing a growing awareness of audience by commenting on the feelings or reactions of characters. Most can retell a story accurately, using basic punctuation to demarcate sentences; some employ commas or speech marks to clarify meaning. The school has correctly identified the shortcoming that pupils in the past have practised too narrow a range of writing skills, mostly linked to the recounting of real or imagined events. Teachers are now encouraging all pupils to think more about the audience for whom they are writing, and of its purpose. As a result, the quality of writing has improved across the school, more markedly among the older pupils where these initiatives have made a more immediate impact, but also more recently among pupils of six and seven years of age. However, there is further scope for improvement in writing. For example, pupils do not yet draft their work often enough, and writing could be used more frequently and imaginatively to support other areas of the curriculum such as history and geography, where the length and range of pupils' writing is sometimes limited by the format of the task set. Pupils of different aptitude and ability make equally good progress; both those with special educational needs and those for whom English is a second language are all well supported in their work.
84. Across the school, standards in spelling and handwriting are in line with those expected nationally. There are sound procedures in place for learning spelling; those under seven practise groups of words and learn effective strategies for memorising those previously unknown, while older pupils are also expected to learn words at home. By the age of nine, pupils have learned to join their handwriting, some displaying a neat, cursive hand. However, there is not always sufficient insistence that pupils apply the skills they have learnt so that; for example, some older pupils revert to printing their writing.
85. The quality of teaching and learning is uniformly good across the school; all the lessons seen were good, and one was of very good quality. This is because teachers plan their work thoroughly, allowing sufficient time for discussion, individual work and revision of what has been learned. Because they have a good understanding of the learning needs of their pupils, teachers set tasks that are well matched to their ability and aptitude. Sometimes, their aspirations for them are limited by the format in which pupils are expected to write; for example, by the number of lines available on a photocopied sheet. Pupils develop a good understanding of what is expected of them because teachers clearly explain what they intend them to learn. Teachers use good questioning skills in discussion, sometimes probing pupils' understanding and expecting them to offer explanations at length. Because much is expected of them, pupils display good

powers of concentration and respond positively to the challenges they are offered. Teachers generally monitor pupils' progress well when they are engaged on individual tasks; in a small minority of literacy lessons, however, they do not visit each group often enough to ensure that the work is proceeding as they intend. Behaviour in lessons is always good or very good; teachers manage pupils well and skilfully maintain pupils' attention. They take care to ensure that all have opportunities to contribute both to initial class discussions and in reporting their learning at the end of lessons. Learning assistants support teachers well, some developing a very close understanding of the educational needs of the pupils for whom they are responsible.

86. The curriculum is both broad and balanced, and national guidance for literacy is used confidently and well, although there is now scope for its use to be extended to include the study of texts that support learning in other areas of the curriculum, such as history, science or religious education. The school has rightly identified those areas where further improvements may be made, for example in aspects of writing and spelling, and the subject co-ordinator has a clear understanding of how these are to be achieved. Sufficient information is collected about pupils' performance; this is analysed and used to inform future planning. Pupils are set targets for their own performance, and these are regularly reviewed and updated. The quality of teaching is sometimes monitored, and planning is checked to ensure that there is a common thread running through both long and long-term plans.
87. Accommodation for the subject is sufficient. A good library is somewhat underused, partly because younger pupils do not have easy access to it. There is a good supply of reading books, and stocks of non-fiction books are adequate. Pupils sometimes use word-processing to present their work, although there is scope to extend the use of computers to support pupils' learning in English. The school regularly holds book fairs and book weeks, and invites authors, poets or drama groups to enrich pupils' familiarity with the language. Such provision serves well to enhance the value of reading and writing in the minds of pupils and makes a positive impact on the quality of their work.

MATHEMATICS

88. Standards in mathematics are in line with the national average for pupils aged seven, and above those expected nationally for nine years-olds. Pupils are now making satisfactory, and often good, progress due to the focus the school has recently given to improving standards and the introduction of the Numeracy Strategy. The school is also setting by ability across both Year 3 and 4 classes and, as a result, higher attaining pupils are being effectively challenged.
89. Inspection evidence based on lesson observations, an analysis of pupils' past and present work and discussion with them and their teachers indicates that current attainment is close to the national average in Year 2 and pupils are on course to attain national averages at the end of Year 2. Achievement for the current Year 2 pupils, including those with special educational needs and the pupils with English as an additional language, is good overall. In Year 4, evidence indicates that current attainment is slightly above the national average and pupils' achievement is good.
90. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 are developing good mathematical vocabulary, which reflects the care taken by the teachers to use appropriate terminology. In Year 1, many pupils add or subtract numbers when solving problems involving up to ten objects and can explain how they arrived at their answers. By the end of Year 2, pupils can count to 100 and put numbers in order, reading and recording them accurately, and matching the number word to the correct digits. In mental arithmetic, most know addition facts to ten and higher attaining pupils know them to 20. Most can readily identify odd and even numbers. They can decide which number they will record on paper first when adding a larger and a smaller number. They are familiar with all coins and can find the total price of two items in the class shop. Higher attaining pupils can extend their knowledge by finding the change from £5. Pupils understand simple place value, use number bonds competently, recognise coins of different value and predict missing numbers when sequencing. Pupils are beginning to learn their two, five and ten times tables and use this knowledge to solve simple number problems. There is a strong emphasis on mental arithmetic, which is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' recall of number facts. Pupils can double numbers up to a total of 20 accurately in their heads. Many can estimate the weight of objects and compare lengths, capacities and masses. They can weigh a variety of objects using non-standard measurements. There is little evidence that pupils are involved in collecting data in order to record results in charts. A satisfactory amount of work on shape and measures is included in pupils' work samples. For example, many can name two-dimensional shapes, such as octagon, hexagon, circle, pentagon and rectangle. They also identify correctly how many sides and corners each shape has. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in smaller groups and reach appropriate levels of attainment, as do pupils with English as an additional language.

91. By the end of Year 4, most pupils have a sound understanding of place value to 100, which they apply in calculation. Higher attaining pupils have sound computation skills, which enable them to solve mathematical problems using their skills and knowledge. Pupils of all abilities show some increasing speed and accuracy in using their mental and oral arithmetic skills. In Year 3, higher attaining pupils use their knowledge of the multiplication tables of two, five and ten to calculate division facts. Higher attaining pupils in Year 4 are able to use the multiplication tables of four to solve problems. Average attaining pupils can divide accurately simple two-digit numbers by two. Pupils in Year 4, can record numbers on a grid to show that division is the inverse of multiplication. Occasionally, higher attaining pupils use their numeracy skills in investigations involving the four rules in fractions and in decimals using money. However, investigations do not feature highly in samples of pupils' work. They have collected some data, for example, favourite food and colours, but the use of information and communication technology is not well developed in mathematics lessons at present. Those with special educational needs are supported well in smaller groups and reach appropriate levels of attainment.
92. The quality of teaching is variable but is good overall. In Key Stage 1 it is good and has been effective in raising current standards with much of the work showing that tasks set for pupils take account of differing levels of ability. This makes a good contribution to the challenge offered to higher attaining pupils. In the lessons observed in Key Stage 2, teaching overall is also good. There is clear evidence in pupils' samples of work and in lessons for these two-year groups that teachers' plan their lessons to ensure that the work set is appropriate for different levels of ability. The teachers are helped in this because the school has decided to teach these pupils in ability sets and therefore there is appropriate challenge for pupils of different ability. All teachers are enthusiastic about the National Numeracy Strategy and are implementing it thoughtfully. Effective lesson planning based on this takes into account the needs of pupils at different levels of attainment. Most teaching is now more rigorous and teachers communicate explicitly the learning intentions. However, not all teachers constantly refer to them at regular intervals during the lesson to assess what the pupils have done and learnt. During the good quality plenary parts of the lesson the teachers check what the pupils have done and learnt in the lesson and elicit from them what they need to do to extend further their mathematical knowledge, understanding and skills. This gives pupils an opportunity to recognise their own learning and to understand what they need to know next. The quality of teaching in these lessons is good because teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. The lessons build progressively on the objectives introduced earlier in the week. A strength of most teachers is the direct teaching of the basic numeracy skills, which is thorough, and opportunities are provided for pupils to use them in problem solving, which they enjoy. The management of pupils is a significant strength in many classrooms. As a result, pupils concentrate hard and persevere when given challenging work and teacher attention but those left to work more independently allow their attention to wander away from their tasks.
93. A further significant strength of many lessons is the mental and oral starter, which gives a clear start to the lesson and maintains a brisk pace. Weaknesses in previous teaching of the subject were the over-use of worksheets and few opportunities for pupils to work together. This resulted in many pupils not being challenged in their work. In the occasional lesson, work is set with no indication from the teacher of how long pupils have to complete tasks. Consequently, pupils, rather than the teacher, are setting the pace of the lesson and are dictating how much work will be completed. As a result, pupils complete less work than they should to reinforce new learning or to consolidate previous skills. This has a negative impact on the progress made by a few pupils, both in lessons and over time. Although the school states that targets are set for all pupils there was little evidence that pupils in all year groups were reminded in lessons of their individual targets. The final session to review pupils' learning is used effectively in most classes. Marking of work is satisfactory. There were some good examples of marking, which inform pupils of their strengths and of areas for development. Homework is set weekly and pupils and parents are aware of its regularity and expectations.
94. The pupils' attitudes towards mathematics are at least good and often better throughout the school. They show a positive interest and enthusiasm, behave very well in lessons and demonstrate very good relationships with peers, teachers and classroom assistants. They

usually show initiative and take responsibility for their work and learning. The very good relationships between staff and pupils help to create a stimulating working environment and a growing interest and enjoyment in the subject. Occasionally, where the teaching is less successful, pupils do not always listen to the teacher and on occasions lose concentration.

95. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is a key feature in the school's efforts to raise standards. Much time and effort have been given to ensure that members of staff were well prepared for this. Classrooms have lively notice boards listing mathematical vocabulary and large and small number lines are used to good effect. There are few stimulating displays of work around the school, which would help to give the subject importance in pupils' eyes. There are bright and colourful resources, especially in Key Stage 1, which are used well in lessons. There has been some monitoring of mathematics by the new subject leaders but this has not been effective in ensuring that all teaching is of an equally high quality. Mathematics is brought to the pupils' attention in subjects such as design and technology, art and design, science and geography and also makes a suitable contribution to pupils' developing literacy skills. However, there is little evidence that the use of information and communication technology is an integral part of pupils' mathematical development.
96. The subject co-ordinators have held responsibility for only a short while and they have observed some teaching and learning and monitored teachers' lesson planning against work achieved in the lessons. They have analysed the national test papers to gain information about areas of weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding. As a result, the school's curriculum is being modified to ensure that all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered in sufficient detail. There are now suitable assessment procedures in place to monitor progress over the short-term and to track progress since entry to school. The co-ordinators have a good understanding of necessary developments in the subject and are fully managing and leading the subject to ensure that all pupils are making the best progress they can. There are considerable improvements since the last inspection particularly in standards being achieved and overall progress being made.

SCIENCE

97. Standards in science are average for pupils aged seven and nine. During Years 3 and 4, pupils make satisfactory progress and overall attainment at the end of Year 4 is satisfactory. The school monitors the performance of all pupils and this contributes effectively to the standards achieved regardless of issues related to gender or race.
98. These outcomes in attainment and progress are slightly better than at the time of the last inspection. At that time the number of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was not as great and the progress of a significant number of pupils within Years 3 and 4 was judged to be at a slower rate.
99. By the end of Year 2 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge about life processes, materials and physical processes. Pupils in Year 1 have a good understanding of scientific ideas like waterproofing and, with help, can develop investigations to test materials for this quality. They can also label different parts of the body correctly and understand the changes that take place in the body as a result of exercise. Pupils in Year 2 can sort and classify materials by given properties such as whether or not they are magnetic. They also know that "pulling" and "pushing" are examples of forces. In Years 3 and 4 pupils build on this knowledge and develop it further by testing the strength of different materials and studying how to keep human bodies healthy.
100. The use of scientific investigative skills, though, is underdeveloped across the school. Pupils are introduced to the idea of asking questions and devising a fair test to answer these in Year 1. However, there are not enough opportunities at the moment to consolidate and build on these skills by the end of Year 4. This is particularly so for higher attaining pupils who are not being given enough opportunities to demonstrate independently what they are capable of.

101. The teaching of science across the school is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Lesson planning and structure are always good and teachers use appropriate vocabulary when giving explanations. Generally there is a good match of task to pupils' abilities, but some lessons are too prescriptive which means that pupils are restricted in the development of their scientific skills and in developing their own recording methods. Teachers mark the work conscientiously, but it does not consistently tell pupils how well they have done in the lesson nor how the work could be improved. Information and communication technology is not used effectively within science lessons. The presence of additional support in classrooms, when this is available, has a good impact on the lessons as pupils remain focused and attentive as a result.
102. Science is led by an enthusiastic subject co-ordinator who has a good knowledge of the subject within the school and ideas for developing it further. She is impeded in her role as science has not been a priority for attention in the school development plan and there is a lack of management time allocated for the development of the subject within the school day. There is a subject policy to aid teachers, but this needs a little updating to reflect current practice. Further guidance for non-specialist teachers would assist the raising of standards.

ART AND DESIGN

103. Because of timetable arrangements it was possible to observe only one art lesson during the inspection. Judgements about art are based on the lesson seen, the scrutiny of pupils' previous work, both on display and in their sketchbooks, and discussion with the subject co-ordinator.
104. Standards in art and design are in line with national expectations by the end of both Year 2 and Year 4 as they were at the time of the last inspection. Progress made by pupils of all abilities is satisfactory overall although this varies from year to year. In Year 3 for example, the teacher has a strong interest in the subject and pupils clearly benefit from the good teaching that they receive; as a result they make good progress. In other year groups, art and design is taught alternately with design and technology in blocks of time. As a result, pupils do not get enough time to explore aspects of the subject consistently and in sufficient depth.
105. In Years 1 and 2, pupils work with a range of materials and experience a range of techniques and build up their knowledge and understanding. They use a variety of pencils when drawing pictures and develop their skills in observational drawing. Younger pupils make satisfactory use of paints when painting their pictures in the style of Van Gogh. They match and apply shades of colour carefully and develop their observational skills when painting self-portraits. They use a range of materials to make collage pictures of sunflowers. They design repeating patterns based on leaf shapes, using a selection of media such as pencils, crayons, paint and coloured paper. Pupils in Year 2 experiment with a selection of pencils when drawing still life pictures. They design repeating patterns in collage based on the patterns found in fruit. They have drawn pictures of reptiles and insects as part of a large collage picture.
106. In Years 3 and 4 pupils continue to develop their skills and techniques in art. They use a wide range of media such as paint, oil pastels and a range of pencils, for example in Year 3 when drawing very careful pictures of poppies using pastels. These pupils experiment with mixing paints to make colours darker or lighter. They have continued to experiment with pattern making, linking this successfully with their work in mathematics. They study how repeat patterns are used in some textiles and draw these carefully using pencils and crayons. Pupils in Year 4 further develop their observational skills when drawing pictures of shells and pebbles from the seaside. They show good use of the pastels to create very careful pictures. Pupils in both key stages have opportunities to create pictures using a computer graphics program. There is evidence of pupils studying and using the work of well-known artists both from European and other cultures.
107. As only one lesson was observed during the inspection, it is not possible to make a secure judgement about the overall quality of teaching. An analysis of pupils' work indicated that progress is satisfactory overall in two-dimensional work; there were no examples of three-dimensional work on which to make a judgement about pupils' progress in this element. In the lesson seen the

pupils were using cardboard 'windows' to draw the repeating patterns found in a range of fabrics. The teacher used her knowledge well when introducing the subject, she had planned the lesson well and resources used were appropriate and engaged the interest of the pupils. Pupils' attitudes within the lesson were positive and enthusiastic. They behaved well and handled the tools and materials with care. Pupils were proud of what they had produced and exhibited good levels of concentration. They valued the comments of other pupils in the class when evaluating the observational drawings towards the end of the lesson.

108. The subject co-ordinator provides sound leadership. She has not had the opportunity to monitor the teaching and learning but informally monitors provision by seeing pupils' completed work on display. The school has adopted the recommendations of national guidelines to provide continuity across the school. Pupils' work is assessed against these guidelines and records of pupils' achievements are passed through the school. The thriving art club makes a positive contribution in enabling pupils to extend their skills and knowledge and within this group they have produced work of a high standard. Resources for art are adequate and are being further extended to represent a wider range of cultures; they are easily accessible to both teachers and pupils. Pupils' work is displayed carefully throughout the school, providing recognition of pupils' skills and enhancing the working environment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

109. Standards attained in design and technology at the end of Year 2 are in line with those normally found nationally. The picture is the same at the end of Year 4. This is an improvement since the last inspection when pupils' abilities at the end of Year 4 were judged to be not as highly developed as they should be.
110. It was possible to observe only one lesson during the inspection. Judgements are based on this lesson, the scrutiny of school planning and pupils' work and studying photographs of previous work and displays. A discussion with the subject co-ordinator also took place.
111. During Years 1 and 2 pupils have opportunities to design playground structures, pop up books and glove puppets. They are encouraged to think about their finished product and carry out an evaluation of their work. By Year 4, they use skills acquired to design and make a pneumatic system such as a monster with moving parts. Pupils give good explanations of how their monster works. They also design money containers.
112. It is not clear though how the skills of design and technology are developed systematically from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 or whether the pupils have the experience of working with a wide enough range of materials and tools. The provision for design and technology is enhanced by visits to places like the local park when studying playground structures.
113. The quality of the teaching overall is satisfactory. The school has adopted national guidelines for design and technology and teachers use these as a basis for their planning. Lesson objectives are shared with pupils and, when the teacher gives written feedback, it is usually related to the task given.
114. The subject co-ordinator includes this role within a variety of other management duties. These other management duties give her good opportunities to monitor and evaluate the provision for and outcomes in design and technology. This has had a satisfactory impact on raising standards within the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

115. By both the ages of seven and nine, the standards that pupils attain in geography are in line with those expected nationally. No geography teaching was seen for pupils between seven and nine was seen during the inspection, but sufficient evidence to make judgements about standards was obtained by interviewing pupils and staff, and by analysing work.

116. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in the subject as they move through the school, although the rate of that progress is not uniform as there are periods of up to three terms when geography is not taught to older pupils. As a consequence, these pupils do not have the opportunity to practise the skills they have learnt as regularly as they should. Nevertheless, the knowledge and understanding that they display at the ages of seven and nine are at the level expected, indicating that pupils learn effectively during those terms of the two-year curriculum programme when geography is taught. Across the school, those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make progress in the subject similar to that of other pupils.
117. By the age of seven, pupils are becoming familiar with the locality in which they live, and understand that many people live in environments different from their own. They appreciate that some features of the locality are fixed, such as buildings and parks, while others are subject to change. They are aware that some buildings are more important than others because they offer specific amenities. Through the study of simple maps and plans, pupils begin to understand the idea of relative distance and location, and appreciate that these may show detailed local features or represent distant countries. They practise drawing and using simple plans for themselves, mapping objects placed on the playground or tracing the route they take on a walk to school or through the locality. By the age of nine, pupils are developing a more general knowledge of aspects of physical geography. For example, they can explain simply how rain is formed, naming some parts of the earth that receive less rainfall than others, and they know the essential differences between the climate at the poles and equator. They sometimes make daily weather records, but do not make sufficient weather measurements for themselves, for example, by measuring temperature and rainfall over time. Pupils study aspects of life in an Indian village, drawing relevant comparisons between these and their own experiences, and beginning to understand the relationship between climate, resources and living conditions, and how these affect the people who experience them. This is a valuable study that enables pupils to appreciate social and cultural differences between peoples, and to give them a clearer sense of their own identity.
118. The quality of teaching for five to seven-year-olds is satisfactory. Teachers plan their work thoroughly and offer tasks that are appropriately matched to pupils' ability. Sometimes, teachers are particularly resourceful in devising a task; in one lesson, for example, the playground was set out with features, the positions of which pupils were expected to record as a map. While expectations for pupils' achievement are high, teachers sometimes ask questions that are too challenging for pupils to answer without further discussion and explanation. No overall judgement may be made on geography teaching for pupils between seven and nine, as no lessons were seen. Nevertheless, some conclusions may be drawn. Teachers display good subject knowledge and pitch the work at the right level to interest the pupils and ensure that their learning is effective. However, some of the tasks set are too teacher-directed and do not allow pupils to demonstrate what they know and understand; for example, questions set on photocopied sheets anticipate the length and scope of the answers that pupils will offer. In the lessons seen, pupils with special educational needs were well supported by both teachers and classroom assistants, with the result that they made good progress.
119. The geography curriculum is broad enough, but because it alternates with history as part of a two-year programme, there are up to three terms in the cycle when no geography is taught within Years 3 and 4. This means that skills are not practised as regularly as they might be and that standards could be higher if the curriculum were reorganised. The subject co-ordinator is well aware of this shortcoming and plans to review practice and revise the geography policy during the coming year. There are some informal assessment procedures, and the subject co-ordinator has some opportunity both to be involved in planning and to work with other teachers. Pupils sometimes make visits to enrich their understanding of the world around them, but the use of information and communication technology for this purpose is capable of further development. Resources for the subject are sufficient.

HISTORY

120. Pupils' attainment in history by the ages of seven and nine is in line with national expectations, and standards now are similar to those seen at the time of the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall, although, as with geography, the rate of progress is uneven because there are up to three terms when history is not taught to pupils between the ages of seven and nine. However, in Key Stage 1 these skills are effectively interwoven within the topic that the class is covering. Nevertheless, historical skills within Years 3 and 4 are not practised frequently enough and standards could be higher if the curriculum were organised differently.
121. Despite this, standards are in line with those seen nationally, and pupils display the expected range of knowledge and understanding in the subject. By the age of seven, they understand well that people change over time, and that the lives of their parents and grandparents as children were different from their own experiences. Pupils know, for example, that children in Victorian times were expected to work and that they had very little time for leisure. They are correctly able to identify some objects belonging to the Victorian era, such as penny-farthing bicycles and oven ranges, and begin to appreciate some of the disadvantages of living in a Victorian house. However, they are less secure in their knowledge when discussing well-known historical characters. By the age of nine, pupils are developing an understanding of chronology, placing the arrival of different invasion forces in the correct order without dating their occupation, and understanding that the Great Wars belong to relatively recent history. Older pupils are able to discuss in appropriate depth aspects of Roman civilisation, such as military training, ships and clothing, but confuse some of those concerned with domestic life, such as the construction of houses. They are knowledgeable about the origins of the Anglo-Saxon invaders, and can suggest some reasons for the Romans' departure from Britain.
122. No lessons were seen for pupils between five and seven years of age, and so no overall judgement may be made about the quality of teaching here. Younger pupils enthusiastically discuss the history they have learnt, indicating that lessons are relevant and interesting, and that teachers' subject knowledge is at least sound. Teachers offer pupils appropriate opportunities to write at length about some aspects of their work, for example, a visit to a Victorian house. Much of this work is logically sequenced, correctly punctuated and in sufficient detail to be of interest to the reader. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils between seven and nine is satisfactory. Lessons are characterised by clear explanations and ample opportunities for pupils to discuss their work, ask questions and display their knowledge. Teachers motivate pupils well, with the result that many show a real interest in the subject. The tasks set are generally well matched to pupils' aptitude and ability and resources are well used. There is scope for contemporaneous historical events to be linked together more closely in the teachers' planning, so that pupils do not learn about these in isolation but begin to appreciate that one may be closely related to the other.
123. The school teaches the range of knowledge and skills expected by the National Curriculum but does not make provision for pupils to practise previously acquired skills with sufficient frequency. As a result, pupils' understanding is not as well developed as it might be. The subject co-ordinator, who also has responsibility for geography, well understands that curriculum provision in both subjects needs to be reviewed in order to overcome this weakness. There is some opportunity for the subject co-ordinator to monitor teaching informally and to be involved in long-term planning, and there is scope for management of the subject to be further developed. Resources for the subject are sufficient. Visits are used judiciously to enrich the curriculum; younger pupils have made a study of Victorian buildings in Bedford, while older ones have visited Verulamium. Visitors, too, sometimes share their historical expertise with pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

124. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. This represents a similar finding to that of the previous inspection. The school does not use information and communication technology sufficiently however, to improve teaching and learning in other subjects.

125. Grant funding has been used well to upgrade resources and to improve teaching skills. The school has recently improved the range, quality and number of computers available to the pupils but they are not yet being used to full effect. There is now a small computer suite in Year 4 where a small group of pupils can work in addition to the computers in class units.
126. By the age of seven, pupils make sound progress in acquiring and using a range of computer skills. They use an art program to design and draw pictures and write a simple program to move a floor robot. By the end of Year 4, pupils prepare graphs and charts based on surveys about areas of interest. They develop their word processing skills to write and present book reviews. They load and operate game systems as they develop their understanding of what an information and communication technology simulator is.
127. Although few direct lessons of information and communication technology were observed during the week, evidence suggests that teaching is satisfactory overall. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to practise their skills in a meaningful way because their use in other areas of the curriculum is limited. Consequently, pupils are not making the progress of which many are capable.
128. The attitudes and enthusiasm of the pupils to the subject are obvious. Pupils concentrate well and put a lot of effort into their work. They co-operate well in pairs, discussing the way forward and overcoming problems.
129. The co-ordinator for the subject has recently left the school and has not yet been replaced. The school follows nationally recommended guidelines for its scheme of work. At present there are no formal systems for assessing the achievements of the pupils. The school has identified the further development of information and communication technology as a priority in the school improvement plan.

MUSIC

130. Due to timetable arrangements, only two lessons of music were observed. However, the limited evidence available suggests that pupils achieve average standards in music by the end of Year 2 and Year 4, as was the case at the previous inspection. Since the last inspection the school has made changes to the provision for music; they have adapted the recommendations of national guidelines to ensure continuity between each year group and hold weekly whole-school singing sessions. There is a regular opportunity for singing as part of the school's assembly and there is now a school choir.
131. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 understand what is meant by *rhythm*, *beat* and *ostinato*. They maintain the beat well when clapping in time to a piece of music and develop this further by clapping the ostinato. When attempting to do this in two parts, one group successfully maintains the beat whilst a second group claps the ostinato when listening to a piece of music. They are keen to learn a new song and begin to learn this successfully, maintaining the tune well. Pupils in Year 4 sing a range of songs confidently and with enthusiasm. They then add a percussion accompaniment to some songs. The focus is upon the enjoyment of singing and this encourages all to participate enthusiastically. However, the lesson did not provide specific teaching to improve pupils' performance.
132. In the very good lesson seen, the teacher's subject knowledge was secure, the lesson was conducted at a brisk pace and the principles of music were clearly communicated to the pupils with challenging yet realistic expectations of what could be achieved. In another lesson, which was satisfactory, the teacher's knowledge was less secure and there was a lack of clear focus on improvement to pupils' performance. This lesson lost much of the musical content when instruments were played simply to provide sound effects, so that pupils' learning was not sufficiently advanced.
133. A good feature of the provision for music is the opportunities that pupils have to develop their skills through extra-curricular provision. Pupils in the Year 3 recorder group play accurately with good tone and feel for the rhythm and are developing their knowledge of notation and note values. The

school choir sings in assembly and has opportunity to sing with other schools from the area. There are opportunities for pupils to learn to play the guitar and violin.

134. The management of the subject has recently changed with the headteacher taking over the responsibility for the subject. She is able to use her expertise to teach some lessons and accompany the singing in assemblies. The school has a satisfactory range of percussion instruments and a wide selection of recorded music; however pupils do not have opportunities to use computer programs, compact discs or the Internet to assist their learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

135. By the end of Year 2 standards in physical education are in line with national expectations. The overall standard achieved at the end of Year 4 is also in line with what is expected nationally, but there are individual children who are exceeding these expectations. This is an improved picture since the time of the last inspection when standards were judged to be in line with national expectations but with some underachievement by the end of Year 4.
136. By the end of Year 2 pupils warm up sensibly and know why this is necessary. This continues into Years 3 and 4. By the end of Year 4, pupils can hop, skip, jump and move around the hall in different ways and have good spatial awareness. They can build these movements into a sequence following the instructions of the teacher. Opportunities are given for using the large apparatus in gymnastics and there is good planned development of skills from Years 1 to 4.
137. In games, by the end of Year 2 most pupils can pass and receive a ball in a variety of different ways. During lessons outside on the playground, though, not all Year 2 pupils pay appropriate attention to the teacher. This means that the task set is not always followed and time is lost whilst the teacher corrects the children or waits for their attention. In lessons in the hall, however, Year 1 children do listen well to the teacher and, as a result, make good progress in the skills of catching and throwing. They also move to music imaginatively by travelling around the hall in a variety of ways.
138. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good, but it is good overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was judged to range from unsatisfactory to sound. Teachers have more clarity about the objectives for their lessons. Their subject knowledge ensures that health and safety issues are addressed and they are able to suggest how pupils can improve their performance. When the teaching is good or better, pupils are well managed and teachers are willing to demonstrate to pupils what they want and select pupils to show good work after pupils have been practising. These lessons are also conducted at a brisk pace. Good links with other subjects like music, science and mathematics are made such as when a Year 1 class reinforced counting skills to the number ten and Year 4 pupils identified and named different muscles in their bodies.
139. Appropriate additional adult support helps to ensure that pupils with special educational needs make good progress, such as when a child from the autistic unit took part in a Year 3 athletics lesson. He was provided with good visual clues as to what the teacher required. In Year 2 though, a child with very limited English did not make satisfactory progress in physical education skills as the teacher had no additional method of supporting him other than his copying his peers.
140. The physical education curriculum is enhanced by extra-curricular clubs in football and dance and through a range of appropriate and well-used resources. The subject co-ordinator has made a good impact on the subject and the school is well placed for further development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

141. Although only one lesson was seen in the course of the inspection, extensive interviews with pupils and an analysis of their work indicate that standards in religious education are in line with those expected by the agreed syllabus for pupils aged seven, and are above those expected at

the age of nine. Across the school, pupils generally make good progress in the subject because teaching closely follows the guidance of the agreed syllabus so that pupils build progressively on previously acquired knowledge and understanding. Standards for pupils between five and seven are similar to those seen at the last inspection, but for older pupils they are higher because teachers have acquired greater confidence in tackling the more demanding issues expected in the curriculum for older pupils.

142. Pupils in Year 2 display a good knowledge of some aspects of the Christian faith. They understand that Jesus was a special person who healed others and showed us the way to live. They know the Christmas and Easter stories, but sometimes confuse the events surrounding them. They can name several of the disciples and write at length about some of the incidents in Jesus's life, such as his learning in the temple as a boy. Pupils know some of the events surrounding the lives of Old Testament characters such as Jonah, Noah and Moses, and can explain simply some of the reasons for God's actions described in the stories; for example, that God sent the Flood because he was angry with people. Building on their understanding of how and why special days are celebrated, pupils learn about several of the special festivals associated with other religions, such as Divali, and can relate in detail some of stories connected with them.
143. Between seven and nine years of age, pupils continue to make good progress in the subject. They understand that Christians believe that Jesus is God's son, and that he is special because he returned to life. They know that Jesus performed miracles, and can recount some of these in detail, such as the feeding of the five thousand. At the age of nine, pupils display a good knowledge of some Old Testament stories and begin to understand the reasons behind them, such as why the Israelites had to flee from Egypt. They study aspects of Judaism, understanding some of its rites and customs and knowing the use and names of some of the artefacts used in the practice of the religion. However, pupils are not so clear why such articles are important and why these customs are practised. An analysis of pupils' work across the school indicates that those with special educational needs and English as an additional language make progress equally as good as that of other pupils.
144. As only one lesson was seen in the course of the inspection, it is not possible to draw detailed conclusions about the quality of teaching. However, the evidence indicates that teachers possess at least a sound level of knowledge and confidence in teaching the subject, an aspect of their work that has clearly improved since the time of the last inspection. Many pupils display an enthusiasm for the subject, indicating that teachers motivate pupils well, and their work reveals that teachers set a range of tasks that interest pupils. However, as at the time of the last inspection, pupils of greater aptitude and ability could be offered more frequent opportunities to explore religious themes for themselves. In some classes, there is an overuse of photocopied sheets that constrain the nature and length of response that pupils are expected to make to the tasks they are set. Teachers encourage older pupils well to think about meanings behind Biblical stories. For example, in their study of the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin, pupils are led to think about the message they contain and to draw a conclusion about its relevance for them.
145. The curriculum is sufficiently broad and closely follows the recommendations of the Bedfordshire Agreed Syllabus. There is a well-written policy, helpful to staff, that sets out clearly the school's expectations for teaching and learning. The headteacher, in charge of the subject pending the appointment of a new subject co-ordinator, has a good understanding of how religious education in the school needs to be further developed. The school has close links with St. Martin's church, and the school sometimes visits this or other places of worship, such as the Gurdwara, to enhance pupils' understanding of religious practice and belief. Sometimes, too, local clergy and representatives of other religions visit the school to share their knowledge and understanding with the pupils. Resources for the subject are sufficient; those on a number of different religions have been built up to reflect the range of faith groups that pupils represent.