

INSPECTION REPORT

SWALLOWFIELD LOWER SCHOOL

Woburn Sands, Milton Keynes

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109429

Headteacher: Mrs Lynda McLean

Reporting inspector: Mr Keith Bardon
11807

Dates of inspection: 22 – 25 April 2002

Inspection number: 196147

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Weathercock Close Woburn Sands Milton Keynes Bedfordshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs B Clark
Date of previous inspection:	23 June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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11807	Keith Bardon	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well is the school led and managed? The school's results and achievements What should the school do to improve further?
19374	Wendy Sheehan	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
8839	Mike Egerton	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Art & design Physical education Religious education Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
11938	Sheridan Earnshaw	Team inspector	English Design and technology Music English as an additional language	How well are pupils taught?
22955	Doreen Cliff	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Special educational needs	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Swallowfield Lower School is a larger than average primary school catering for pupils in the four to nine age range. The school is situated in Woburn Sands, a small town south of Milton Keynes on the Bedfordshire/Buckinghamshire border. The town is a popular place to live and the housing is mainly owner occupied, high cost accommodation. Only about 40 per cent of pupils live in the town with the remainder travelling some distance to the school, mainly from Milton Keynes itself. There are 287 pupils on roll. All children start school in the September following their fourth birthday but the youngest children attend a reception class part time for one or two terms depending on where in the year their birthday falls. At the time of the inspection all reception aged children were attending full time. Thirteen pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is a below average proportion. Forty two pupils have special educational needs, mainly for learning difficulties. This figure is below average for a school of this size. There are no pupils with a statement of special needs, which is unusual. Although most pupils are of white UK heritage, five per cent have a range of other heritages. A very small proportion of pupils is at an early stage in the learning of English. The school has had a little difficulty recruiting a full time teacher for one of the reception classes and this is currently being taught by two temporary part time teachers. Children's attainment on entry to the school is broadly average although this varies year on year and on occasions their early attainment is lower than expected.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Swallowfield Lower School provides its pupils with a good quality and well balanced education. Pupils learn in a pleasant atmosphere in which their welfare is paramount and this enables them to maintain a good rate of personal development. Standards are generally above average, the teaching is good and pupils achieve well. The school is very well led and efficiently managed and provides good value for the money it spends.

What the school does well

- Good teaching enables pupils to attain standards that are above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 4.
- Standards are well above average in art and design.
- Pupils develop positive attitudes to school, behave well and maintain a good rate of personal development.
- The curriculum is well balanced and stimulates pupils' learning in a broad range of subjects.
- Leadership and management provide the school with a very clear sense of direction.
- The school's partnership with parents is well established and productive.

What could be improved

- Pupils do not speak and listen as well as they should.
- The last part of lessons are not used well enough to extend pupils' learning.
- Teachers do not always make sufficient allowance for pupils' different levels of attainment when planning and delivering lessons.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in 1997 it has made good improvement. Although pupils' national test results dipped in 2001 standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 4 have improved and pupils are achieving more. Effective procedures for monitoring, teaching and learning the curriculum have been established and because of this, the decisions that need to be made by senior staff and governors are

better informed. The school is more efficiently managed because the senior staff are working more closely as a team. The role of subject coordinators has been strengthened although more is needed to increase the effectiveness of subject monitoring. The quality and consistency of teachers' lesson planning is better and well structured schemes of work have been put in place for all subjects. The school recently received a nationally recognised 'Schools' Curriculum Award'. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and evaluating their progress have been developed and are in the process of being fully implemented. Performance management has been introduced effectively and the school achieved 'Investors in People' status in 2001. The school has clearly moved forward since it was last inspected and is well placed to continue to develop and improve.

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	A	A*	B	C
writing	A	A*	A	B
mathematics	B	A	C	D

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Although pupils' performance in the national tests in 2001 was not as high as it had been in previous years pupils generally achieved well in comparison to their attainment when they first joined the school. Almost all pupils attained the level expected and about a quarter attained a higher level. The reason for the fall in mathematics results has been carefully identified and the outcomes acted upon to help improve results this year. Standards in English, mathematics and science meet expectations by the end of Year 2 and are above average by the end of Year 4. Throughout the school pupils achieve well in all three subjects. In Year 2 pupils' reading is a little stronger than their writing. Pupils' ability to speak and listen effectively is the weakest aspect of their English in all classes. Most pupils have good number skills and calculate accurately but they are not as good at using and applying their mathematics to solve problems. The school tradition of high standards in art and design is continuing and pupils' attainment is well above average. Standards are above average in information and communication technology, religious education and design and technology. In all other subjects pupils' attainment meets expectations for their ages. Children make good progress in the reception classes and despite half them having only recently started full time education, most are on course to meet the targets for the age group by the time they are ready to move into Year 1. Pupils' progress in personal, social and emotional development is very good and in this area of learning many are likely to exceed expectations.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils have positive attitudes to school, work with enthusiasm and enjoy learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. With very few exceptions pupils behave well. They are polite to adults and to each other and play happily together at break times and lunchtimes.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities and take a pride in their school. They show care and consideration for others and readily look after each other.

Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average and there is no unauthorised absence. Pupils are punctual and lessons start on time.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching in the reception classes gives pupils a secure start to their learning. Children are provided with a wide range of appropriate activities which stimulate their interest and help them to develop sound basic skills. On occasions, reception teachers do not plan clearly enough what children are expected to learn and when this happens the lesson loses focus. Teaching in English and mathematics is good throughout the school. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are firmly established and teachers use them well to provide lessons with a clear framework. Teachers encourage pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects and this has a positive effect on their learning across the curriculum as a whole.

The teaching in most lessons in Years 1 to 4 is good but varies between excellent and unsatisfactory. In the most effective lessons the teaching is lively, what pupils are expected to achieve is made clear to them and teachers use challenging questions to encourage pupils to think carefully. Occasionally lessons lack pace and class discipline falls below its normally high standard because the lesson is not organised well enough. Teachers give careful thought to their lessons to help ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to learn. However in a significant number of lessons insufficient regard is taken of pupils' different levels of attainment, with the result that some find the work too hard and others find it too easy. In general, the least effective part of lessons is the discussion at the end, which teachers do not use well enough to consolidate and extend pupils' learning. Pupils' learning in most subjects is good and they make clear and sustained progress. Most concentrate hard and persevere with a task until it is successfully completed. Limited speaking and listening skills at times inhibit pupils' capacity to discuss their ideas in depth.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The strength of the curriculum lies in the broad range of learning opportunities pupils are given. Due emphasis is placed on English and mathematics but all subjects receive an appropriate amount of time and attention. The mathematics curriculum is a little imbalanced with a great deal of time devoted to basic number work at the expense of investigations and problem solving and there is no whole school programme for the development of pupils' speaking and listening.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' difficulties are identified early and they receive the support they need to learn effectively.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils who speak English as an additional language have full access to the learning opportunities the school provides and maintain the same good rate of progress as other pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school makes careful provisions for all aspects of pupils' personal development. The provision made for pupils' social development is particularly effective.
How well the school cares	Good overall. The school's procedures for child protection and for

for its pupils	ensuring pupils welfare are very well organised. Systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic progress are satisfactory.
How well the school works with parents.	Very good. The school has a close relationship with parents and they have very positive views of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides the school with high quality leadership. Senior staff work effectively as a team and their management of the school is good. Subject management is satisfactory. Coordinators are monitoring their subjects in a range of ways but not yet using information well enough to plan for development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school and have a clear understanding of its strengths and future development needs. The governing body meets its statutory responsibilities very well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Test results and other information are carefully analysed and the information used to help senior staff and governors make correct decisions. School development is carefully considered, although the format of the school development plan does not make it an easy document to use.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Although the school has a financial deficit the budget and other grants are used efficiently to resource pupils' learning. The school consults widely about important matters, obtains resources at the most competitive prices and uses them well. It compares its performance with that of other schools both locally and nationally.
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	The school has an appropriate number of well qualified teachers and a good number of classroom assistants. The accommodation is well maintained and provides a very comfortable learning environment. The level of resources is good in most of the school and satisfactory for the reception children.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents feel that their children are taught well and make good progress. Children enjoy school. The school has high expectations of its pupils and of what they can achieve. Staff are very approachable and parents feel comfortable raising issues or discussing any problems. The school helps children to develop a sense of responsibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A significant minority of parents feel that the school does not work closely enough with them. Some parents would like better provision for extra curricular activities.

Inspectors share the many positive views parents hold of the school and of the provision it is making for their children's education. There is regular contact between school and parents and the working relationship is secure and constructive. The school has improved the provision it makes for extra curricular activities and this is similar to that provided by many other primary schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 When pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4 standards are above the national average in many subjects, including English, mathematics and science.
- 2 In most years the attainment of children entering the reception class is much the same as other four year olds nationally although this does vary year on year. Children achieve well while in the reception classes and despite a significant proportion only recently having started full time education, by the time they enter Year 1 most are on course to reach the targets set for this age group in all the different areas of learning. Teachers place strong emphasis on pupils learning to work and play together effectively and standards in personal, social and emotional development are above average.
- 3 The performance of Year 2 pupils in the national tests in 2001 was well above the national average in writing, above average in reading and average in mathematics. Almost all pupils attained the expected level in all three subjects and about a quarter attained a higher level. In comparison with schools in a similar context to Swallowfield these results were above average in writing, average in reading but a little below average in mathematics, mainly because fewer pupils attained the higher level than they did in most similar schools.
- 4 Up to and including 2000 the school's results had shown sustained improvement but they dipped in 2001 in all three subjects. However, when the outcomes of the 2001 tests are compared with pupils' attainment when they first joined the school in 1998 it is clear that, despite being lower, the results represent a good level of achievement on the part of the majority of pupils. Results in mathematics were not as good as the school had hoped for. The reasons why have been carefully identified and steps taken to strengthen the teaching in certain areas and to ensure that the problems, some of which were caused by outside factors, do not reoccur.
- 5 The attainment of pupils currently in Year 2 is broadly that expected for their age in English, mathematics and science. In English there is a little variation between the different aspects, with pupils reading being stronger than their writing and speaking and listening. There is a similar variation in mathematics. Pupils work confidently when making basic number calculations and have good understanding of shape and measures but their ability to apply what they know and to solve problems is not as well developed. By the end of Year 2 pupils' literacy and numeracy is broadly that expected for their age. In science pupils' attainment is at the level expected in all the different aspects.
- 6 These overall evaluations tend to hide a rather unusual pattern of attainment. In both Year 2 classes there are quite a large proportion of pupils who attain at an above average level and an equally large proportion who struggle to meet the national targets for their age. There are relatively few pupils who are consistently working at an average level. Consequently, when the pupils sit the national tests this year the pattern of results is likely to be a little different from previous years. The attainment of this cohort of pupils when they were tested on entry to the reception class in 1999 was the lowest the school has on record and their attainment to date equates to a good level of achievement in the three years they have been at Swallowfield.
- 7 At the request of the local education authority the school has set and submitted targets for pupils' performance in the coming national tests. In light of pupils' current levels of attainment the targets in reading and writing appear to be overly ambitious and while the school is trying hard to meet them it is likely that results will fall a little short. The target for mathematics is challenging but more realistic and pupils' performance is likely to be nearer the target in this subject.

- 8 Year 4 pupils sit tests produced by a national body and the results are analysed by the local education authority. The results for 2001 show that the Year 4 pupils transferred to the middle school with good levels of attainment in English and mathematics which were above those of pupils from other schools in Bedfordshire. It also illustrated that the pupils had achieved well in relation to the results they obtained when they sat the national tests as Year 2 pupils in 1999.
- 9 This positive picture is reflected in the attainment and achievements of pupils currently in Year 4 and standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above the national average. Pupils' literacy and numeracy are both above average for their age. The targets that the school has set for pupils' test performance is at a very similar level to last year, making them both challenging and achievable. Pupils' scientific knowledge and skills build systematically and standards in all aspects of the subject are also above average.
- 10 One area in which pupils' achievement lags behind that of other subjects is that of speaking and listening. This is weak when children enter the school and while pupils in both infant and junior classes make steady progress the lack of a whole school programme for the teaching of speaking and listening reduces the rate at which they acquire these important skills. Consequently when pupils, discuss, describe, explain or give answers their contributions are often not as detailed or comprehensive as might be expected from their attainment in other subjects.
- 11 The school has a tradition of high standards in art and design and this is continuing. Effective, well planned teaching in this subject results in very good achievement and standards that by Years 2 and 4 are well above expectations. Considerable development has taken place in information and communication technology and pupils' attainment has risen since the last inspection. The subject is much better resourced and the teaching is good. Consequently pupils of all ages are achieving well in information and communication technology and standards by the end of Years 2 and 4 are above expectations. The picture is similar in design and technology and religious education where standards are above average and pupils' achievements are good. Pupils make satisfactory progress in all other subjects and in geography, history, music and physical education pupils' attainment meets expectations for their age.
- 12 Pupils with special educational needs receive carefully considered and well structured support from teachers and classroom assistants and make good progress against the targets set for their learning. The school is becoming increasingly proficient at identifying those pupils who are gifted or have particular talents. The progress made by these pupils is satisfactory though no better because the work planned for them provides an inconsistent level of challenge in lessons. The progress made by pupils who speak English as an additional language is good and equivalent to that made by others in the school. They have full access to all the learning opportunities the curriculum provides and work confidently alongside their class colleagues. The school has a very small number of pupils who are at an early stage in learning English and these pupils are also achieving well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 13 Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good. They contribute positively to the standards of attainment that pupils achieve and to the caring and friendly atmosphere throughout the school. Overall, pupils respond well to the clear and consistent expectations of staff and the very good role models they provide. They enjoy coming to school and a display of writing about their perceptions of school reflects their pride in it. At the time of the last inspection this aspect of the school was judged to be satisfactory with some good features. The improvement is a result of high expectations and the introduction of a range of systems providing for and recognising positive behaviour. Most parents regard pupils' behaviour as good.
- 14 The personal and social development of children under five is good. They settle well into school where they soon become used to the routines and learning opportunities that are provided in a caring environment. The children take turns and share equipment and understand the simple rules of work and play. They grow in confidence and independence through the activities they readily participate in and the constructive relationships they develop with each other and with adults.

- 15 The attitudes to learning of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are good. They readily engage in their lessons, contribute their ideas and concentrate and persevere with their work. They enjoy good relationships with staff and appreciate the humour and fun that are often introduced into lessons. Pupils settle quickly to their routines when they arrive in school each morning and work conscientiously at pre arranged tasks. This continues through the day as pupils work hard, cooperate with each other and respect each other's opinions. Pupils enjoy their work as was the case in Year 2 where pupils were enthralled by the effects they created as they used paints to mix colours and in Year 3 and Year 4 when pupils described how they had enjoyed carrying out mathematical investigations and learning about Mexico.
- 16 Pupils' behaviour is good although there are very occasional disruptive incidents from a small number of pupils who display challenging behaviour. These are dealt with promptly and by appropriate intervention from teachers or support assistants. There were five fixed term exclusions and one permanent exclusion last year, all concerning the same pupil. Pupils understand the concept of good behaviour and the impact that antisocial behaviour can have upon others. There is an absence of oppressive behaviour and this contributes to pupils' capacity to learn. They respect property and a culture of respect and trust between adults and pupils pervades the whole school. At playtimes and lunchtimes pupils socialise and play well together sharing equipment and respecting each other's space.
- 17 Pupils' personal development is also good. Pupils' very good social skills are very evident on occasions such as lunchtimes, playtimes and the way they conduct themselves around the school. Not only do they politely open doors for visitors but also they do this for each other without the need for prompting. During playtimes and dinner times the 'friendship squad' is on hand to look after any pupils who have no one to play with. They take this responsibility seriously and wear specially designed jackets so that they can be easily recognisable. School council meetings have a formal agenda and members reflect the opinions of their classes about playground initiatives, supporting charities and school activities. Their views are taken seriously and have a positive impact upon school life. Pupils relate very well to each other both in the classrooms and in the general areas of the school. The relationship between the younger and older pupils is a pleasure to see.
- 18 The staff strive to develop and maintain the self esteem of all pupils and as a result they feel able to take risks with their learning, knowing that their answers and suggestions will be treated with respect. This is particularly evident in the support received by pupils with special educational needs. Their support assistants know them well and encourage them to concentrate and to solve problems for themselves. As they achieve success in their work their interest and effort increases. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and with disabilities are fully integrated into the school community. Pupils take responsibility for their own learning through half termly homework research projects in a range of subjects, both practical and written.
- 19 Overall, attendance at the school is good and this contributes towards pupils' good attitudes to learning. The level of attendance is above the national average and unauthorised absences are below average. Punctuality to school and for lessons is very good and daily classroom registration is conducted efficiently.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 20 The teaching in the reception classes and in Year 1 to Year 4 is good. This stimulates pupils to learn and helps ensure that they maintain a good rate of progress. Almost all the parents who completed a questionnaire or attended a meeting before the inspection feel that their children are taught well.
- 21 Reception class teachers promote pupils' personal and social development well by encouraging them to work and play together and to adopt classroom routines quickly, such as tidying away at the end of lessons. A large proportion of children enter the reception classes with limited vocabulary or lack confidence when speaking in front of others. Teachers recognise these

inhibitions and gently target those who are reluctant to speak and encourage the development of their communication skills. Children learn other skills through tasks that have been carefully selected by the teachers to provide a challenge. For example, they are shown how to use suitable tools and equipment to make tiles out of clay and how to put patterns on them. There is a good pace to lessons and children learn to sustain tasks for relatively long periods. The activities provided are well suited to the age and attainments of the children. On occasions activities do not have sufficient focus because the teachers' planning lacks clear lesson objectives and when this happens the amount children learn is reduced. Teachers encourage children to use their imagination; for example, in the classroom hospital area they are encouraged to play the parts of doctors and patients and to act out medical scenarios. The learning support staff have very clear roles and their regular encouragement of children to take part in the activities ensures that all children are actively and gainfully involved throughout the day.

- 22 Although the teaching in most lessons in Years 1 to 4 is good, the quality of teaching varies between excellent and unsatisfactory. This is a very similar picture to the one found at the time of the last inspection. The better lessons often begin with simple exercises, which encourage pupils to start thinking straight away and to listen carefully to their teachers and others. Such exercises have a very settling effect on pupils and lessons get off to a good start. Most lessons are planned carefully by the teachers and provide pupils with interesting activities. Tasks are explained clearly and teachers often share with pupils what they want them to have achieved by the end of the lesson. This constructive approach helps pupils to focus on what is important and to understand what the teacher requires them to do. It encourages them to participate fully and to concentrate until they have met the objectives they have been set. In the occasionally unsatisfactory lesson there is a lack of pace because the activities are not challenging pupils sufficiently and weak class management allows the flow of the lesson to be broken by unnecessary interruptions.
- 23 Teachers encourage pupils by providing a good range of thoughtfully prepared resources. In a Year 4 art lesson, for example, the teacher had provided a range of plants of varying shades of green for pupils to observe whilst painting. Pupils achieved well and were able to produce a range of shades of green to apply a sensitive wash to represent a jungle background. Similarly, in a literacy lesson in Year 1, the teacher gave the pupils words and picture cards which depicted the food eaten by 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. This enabled pupils to extend their vocabulary through using the correct words and letter sounds.
- 24 Teachers generally have good knowledge of the subjects they are teaching. This is particularly the case in English and mathematics and the national strategies for literacy and numeracy are taught well. There is a little imbalance in mathematics where number and basic calculation strategies are taught very thoroughly, but less time is given to teaching pupils how to use and apply their number skills. Consequently pupils are better at making standard calculations than they are at investigating and solving mathematics problems. Teachers generally make good use of other subjects to extend and develop pupils' literacy and numeracy. Subsequently pupils learn about the wide range of books available to them and how to write for different purposes. For example, pupils write informatively about different world religions in religious education and in Year 2 history lessons construct descriptive and lively accounts of the 'Great Fire of London'. Teachers encourage pupils to use their measuring skills well when designing in design and technology and when recording in science. Information and communication technology is taught well. Not only do pupils learn a good range of skills but they also acquire a secure understanding of how the computer can help them to learn in many ways.
- 25 Lessons are generally well organised. Most lessons start with a class discussion and instruction followed by activities where pupils work either individually or in groups, and then the class is brought back together for final discussion at the end. In the most productive lessons teachers return to the objectives they set at the beginning and in the concluding plenary discuss with their pupils how much they have learned and whether or not they have managed to achieve the target set. This gives pupils a clear understanding of what they have learned and just as importantly what they have still to learn. However, in too many lessons this important final part of the lesson is not well enough planned and is simply used to allow pupils to show their work to others. Whilst this

can sometimes be valuable, the time is not used efficiently to consolidate the learning or to teach pupils the skills of self evaluation.

- 26 Although this is not always the case, in a significant number of lessons, the work given to the pupils is not as well matched to their individual needs as it should be. In lessons where all pupils are asked to do the same or very similar tasks, regardless of their knowledge and skills, higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged and lower attaining pupils have difficulty keeping up and completing the task. Sometimes the pace of lessons is too slow and pupils become restless and begin to lose interest. Pupils are not always given enough opportunities in lessons to make decisions for themselves or to formulate their own questions. At times, these limitations are caused by an over use of worksheets which do not encourage pupils to think, particularly about alternative ways of doing things. Pupils who have difficulty in expressing themselves would benefit from opportunities to ask questions and decision making would increase the challenge, particularly for the highest attainers. Speaking and listening are not taught as well as other aspects of English because the school does not have a clear framework for teaching and learning in this area of the curriculum.
- 27 In most lessons teachers use assessment well to monitor pupils' learning and to make judgements about what to teach next. Teachers ask focused questions to enable them to find out what pupils know, understand and can do. Marking of work is variable but where it is good teachers point out clearly to pupils what they have done well and how they can improve. In some of the older classes teachers share with pupils the levels they are achieving, adding an extra dimension to pupils' understanding of how much they are achieving. However, some marking simply uses praise, which does not fully support and inform pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support in the majority of lessons and their individual support plans are followed carefully. Learning support assistants work with pupils well. They ask pertinent questions and help pupils to complete tasks so that their learning is good. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well and work is generally provided which meets their needs. Teachers quickly identify gifted and talented pupils, although work does not always challenge them sufficiently, particularly where all the pupils in the class are doing the same task.
- 28 Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and respond well to their individual needs. Lessons are taught in a comfortable atmosphere and the constructive interaction between pupils and adults helps to build their confidence. This is particularly important for those pupils who are reluctant to speak or who have limited vocabulary. When pupils were asked in a geography lesson why they had chosen school as a good environment, they said it was because they liked school and they enjoyed learning.
- 29 The quality of homework provided for pupils is good overall and very good for Year 3 and 4 pupils. All pupils regularly take home reading books, spellings and mathematics work that provide a good extension to their work in lessons. In the junior classes pupils have homework projects each half term related to different subjects. The range and quality of work these generate make a very good contribution to pupils' learning

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

- 30 The quality and range of the curriculum is very good. Statutory requirements are met well. The school has been very successful in maintaining a broad curriculum and there are particular strengths in art and religious education. At the time of the last inspection there were issues concerning planning and the provision for extra curricular activities. These have been rigorously targeted through the action plan. Strategies and policies put in place have brought about an effective improvement. In recognition of the quality of its curriculum the school recently received a nationally recognised 'Schools' Curriculum Award'.
- 31 There is sound provision for children in the Foundation Stage in both reception classes. The curriculum is planned to enable children to meet their Early Learning Goals by the end of the

reception classes through a wide range of well organised experiences. Children in reception make good use of the school and its grounds to further their learning. For example, they have regularly planned 'Welly Boot' sessions during which they put on their old clothes and whatever the weather they explore and investigate and enjoy the school environment. They also make a number of visits within the area, which helps their learning and enriches their experiences.

- 32 The curriculum meets all statutory requirements. A particular strength is the very good balance that is struck between the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and all other subjects. Subjects such as art, music, design technology and physical education make a strong contribution to the ethos of the school and the extent of pupils' learning. History, geography and particularly religious education provide ample opportunity to promote pupils' writing and support work in literacy. Information technology provides further opportunities to enhance work in the core subjects. This means that the school is maintaining a genuinely broad and balanced curriculum. There is however, no whole school curriculum for speaking and listening and this adversely affects pupils' progress in this area.
- 33 Teachers have very effectively implemented the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. This makes a strong contribution to standards throughout the school. The previous report indicated that there were some omissions at Year 3 and Year 4 in science. Work has been done to eradicate these omissions and the curriculum for this subject is much better.
- 34 A very positive contribution is made to the curriculum by homework activities. Homework is planned well to support the learning taking place in language and mathematics and involve parents in the pupils' learning. For the older pupils homework takes the form of a task related to a particular subject. For example, pupils have carried out their own study of Woburn Sands which includes quite detailed studies of the town or aspects of Milton Keynes for those pupils who live further afield. There is a very clear and detailed homework policy that extends the partnership between the school, the parents and other carers.
- 35 The curriculum is further enhanced by a week long visit from the 'Life Bus' which addresses issues of healthy eating and lifestyle, drug and alcohol abuse and other related issues. Sex education is not taught. The school has a clear policy for personal health and social education and all aspects of this very important area of learning are built into teachers' lesson planning. Teachers take regular opportunities in all areas of the curriculum to emphasise and develop these important aspects. The whole ethos of the school strongly supports the development of personal, social and health education and the success of this work can be seen in the caring attitudes shown by the pupils and in their own self esteem.
- 36 A key issue at the time of the last inspection was to provide a clear rationale for curricular planning at all levels. This has now been achieved and planning is generally of good quality. Plans for literacy and numeracy lessons use national guidelines very effectively. Most weekly plans have clearly defined learning objectives and help teachers to provide lessons that are interesting and stimulating for pupils. However, lesson plans in the reception classes often fail to identify with sufficient clarity what children are expected to learn and this makes assessing the gains they have made and what they need to learn next difficult.
- 37 The equality of access and opportunity available for all pupils is good. The school's ethos supports the policy and ensures that all pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life. Careful consideration is given to the learning of pupils with special educational needs to ensure they have full access to the curriculum. Some pupils are withdrawn at times for concentrated support. This is organised on a rolling programme so they do not consistently miss the same subject. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are given the same opportunity to learn as other pupils and access the curriculum well.
- 38 There is a range of out of school activities that includes hockey, choir, chess, football and dance. The school participates in local sports events and encourages parents to contribute to the range of activities available. An adventure weekend for the older pupils provides them with an

opportunity to try activities that are not available in the school such as mountain biking and archery. The extra curricular provision effectively extends what pupils learn in lessons.

- 39 Links with the community are very good. Many parents and people from the community are invited into school and these visits significantly enrich pupils' learning. The school also uses the local environment to extend pupils' learning for example with visits to the local church and shops. There are regular contacts and very good relationships with pre school providers and the receiving middle school to help pupils' smooth transition between the different phases of education.
- 40 The good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is reflected in the caring, supportive ethos, which permeates every aspect of the life of the school. It has a very positive impact on the relationships within the school.
- 41 Provision for spiritual development is good. In their work in religious education and in other subjects pupils are given the opportunity to explore values and beliefs and the way in which these affect people's lives. Staff work hard to encourage pupils to contribute to discussions making them feel that whatever they say, it will be valued. This has a positive impact in helping to make pupils appreciate each other's thoughts and ideas. Assemblies are well planned and provide good opportunities for pupils to reflect on spiritual and moral issues and to celebrate feelings and emotions in an atmosphere of mutual trust. There is appropriate quietness and calm and prayers are responded to respectfully. Music of a good quality is played as pupils enter the hall and this provides a climate which encourages quiet reflection.
- 42 The provision for moral development is good. The school is a very caring community with clear values. These are clearly reflected in its ethos and working practices. Staff provide good role models and encourage pupils to understand right from wrong in relation to behaviour in school and beyond. Pupils develop an understanding of school and class rules and are actively involved through the school council in addressing issues that affect the school community. The school uses a good system of awards, including regular special assemblies. The culture of the school is one where good behaviour is positively reinforced and where pupils grow in self confidence.
- 43 The very good social development is promoted by the many and varied opportunities provided by the staff and by the very good example of all the adults who work in the school. The school has successfully identified ways in which pupils respect and take responsibility for themselves and each other both in and out of the classroom. Discussions in assemblies and religious education lessons reflect an understanding of caring, as does the good will with which pupils join the 'friendship squad' on duty at playtimes. Other responsibilities are also rotated between the pupils including becoming energy monitors and classroom helpers. Older pupils are given the task of preparing the hall for assembly and making sure that when assembly is over everything is returned to its proper place. The school council provides nominated representatives from all classes with the opportunity to play an active and influential part in the school
- 44 Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Through subjects such as art, history, geography and music, pupils learn about other cultures. They listen to and appreciate music from countries such as Africa, Morocco, Spain and France. The visit of an African dance group provides them with a living experience of a culture that is very different from the one they live in. They study aspects of different religions and make comparisons with their own life and culture. Pupils gain a deeper understanding of the cultural diversity of British society and this is reflected in the range of visitors to the school, for example, the school invited a member of the Muslim faith to come in and talk to pupils about their beliefs. The school uses assemblies effectively to link with other faiths and their important celebrations.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 45 The school has continued to maintain high standards of care for its pupils. It provides a community where pupils are able to seek help and support whenever they need it.

- 46 The overall monitoring and promoting of health and safety is very good. The governing body take their responsibilities very seriously and have initiated annual external audits that support their role in efficiently monitoring and assessing all health and safety risks. The school's health and safety policy is good and during lessons all staff are alert and vigilant to any potential risks. Procedures for providing first aid are secure with sufficient staff trained in first aid. Pupils' awareness of health and safety is very well promoted through visitors including the police and visits by the 'life bus'. Personal, social and health education lessons actively support the promotion of pupils' welfare. For example, in a Year 3 lesson strong emphasis and guidance was given to pupils to help them understand and be aware of road safety.
- 47 The procedures for child protection are very well established and routines very carefully and meticulously followed. The designated child protection coordinator has received appropriate training and staff are kept up to date with regular reminders during staff meetings. Midday supervisors have also received useful training. In addition the school plays an important role in helping pupils to understand the need to protect themselves through information in lessons, assemblies and visiting speakers.
- 48 The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. There is a clear commitment to monitoring and improving attendance continually. Holidays during term time are actively discouraged. The school encourages parents to ensure their children attend school regularly and the headteacher alerts the education welfare officer quickly should she have any cause for concern. Punctuality is monitored closely and all absences telephoned in by parents or carers are carefully recorded. Procedures to monitor attendance are well established. However, the link between written registers and the subsequent final data on the computer has resulted in some inconsistencies, which have yet to be resolved.
- 49 The policy for promoting positive behaviour is very good, and it is implemented uniformly across the school. The school has been innovative in promoting new methods to encourage good behaviour. For example in classrooms 'brain gym' has been introduced and in the playground, friendship monitors and a buddy system are in place. All these developments are having a positive effect on pupils' learning and on their personal development. Arrangements for monitoring and reducing instances of inappropriate behaviour are very well established. Misbehaviour is handled sensitively by the school. Records of bullying and harassment are carefully kept and these incidences are very infrequent. Records for monitoring incidences of racial harassment are very accurate and detailed and show all actions and outcomes. The very few racial incidents have been dealt with carefully, sensitively and with rigour.
- 50 Pupils' personal development is monitored well in an informal way; using the good knowledge the headteacher and all staff have of the pupils. This is achieved during informal discussions with pupils at form time and through discussions during lessons and by staff supporting and working cooperatively to support all pupils' personal development. Pupils' achievements, both academic and personal, are consistently acknowledged through celebrations in assemblies, and rewards in classes. This promotes their good attitudes to school and encourages further progress.
- 51 The coordinator for special educational needs maintains a clear register of all pupils and their progress towards identified targets is regularly monitored. Pupils' needs are identified early and appropriate action is taken to address them. External support agencies are involved as and when pupils need this and their advice is welcomed. Individual education plans are written clearly with specific and attainable targets and statutory and other reviews are carried out appropriately. Pupils benefit from the support of teaching assistants who are well informed of pupils' needs and of the strategies to use to help them reach their targets. Gifted and talented pupils are identified for inclusion on the special needs register and appropriate targets are set for their learning. The needs of pupils who at an early stage in learning English are given due consideration and they have access to a full range of learning opportunities.
- 52 At the time of the last inspection, assessment was identified as a key issue for improvement in order to raise standards. Satisfactory improvement has been made and the school has implemented a variety of systems for assessing pupils' attainment. The assessment policy

identifies systems for the effective monitoring of standards. In some subjects, such as English, mathematics and information and communication technology these are working well but in other subjects they have yet to be fully implemented.

- 53 Regular assessments in English and mathematics are used to identify year group targets as well as those for pupils' individual learning. The setting of targets in literacy and numeracy is becoming an established and effective feature of the school's working practices. The range of targets for individuals is appropriate and reflects the teachers' good knowledge of the pupils. The pupils play an active part in identifying their own learning objectives and reviewing progress towards them. These are written down for easy access by the pupils and their achievement is recognised by a system of awards. Parents are kept informed of the targets through consultation and end of year reports.
- 54 During the early weeks in the reception classes assessments are carried out so that the school has a secure baseline against which it can measure pupils' progress over time. Through informal assessments and observations teachers have a good knowledge of the children. Elsewhere in the school, the results and analysis of tests are used to identify areas for development both for teaching and learning and for the curriculum.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 55 The school continues to improve relationships with parents which are now very good. This is reflected clearly in the very positive comments about the school from the questionnaire, parents' pre inspection meeting and interviews with parents during the inspection.
- 56 Parents who returned a questionnaire last December confirmed that their children liked school and the majority felt their child was expected to work hard and achieve their best. Parents felt teaching was good and that the school was well led and managed. Overall parents agreed they were well informed about their child's progress and felt comfortable approaching the school with any concerns. However, a significant minority of parents felt the school did not work sufficiently closely with them. The inspection found that the school actively promotes very close links with parents at many various levels consulting them on strategic issues, informing them on curriculum and learning issues and providing them with regular formal opportunities to meet with teachers.
- 57 The school tries hard to involve parents in its work and the good number who came to watch the celebration assembly during the week of the inspection demonstrated this. Parents are kept well informed of their child's progress through meetings, which include discussions of their child's individual targets for improvement. The school's 'parent, teacher and friends association' raise substantial funds that are used to enrich learning resources throughout the school including physical education equipment and the attractive adventure trail. Whilst some parents are keen to help out in school and make a good contribution to supporting teaching and learning, for example, by helping change reading books, the overall number is limited.
- 58 The quality of documentation provided for parents is very good and the prospectus and governors' report meet statutory requirements. Parents are regularly informed about what is to be taught to their children through an annual year group curriculum meeting and detailed termly topic letters. Pupils' annual reports to parents are very good overall, and are clear about what pupils know, understand and can do especially in English, mathematics and science and are consistent on reporting targets for improvements. When major decisions are to be made, for example the strategic direction of the school, or whether to continue maintaining the outdoor swimming pool, the views of parents are sought and this further strengthens parents' links with the school.
- 59 New pupils entering the school are very well looked after and effective induction procedures include home visits, a parents' meeting and a range of written information about the school. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are consulted and kept well informed about their children's progress. Formal reviews take place as required. The school has responded appropriately to the requirements contained in the new Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for parental involvement at an earlier stage.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 60 The high quality of leadership provided by the headteacher has enabled the school to make good progress since the last inspection despite frequent changes of staff and a number of unforeseen difficulties beyond the control of the school. These issues have been managed with considerable skill so that any adverse effect on pupils' learning has been kept to a minimum. For example, the school has had some difficulties recruiting teachers to fill temporary and permanent vacancies. The headteacher has used a very good level of creative thinking and despite the problems the momentum of learning has been maintained
- 61 The management of the school has improved since the last inspection, particularly at senior level, and is good overall. The deputy headteacher joined the school a little under two years ago and has added an extra dimension to school management and expertise which had previously been lacking. The senior management team, consisting of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and three senior teachers, functions well as a unit. Their close working relationship helps to provide a regular flow of information through the school and to ensure the effective implementation of decisions.
- 62 Between them, the members of the governing body have a wide range of experience and expertise, which they use well in their governance of the school. Governors are in regular and close contact with the staff, pupils and parents and are able to monitor its work closely. Consequently, they have a good understanding of what is going well and the areas in need of further development. They are fully prepared to bring in outside expertise to ensure they are making the best provision for the pupils, such as when making assessments of health and safety in the building and grounds. The governing body meets its statutory responsibilities very well and plays a full role in shaping the school's direction.
- 63 While the headteacher and deputy headteacher oversee the monitoring of teaching and learning, responsibilities are delegated to other members of staff at an appropriate level. This helps to provide atmosphere in which staff are constantly looking to make improvements and to make the school even better for its pupils. The principles of performance management are well established and the school has achieved 'Investor in People' status. Procedures for monitoring pupils' development and progress are satisfactory and continuing to develop. A considerable amount of data about pupils' attainments is gathered and recorded on the computer. From this, the school is able to identify patterns and trends in pupils' performance and adjust its teaching programmes to improve them. Procedures that enable staff and governors to track specific groups of pupils are at an early stage of development.
- 64 The school has clearly stated aims, which are fully reflected in its work and in pupils' achievements. There is a good level of corporate working and relationships throughout the school are good. This makes for a happy school with a pleasant and welcoming atmosphere. Daily routines are well established and the school runs smoothly. Clear policies are in place for the different aspects of the school's work and these are consistently applied by staff. The uniform application of the behaviour policy, for example, helps pupils to develop social skills and appreciate the benefits of equality.
- 65 Priorities for school development are discussed carefully and all sources of information drawn upon before the school development plan is constructed. The initiatives the plan contains reflect national and school priorities and are also influenced by the work being undertaken by the group of schools to which Swallowfield belongs. This provides a good balance to the school's development and helps ensure that it is continuing to improve. The way in which the plan is written down makes it more difficult to use than it should be. It does not progress clearly enough from objective to action needed and onto evaluation of outcome. This hinders the monitoring of the plan by staff and governors and does not allow clear links to be made between the subject coordinators' action plans and the whole school development plan.
- 66 Subject management is satisfactory. Coordinators use a range of formal and informal systems to monitor the curriculum in their subjects and to evaluate how well pupils are achieving. While the

information these systems produce provides a broad picture of what is happening and coordinators are able to identify problem areas which need attention, in the majority of subjects it is not yet used effectively enough to raise questions or to plan for more closely focused development. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed well. Clear procedures are in place for identifying their needs and finances are spent carefully to provide for those needs. The support provided by special educational needs assistants is organised carefully so that pupils have regular access to the help they need to learn effectively. The efficiency of the provision is evidenced by the low number of pupils who remain on the special educational needs register and the good progress the pupils make.

- 67 As a result of a combination of unfortunate factors, most of which were outside the control of the school the budget is in deficit. These included a fall in pupil numbers due to a new school opening nearby, damage to the school from burst water pipes on two separate occasions and vandalism to the building and swimming pool. The local education authority has accepted the reasons for the large financial shortfall and set a timescale for the gradual elimination of the deficit. In response the school has taken certain steps already and is moving towards the targets set. The governing body has given careful consideration to how the school's finances can be brought back on an even keel. A plan has been formulated which will reduce spending without serious erosion of the educational provision the school is able to make. The fluidity of certain factors, such as pupil numbers, make setting exact targets difficult but the measures the governors have planned are well conceived and based on a full consideration of the alternatives.
- 68 Governors and senior staff monitor the school's finances regularly and thoroughly and fully appreciate the need to continue to do this so that any changes affecting the budget plan can be responded to quickly. They consult widely and regularly compare the performance of Swallowfield with other schools. Through these procedures governors are able to tell whether the school is getting best value for the money it is spending and to consider alternatives if it is not. The links between spending and outcome are discussed and evaluated closely. For example, in response to concerns about deteriorating behaviour in lessons the school increased the number of classroom assistants. Through their monitoring and consultations with pupils and parents governors have identified a marked improvement in behaviour and this is clearly benefiting all pupils.
- 69 The day to day financial management is well organised and efficient. Computerised systems are used to keep financial records fully up to date and well established routines provide a good level of financial control. The school has made the changes necessary since the last audit to ensure that procedures comply more closely with regulations.
- 70 The match of teachers to meet the demands of the National Curriculum is good and the school benefits from a good number of classroom assistants. Classroom assistants are very well deployed and have received extensive training that has enabled them to provide very good support for pupils' learning. The teachers have an appropriate range of subject expertise and there are very good procedures for the induction of teachers who are new to the school and those who are newly qualified. The employing of an information and communication technology specialist has been very effective in raising pupils' standards in this subject.
- 71 The accommodation is very good and well maintained by the site agent and cleaning staff. Improvements in the accommodation since the last inspection include the installation of an information and communication technology suite, the refurbishment of small group teaching areas and considerable improvements to the external environment including a new adventure trail and attractive environmental area. Unfortunately, the poor condition of pupils' toilets and the rotten state of some window frames detract from the overall high standard. Vandalism has become an increasing concern and as a result of this, the open air swimming pool is in need of considerable investment.
- 72 The level of resources is good in most of the school and satisfactory for the Foundation Stage. The school has an appropriate range of resources to address the special educational needs of pupils currently in the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

73 In order to make this good school even better the headteacher, staff and governors should now:

- (1) Improve standards of pupils' speaking and listening by adopting a whole school approach and providing a structured programme for the teaching and learning of these key skills.
(reference paragraph numbers 10, 26, 32, 85)
- (2) Develop the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - the final part of all lessons is used effectively to extend pupils' learning and further develop their ideas
 - in all subjects teachers make sufficient allowance for pupils' different levels of attainment when planning and delivering lessons(reference paragraph numbers 25, 26, 90, 106, 124)

74 In addition to the key issues the governors should consider the following additional less significant issues for inclusion in their action plan:

- (a) provide more opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve problems in mathematics
(reference paragraph numbers 5, 24, 94, 96)
- (b) improve the quality of lesson planning in the reception classes
(reference paragraph numbers 21, 36, 76)
- (c) agree a common format for the presentation of the school development plan which provides for easier monitoring and evaluation of outcomes
(reference paragraph number 65)
- (d) provide training for subject managers in the skills of evaluation and action planning
(reference paragraph numbers 66, 108, 131)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	55
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	7	29	15	3		
Percentage	2	13	53	27	5		

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 almost 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)	0	287
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	42

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	17

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	26	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	25	24
	Girls	32	32	33
	Total	58	57	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (100)	97 (100)	97 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	23	24
	Girls	32	32	33
	Total	56	55	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (98)	93 (98)	97 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	6
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	211
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)	11.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.7
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	285

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5.0
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)	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	5	1
Other minority ethnic groups		

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	2000/1
	£
Total income	500,131
Total expenditure	545,808
Expenditure per pupil	1,876
Balance brought forward from previous year	-15,000
Balance carried forward to next year	-60,677

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

NB. These are the results of a survey sent out by the school in December 2001 prior to its notification of this inspection. The school felt it inappropriate to repeat the exercise in such a short space of time.

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	287
Number of questionnaires returned	80

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	36	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	44	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	53	6	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	55	7	3	3
The teaching is good.	54	41	1	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	49	10	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	30	8	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	36	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	33	46	16	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	47	47	4	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	47	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	37	12	4	19

The outcomes of the survey are very similar to the views expressed by the parents who attended the meeting with the registered inspector on the 21 March 2002.

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

- 75 In the reception classes the children receive a good start to their education particularly in personal and social development where they are acquiring very positive attitudes to learning. In most years children enter the reception classes with average levels of attainment though there are marked variations year on year and significant weaknesses in speaking and listening. Children are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals set for the age group by the end of their reception year. They make good progress when account is taken of the short period some of the children spend as full time pupils in the reception classes. The good progress made includes those children who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Through good teaching in all the areas of learning and a sound curriculum the school has maintained the standards reported at the time of the last inspection.
- 76 The school has a clear policy for the education of children in the Foundation Stage and provision covers all the required aspects. Although teachers structure activities very well the format for planning in the short term does not specify the learning objectives. This hinders clear assessment of what the pupils achieve. However, in all the areas of learning the quality of teaching in both reception classes is never less than satisfactory and in the majority of lessons and activities it is good. Relationships between adults and children are very good and there is an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect in which the children receive excellent care. The work of the teachers is very well supported by the contribution made by the classroom support staff. They have very clear roles and responsibilities and carry them out very effectively. Links with parents are very good; the '4+ newsletter' is an excellent idea and keeps them informed about the curriculum as well as other events.

Personal, social and emotional development

- 77 Teachers place strong emphasis on the personal, social and emotional development of the children. By the time they leave the reception class, most children will have easily achieved the required goals and a good proportion will have gone beyond. The majority of children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are on course to attain the learning goals. This represents good achievement by all pupils. The staff make good use of interesting and lively activities to make each child feel valued. Consequently all children arrive in the morning with an air of confidence and settle quickly to the routines of the day. The regular use of stories and time set aside for discussion helps children to relate well to others and understand that for all of us there are 'good days' and 'days that are not as good'. Teachers forge close links with the children's early work in religious education and history by using stories from the Bible to talk about such aspects as kindness and love and using simplified historical events such as the life of Florence Nightingale. All the children can get changed without assistance for physical education and when they are ready they move readily into the hall where they work well together sharing and cooperating with each other.

Communication, language and literacy

- 78 Children make good progress in most aspects of language and literacy. When looking at books and other texts most children are beginning to recognise simple words and, in the case of higher attaining pupils, strings of words. Many children enter school with

weak speaking and listening skills and because of this initial weakness their progress is slower than in other aspects of this area of learning. Having said that, the strong emphasis teachers in both the reception classes place on this aspect of learning means that pupils make sound progress. During the lesson on 'Mrs Honey's Hat' the children very confidently read from a large shared book using plenty of expression and showing how well their reading skills were developing. When it came to discussing the story however the teacher had to work extremely hard to get to the answers to her questions, even when it was clear that the children knew the answer. Lower attaining children in particular had considerable difficulty contributing to the discussion. Books are well displayed to encourage children to look at them and they are developing a keen interest in reading. Reading progress is carefully monitored and the 'reading at home' record book provides a good link with the parents and carers who are listening to them read. In order to strengthen the link between reading and writing the children make class books. The books made as part of their fabrics topic include sentences where the teacher started the sentences and the children have completed them. Writing is developing well and children are becoming confident in making letter shapes and writing words. Children with special educational needs are well supported during activities and are making good progress.

Mathematical development

79 Children, including those with special educational needs and the small number who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in mathematical development and the majority will achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area by the end of reception. This area of learning features regularly on the timetable, effectively preparing pupils for the daily mathematics lesson they will receive when they enter Year 1. Through a good range of high quality games, structured activities and lessons, children learn how to say and use numbers up to 20, recognise coins and sort and match objects. Teachers make good use of number rhymes, songs and stories so that the children become confident in using numbers in a range of different situations. At all times they are required to use the correct mathematical language when answering questions or talking about work they are doing. Most children are able to understand and use such letters as 'cylinder', 'sphere', 'cone', 'cube' and 'cuboid' when referring to different shapes but lower attaining pupils find some of the terms difficult to grasp and remember. Pupils' knowledge of shape is used and extended in other contexts, for example when they are making shape pictures as part of an art activity. Displays in the classroom emphasise the importance of numeracy and the part it plays in everyday life. For example, a display on children's height uses the language of height and measurement well to reinforce the children's learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

80 All children make good progress towards the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. Although attainment by the end of reception is broadly as expected the teachers have to work hard to overcome the rather narrow perspective many children have of the world in which they live. Through effective teaching and interesting topics such as one on clothes, the children learn about materials of different kinds. An attractive display of a range of clothing has encouraged children to examine the different materials and list them down as leather, plastic, wool, and cotton etc. They look closely at eggs before and after cooking and from this begin to understand that materials can and do change in different ways. Children are taught about the different kinds of animals that live in our environment and as part of this they are able to make a nest for hedgehogs. As part of the current clothes topic there is a visit from a policewoman who comes in to talk about her uniform and why the hat has to be hard and her tie has to

easily pull away from her shirt. Children show high levels of interest when presented with these opportunities and are keen to find out how and why things happen as they do. Through the time line in the classroom and looking at things from the past and things from the present teachers stimulate pupils' thoughts and introduce them to the concept of the passage of time. Children begin to use the computer and are able to carry out simple operations using the mouse.

Physical development

- 81 All the children, including those with special educational needs are on course to achieve the required goals in this area of learning. Through well planned activities, the children learn how to use tools and construction materials with increasing control and safety. This was the case, for example, when making a badge for the policewoman's hat. Although a minority of children lacked fine control most used scissors with confidence and accuracy to produce a finished article of good quality. Staff recognise that as children become more skilful in using their hands and coordinating their hand and eye control, this promotes progress in reading and writing. Subsequently, teachers place a strong emphasis on activities which will help to develop these skills. In physical education, children are learning to move with confidence and are beginning to use space well and gain an awareness of each other. The regular 'Welly Boot' activities provide children with an opportunity to explore the immediate environment whilst wearing their oldest clothes and not to be discouraged by changeable weather. During this time they can jump, climb and play in the freedom of the school grounds and the adventure area. This particular activity although including much physical activity also includes learning in many of the other areas such as observing patterns of change and appreciating the environment. On occasions physical activity lessons do not have clear enough objectives and children are left wondering how well they have achieved.

Creative development

- 82 There is good provision for children's creative development and all the children will meet the required goals by the end of reception. After the visit of the policewoman the children were given the opportunity to use paint or pencil to produce a picture of her. Children were confident in the way in which they used and mixed paints and the detail that they put into their pictures showed how well they had observed the different aspects of the policewoman's uniform. One boy included her radio and in the picture you could clearly see the different parts, including the aerial and the on/off buttons. The children take time and care with their work and when it is finished they are very proud of it and eager to show it to others. Teachers give children regular opportunities to work with and enjoy using a wide range of materials that include clay, sewing and collage. During a drama session the children showed considerable imagination. With encouragement from the teachers, a simple piece of fabric became a sail, a kite or Superman's cape depending on the character each child had adopted. Children enjoy singing and when given percussion instruments they can tap out a rhythm. They enjoy role play and the hospital play is the focus for a wide range of imaginative activities and happenings.

ENGLISH

- 83 By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4 they attain standards in English which are above average for their age. The good standards found at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. Both boys and girls achieve well and pupils who speak English as an additional language maintain a good rate of progress. Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support and also make good progress.

- 84 Currently pupils attain standards by the end of Year 2 that are broadly average in speaking and listening and writing and above average in reading. Standards are lower in speaking and listening and in writing than those attained by pupils who took the tests in 2001 because of the high proportion of pupils who entered the school with below average attainment and particularly poor speaking and listening skills. There is also an unusually high proportion of boys in the Year 2 classes which is tending to lower the writing attainment of the group as a whole. The school has addressed the issues surrounding boys' reading well by providing books they enjoy, and this has led to improved standards. However, the strategies the school is using to encourage younger boys to improve the quality of their writing are not yet having the same positive effect. By the end of Year 4, while standards in speaking and listening are average, standards in reading and writing are above average.
- 85 Pupils' speaking and listening skills differ across the school. Higher attaining pupils are able to articulate well and have an extensive vocabulary but a significant number of pupils, including those who attain at an average level in other subjects have difficulty expressing themselves fully and lack confidence when speaking in front of others. Higher attaining Year 4 pupils, for example, were able to describe the effects of gravity and air resistance during a science lesson but others had considerable difficulty discussing the type of books they prefer to read if given a choice. Similarly higher attaining Year 2 pupils can detail the information they want to put on posters, while others find it hard to talk about the title. Teachers encourage pupils to read aloud using large books in the infants and individuals texts in the juniors, which most enjoy doing. They are encouraged to perform in assemblies and in class and are asked well focused questions by teachers. However, there are few other strategies in place to improve pupils' speaking skills and too little opportunity for them to present their work in front of the class. The school lacks a coordinated approach to the teaching of speaking and listening. The majority of pupils listen carefully to instructions and to stories read by the teacher but do not always use what they have heard to trigger their thinking.
- 86 The majority of pupils in all classes enjoy reading and choose a diverse range of fiction and non fiction books from the library and when reading in class at the beginning of each afternoon. Pupils are taught a variety of strategies for identifying and deciphering words. Most make good attempts with words they do not know by sounding out letter combinations or trying to make sense of them from the rest of the text. Many pupils are willing to suggest the meaning of words they read. For example, a Year 4 pupil made a good attempt to explain what 'feeling fragile' meant in the context of a particular story. In Year 2, the teacher challenged pupils to attempt words such as 'neighbours' which they managed to read, when they were reading a book about 'Our Cat Flossie'. Teachers give pupils opportunities to read in groups, which helps their joint understanding as they learn from each other as well as from the adult. Even younger pupils are able to read with expression whilst older pupils are able to discuss the settings and characters within a story. Teachers use these group reading periods productively to assess pupils' reading and to decide what books they need to read next. Pupils are encouraged by the regular praise they receive. For example, when Year 4 pupils read passages from 'The Hobbit', which is quite a difficult text for this age, the teacher left them in no doubt that she was pleased with their efforts.
- 87 Pupils' comprehension of what they are reading is good by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Teachers frequently discuss the text with the pupils and ask well structured questions which require the pupils to examine the text for meaning. Pupils know how to find information in non fiction books and most Year 2 pupils know how to use the contents and index pages of reference books. Good use is made of information and communication technology to extend pupils' reading skills. For example, Year 3 pupils

researched information about the author Dick King Smith on the computer and pupils in Year 1 used a program where they had to match initial letters to the names of the food eaten by 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. The school libraries have recently been rearranged into borrowing and reference units. Pupils have regular opportunities to borrow books although at present the selection of non fiction books is rather narrow. The reference library has a satisfactory stock of books which have been catalogued. However, it is not yet timetabled for library lessons in which pupils are taught appropriate library skills.

- 88 By the end of Year 2 pupils write interesting stories which often include different characters and settings. They make good attempts at spelling unfamiliar words and their handwriting is generally neat. Teachers ensure that pupils use a structured planning sheet before they commence their stories so that they learn to put all their ideas down on paper before starting to write. Even higher attaining pupils regularly forget about punctuation although some attempt to use more advanced forms, such as apostrophes. Teachers plan a wide variety of different writing tasks, including letters, poetry and posters and by the end of Year 4, pupils write to a good standard. Their stories are often very descriptive and adventurous with different characters woven into the text. Pupils write good descriptive phrases such as 'berries lustre glossed' when writing poetry and 'hearts as cold as ice' in stories. Many pupils are interested and excited about their writing and in a Year 4 class a lower attaining pupil asked to be able to write a passage by herself without support from a worksheet. The end result was good and she had managed to capture the essence of the story well. Teachers in the junior classes have addressed boys' interest in writing by asking them to write stories such as 'Murder and Microchips' which enthralls them. Consequently pupils concentrate well and as a result stories are colourful and lively. Teachers frequently plan information and communication technology activities that link to writing so that pupils can use and extend both their literacy and computer skills. For example, pupils in Year 2 wrote the cover of their books about 'My Pet' on the computer choosing the appropriate font and size of print. Classroom assistants give good support to pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language by helping them to write correctly and to spell words accurately.
- 89 Literacy is used well to support pupils' learning in different subjects. Year 2 pupils have written interesting accounts of 'The Great Fire of London' in history and about the 'Island of Struay' in geography. Older pupils researched information about Mexico in geography and wrote descriptive stories about Abraham and Moses in religious education. When teaching different subjects teachers emphasise the correct use of technical vocabulary. For example, in science pupils in Year 4 learn how to use and spell words such as 'evaporation' and 'condensation' correctly so that they can be precise in their explanations and answers to questions.
- 90 The quality of teaching is good in Year 1 to Year 4. The school has implemented the National Strategy for Literacy and the early support programmes for Years 1 and 2 well and, in general, lessons are clearly planned and well organised. However, on occasions the work provided does not meet the needs of individual pupils as well as it should. This results in insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils and lower attaining pupils being unable to complete their work without a lot of help. Where work is well planned for individuals, such as in a Year 4 lesson in which pupils wrote at different levels about the 'Battle of the Bard' from the 'The Hobbit', all pupils are able to succeed. In this instance all pupils were suitably challenged and the higher attainers wrote descriptive passages of a very good quality. The final part of many lessons is not planned well enough and is often used for pupils simply to read their work out loud or for the teacher to choose some good work to read. These sessions are not used appropriately to consolidate pupils'

ideas or to offer further targets for learning. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and the assessment procedures for the subject are good. Pupils are assessed regularly in reading, writing and spelling and careful analysis is made of the outcomes to inform the next step in pupils' learning.

- 91 The subject leader has only had subject responsibility for a short time. Since taking on the role she has been instrumental in putting in place strategies to improve teaching and learning in the infant classes. She regularly monitors work from the different classes but as yet has not got a clear overview of how well the subject is being taught in junior classes. The coordinator provides effective support for the less experienced members of staff and for students working in school.

MATHEMATICS

- 92 By the end of Year 4 standards in mathematics are above the national average and pupils transfer to middle school with a good level of numeracy.
- 93 Standards by the end of Year 2 are broadly those expected for pupils of this age. This is the same as at the time of the last inspection. There was a fall in national test results last year. Prior to that pupils' performance had been well above average. Despite the fall, the results pupils attained represented good progress over time, since the attainment on entry to school for that year group was lower than normally expected. The situation is similar within the current Year 2 classes. In most aspects of the subject pupils are achieving well, particularly in their ability to make standard calculations. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and as a consequence make good progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are included fully in all aspects of mathematics lessons and they too maintain a good rate of progress.
- 94 By the end of Year 2 most pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of number and basic calculating skills. They recognise the values of coins, calculate change from fifty pence and convert pence to pounds and pence. The pupils' good mental arithmetic is evident at the beginning of lessons when they confidently and accurately count forwards and backwards in twos, fives and tens starting from different points on a line of numbers. Lower attaining pupils do not have the mental recall of other pupils and have to work at a slower pace. While most pupils are able to use their basic number skills to solve simple problems only the highest attainers are able to use and apply their numeracy skills confidently in new and differing contexts. For example, while most pupils are able to add and subtract accurately with tens and units, if they encounter an addition or subtraction problem which is a little out of the ordinary they often need the teacher's help to solve it. Their understanding of shape, space and measures is satisfactory and they know the names of an appropriate range of shapes, such as triangles, squares, some polygons and 3D shapes. Pupils are also able to identify some shapes using simple properties such as the number of sides and corners. They show an understanding of whole, half, and quarter turns both by movement and the rotation of shapes. In one lesson pupils discovered that four quarter rotations result in a return to the original starting point, but they do not yet understand that a right angle is the measure of turn. Pupils can read half hour units of time from an analogue clock face and identify lengths greater or less than a meter.
- 95 The local education authority's analysis of the optional national tests for Year 4 pupils indicates that attainment has been consistently above average over time. This is being maintained in the current Year 4 classes and pupils' progress is good, including that for pupils with special educational needs. Standards in numeracy are above those often found by Year 4 and pupils calculate with confidence and accuracy. The majority of

pupils use their knowledge of numbers to add, subtract, multiply and divide accurately. They can work out simple equivalent fractions and use decimal points to record measurements in length and weight. Mental arithmetic skills are good; this is an improvement since the time of the last inspection when the range of mental arithmetic strategies was underdeveloped. By the end of Year 4 most pupils are confidently using both mental and written methods of calculation and can manipulate numbers over 1,000, having a secure understanding of place value. Many pupils have good knowledge of multiplication tables and demonstrate this in mental arithmetic sessions. Lower attaining pupils work with smaller numbers and often have to recalculate simple number facts because they cannot remember them as well as other pupils.

- 96 By the end of Year 4 many pupils have developed a secure understanding of mathematical language appropriate to a range of processes. However, they are less confident applying their mathematical knowledge to problems and investigations. The majority wait for teachers' guidance before attempting a task and rely on suggestions rather than trying to find ways forward for themselves. It is not that they do not have the number skills to proceed but have not got into a manner of automatically trying to think their way around a problem for themselves. Pupils measure with a good level of accuracy and their understanding of shape and space is generally above average. For example many pupils understand the principles of the eight points of the compass and can apply this correctly when route making. Pupils' understanding of geometric terms such as calculate perimeter and area is good and they know how to calculate these on simple shapes. Most have a secure knowledge of 2D and 3D shapes and can describe them using their properties. Pupils' skills of handling data are satisfactory. The majority can record information on simple bar graphs and interpret basic information from them.
- 97 Pupils use mathematics effectively in other subjects, for example when timing with stopwatches in physical education and measuring in science and design and technology. Satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology to aid the development of pupils' mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils use data programmes to draw bar charts and to construct pictograms and extend their understanding of shape and symmetry by making rotational patterns from clip art pictures.
- 98 The teaching of mathematics is good throughout Years 1 to 4. Teachers use a range of methods in mental arithmetic sessions at the beginning of lessons to promote pupils' thinking and to assess their understanding. They use questioning well to reinforce pupils' knowledge and build their confidence in the subject. Learning objectives are clearly identified in weekly and daily planning. A strong feature of planning is the constructive liaison between teachers in the same year group to ensure pupils are being given appropriate work. Activities to match the learning needs of different groups of pupils are particularly well identified in Years 3 and 4 where the pupils are grouped according to their level of attainment. Teaching is often supported by useful displays of the appropriate mathematical language relating to the topic on which the pupils are working. These provide pupils with a useful reference and encourage the use of technical words.
- 99 Teachers have high expectations of both behaviour and work and the pupils respond positively. They encourage and involve pupils and value their responses. A quick pace and interesting activities engage pupils' interest and they concentrate throughout the lessons. The pupils' presentation of their work is inconsistent. Where teachers have high expectations and explain the importance of clearly organised presentation in mathematics it is good.

100 The curriculum is planned well, meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and makes good use of the National Strategy for Numeracy. Teachers have secure knowledge of this and of the subject in general and use sound organisational strategies in their lessons. The use of questioning at the end of the session is not consistently used in all classes to assess or reinforce learning during lessons. The 'Springboard' mathematics programme to support the lower average pupils is currently being used as a trial with a group of Year 3 pupils and appropriate training has been given to the adults involved. Assessment data is analysed carefully to identify areas in which the teaching and learning could be improved and informal teacher assessments are used to set individual targets for pupils. The coordinator has a secure understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the subject and has constructed a well informed action plan to address these.

SCIENCE

101 By the end of Year 4 the standard of pupils' science is above the national average. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection in 1997 at which time pupils' attainment was below average. The improvement has been achieved by a better quality of teaching and a more comprehensive and well balanced science curriculum.

102 By the end of Year 2 pupils are attaining standards that meet the national expectations for their age. Teachers' assessments show that in some years pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 is above the national average. Pupils are taught well and the gains they make while in the infant classes represent a good level of achievement. However, a significant number of the pupils currently in Year 2 entered the reception class with lower than average knowledge and understanding of the world and they have taken a little more time than usual to acquire the basic skills and knowledge of science. Most pupils can carry out simple tests and understand what the findings show them. For example, when investigating how well materials mop up spills they appreciate that the ones that release the most water when rung out are the most absorbent and that measuring the amount of water each releases gives a comparison between different materials. Most pupils understand the basis of a fair test but lower attaining pupils have still to develop a secure understanding of this key technique. Most pupils have the knowledge of living things, materials and physical processes expected of the age group. Higher attaining pupils have started to give explanations when answering questions and are more inclined than other pupils to extend their answers.

103 Pupils continue to achieve well in the junior classes. Their knowledge builds systematically so that by the end of Year 4 most pupils can give reasons for common phenomena clearly and logically. When explaining why an object falls, for example, they describe how the force of gravity pulls objects towards the Earth and immediately refer to the properties of material when explaining how and why they are used in particular ways. Higher attaining pupils are able to give detailed descriptions and use quite abstract ideas to explain their theories. Conversely lower attaining pupils have difficulty linking factors together and are not always sure what the data they have gathered is indicating. Although a minority have some difficulty with scientific terminology, confusing melting with dissolving for example, in general pupils' use of technical vocabulary is good. Pupils' understanding of how to conduct a piece of scientific enquiry is generally above average. Most pupils appreciate that only when an investigation is carried out in a controlled way can the data be relied upon and can carry out a fair test correctly. This good level of understanding is the result of effective teaching which provides regular opportunities for pupils to test and discover for themselves.

- 104 Teachers and classroom assistants pay due attention to the needs of pupils with special educational needs and those pupils who speak English as an additional language. Care is taken to ensure that any difficulties they may have do not prevent them participating fully in all lessons and as a consequence these pupils make good progress in learning the ideas and skills of science.
- 105 The teaching is good overall. Most teachers have a secure understanding of the subject and lead their lessons confidently. This encourages pupils to participate fully and to try and find things out for themselves. In a Year 2 lesson the quality of the resources the teacher provided for the pupils combined with her enthusiasm for the subject stimulated a high level of interest amongst the pupils and resulted in close observational work of a very good standard. By the end of the lesson pupils had a clear understanding of the basic structure of a flowering plant and had also begun to recognise the diversity of living things. Similarly in Year 3 teachers used paper spinners as the basis for a stimulating lesson in which pupils were learning to put the elements of testing together into the whole process. This key step in pupils' learning was made all the much more effective because of the high level of interest the activity generated and the careful step by step approach the teachers used. On a small number of occasions teachers do not organise and manage their lessons as well as this and pupils do not learn enough because the pace is too slow or there are too many interruptions which spoil the concentration of others.
- 106 What often prevents the teaching from being very good is that, at times, insufficient consideration is given to pupils' differing levels of attainment. When this happens the very highest attainers are not challenged enough and some of the lower attainers may find the work too difficult. Some pupils show particular talents in science and while the school is beginning to recognise this small but significant group, insufficient is done to challenge them and others to make decisions for themselves and do more of their own thinking. A reduction in the number of worksheets used in some of the lessons would help in this.
- 107 Pupils' attitudes to science are very positive and in most lessons their behaviour is good. Most are keen to learn and show a natural curiosity about the world in which they live. Teachers often use science to help pupils' broader development. In lessons about electricity Year 1 pupils were able to consider the need to act responsibly to ensure their own safety and that of others. Year 3 pupils were encouraged to work together during the 'spinners' enquiry' and were able to improve the quality of their investigation by helping each other.
- 108 Some useful assessment procedures are in place and others have been introduced recently. These have the capacity to provide the information teachers require but as they stand are inconsistent and not yet established firmly as school policy. The coordinator monitors the subject regularly but the information is not yet fully used to identify the developments needed in order to keep the subject moving forwards. The science curriculum covers all areas of the National Curriculum well, although the opportunities pupils are given to use information and communication technology to aid their learning in science are somewhat limited. Project work forms the main basis of science homework. This is a constructive approach and Year 4 pupils have produced detailed and informative folders on the subject of 'Space'.

ART AND DESIGN

- 109 Pupils' standards of attainment in art and design are well above expectations both at the end of Year 2 and when the pupils leave the school in Year 4. The school has been successful in maintaining high standards since the last inspection in spite of the increased pressures that have affected the curriculum in many schools. Standards in observational work are particularly high. All pupils are given access to a wide range of art activities and in response to good quality teaching pupils with special educational needs learn at the same rate as the rest of the pupils.
- 110 In Years 1 and 2, pupils have a developing ability to represent through art what is seen and touched. Pupils in Year 1 looked at themselves carefully and drew well observed self portraits using pastel crayons and paints. They explored different facial expressions then experimented with tone by effectively smudging the pastels to create areas of light and dark. Teachers ensure pupils have good opportunities to experiment with, and develop increasing control over, a wide range of materials and techniques. For example, in Year 2 pupils extended their knowledge of the range of colours they could mix by experimenting with both paints and pastels. Their new found skills were then put to use in observational drawings of poppies where they used pastel colours to great effect in capturing the true likeness of the poppy. Their skill in printing was also extended by using autumn leaves for the printing of collage pictures. Throughout all their pieces of work everything they produced was of a high quality and clearly demonstrated how much care and effort they had put into it.
- 111 Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 and 4. In Year 3 their observational skills continue to refine and there are some excellent examples of pencil drawing. Work on depicting a townscape shows a growing awareness of perspective as pupils achieve the correct balance between the different parts of buildings. Their work on producing pictures of different kinds of fruits includes some very high quality work on pineapples which could have been the work of much older pupils. The range of materials and experiences extends in Year 3 and following a study of mosaics the pupils begin to design their own mosaics on a paper plate. Weaving was introduced by one of the parents and over a period of time the pupils use a frame to weave a fabric that will eventually be framed and used to enhance the school. Pupils in Year 4 use watercolour, a medium often not experienced by pupils in primary schools. They use this medium to paint pictures of flowers and in their pieces of writing they are able to describe accurately why they enjoy using this particular painting method. Other mixes of paint are used to create exciting and imaginative textures that they can then use in their paintings.
- 112 A key feature in the success of the pupils' work in art is the good quality of teaching. A strength of the teaching is the way in which pupils' art work is highly valued and attractively displayed throughout the school, which motivates pupils, leading to higher standards. Pupils take pride and care in their work; they show a genuine appreciation of the efforts of others and they enjoy learning new techniques and relish challenges. The pupils working on the plate mosaics were keen to talk about what they were doing and one girl explained in some detail, how she had made a mistake in trying to begin with an accurate pencil drawing; 'I should have used the shapes of the tiles,' she said. These kinds of experiences in art are causing the pupils to think through the processes they are using and this is a skill that is important in any subject. Although only a small number of lessons were seen, pupils' work shows that the teachers set high expectations and that pupils have an immense pride in their work. Lessons are very carefully prepared with high quality resources available to the pupils. The teaching of skills and techniques is very good in order to produce work of the quality seen. Throughout the school there is a strong belief in the value of high quality artwork and as a result of this the subject makes

a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Good use is made of information and communication technology to provide an extra dimension to pupils' learning in art and design.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 113 By the end of Year 2 and Year 4, pupils attain standards that are above average and all ages achieve well. Most pupils have acquired a wide range of skills by the time they transfer to the middle school and have good knowledge of different materials. The school has made good improvement in this subject since the last inspection.
- 114 A clear and well structured scheme of work has been put in place and pupils' skills build progressively throughout Years 1 to 4. Most Year 2 pupils recognise the importance of drawing a plan of what they are going to make and can do this successfully. They know a good range of techniques for joining materials together, such as stapling, sewing, and gluing and can sensibly evaluate what they have made. This was clearly evident in the attractive and well constructed puppets of animals and pirates they made from felt and the careful manner in which they stitched the fabric together. Once they had made their puppets they thought carefully about how successful they had been and how they could have improved their finished product. Year 4 pupils have extended the skills they learned when they were in the infants to a wider range of materials, for example wood. They use good observational skills to investigate artefacts such as torches, identifying the materials used and determining how they work, before making their own models which function well.
- 115 Although, because of timetable arrangements no lessons were seen during the inspection it is evident from pupils' work and from discussion with them, that the teaching is good in both the infant and junior classes. Pupils have regular opportunities to design and construct. The criticism in the last report of a lack of planning for pupils' learning has been addressed well and pupils' skills are carefully developed. Tasks are well matched to the age and levels of attainment of pupils. Consequently, pupils derive a great deal of enjoyment and self satisfaction from being able to produce well made objects. They are keen to show their finished products and talk about how they have made them. Pupils readily continue their design and technology outside school. Many pupils in Year 4 made the torches, mentioned earlier, at home and brought them to school to display. They await the start of their next project with eager anticipation.
- 116 Teachers ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to evaluate different materials before using them. However, at times, teachers make too many decisions for the pupils and this does not encourage them to think and make choices for themselves. This does not detract from the very positive effect the teaching has on pupils' learning and the good progress in all year groups. Year 1 pupils learn how to secure structures by making houses supported by a framework of straws. Year 2 pupils recently made a simple and effective winding mechanism using dowel, a cotton reel and string to lift an object. They made their models as a group project with all members contributing to the finished product. Cooperative working of this type helps pupils develop very good social skills. Year 3 pupils develop skills of joining wood using card triangles when making a photograph frame. Year 3 pupils include careful measurements in their designs and use good techniques, such as strengthening joints with card triangles to improve the quality of their products.
- 117 The subject leader is compiling a portfolio of examples of work before she leaves the school at the end of the summer term so that the school will have a good point of reference to what is being produced by the pupils. This apart there are no formal

procedures for assessment by which teachers can keep track of specific groups of pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

- 118 Standards in geography at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 meet expectations for pupils' ages. This is much the same as it was at the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress year on year. Those pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The support they receive enables them to have full access to the geography curriculum.
- 119 By the end of Year 2 pupils have a sound understanding of simple map work. This has been developed through making simple plans of a room and locating features in an adventure playground. Most are able to label the countries of the United Kingdom and the world's oceans on maps. Photographs of the locations 'Barney Bear' has visited with pupils on holiday stimulates their interest and pupils enjoy sharing and recalling their experiences. This work helps them to develop an early understanding of the purpose of maps. Following an educational visit, Year 1 pupils can successfully compare their own environment with that of a farm and identify the features that characterise both. The higher attaining pupils are able to explain what they like and dislike about both environments. This work is extended well in Year 2 when pupils carry out a detailed study of island life on Struay. They enjoy comparing life on an island with their own locality and have sufficient knowledge and understanding to write informative guidebooks about the island. Those of the higher attainers are detailed and show a good level of understanding.
- 120 In Year 4 pupils are investigating life in the developing country of Mexico. Most pupils can recall a satisfactory range of facts about the country and interpret information about its physical features from an atlas, although lower attaining pupils have only a limited knowledge. The majority of pupils recognise similarities between Mexico and Spain from a previous study and begin to make comparisons with the climate of Britain. They make plans of growing complexity with explanatory keys and use simple coordinates and the points of a compass to good effect. In Year 3 pupils are beginning to show an understanding of physical and human geographical features. Higher attaining pupils in particular use maps well and can identify many of the countries in Europe. Pupils use reading skills well to extract information from text in order to learn facts about the topic they are studying. The curriculum places a strong emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge but less upon the skills of interpretation.
- 121 The teaching of geography is sound overall and on occasions it is good. Teachers who have good subject knowledge use questioning well to reinforce learning, and challenge and extend pupils' thinking. Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and enjoy discussing their work. However, in too many lessons all the work given to the pupils is the same irrespective of their differing levels of attainment. When the same activity is planned for the whole class higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged and those pupils with special needs find the work difficult without support. Pupils' use of information and communication technology to research information and construct street plans provides an effective extra dimension to their learning. The subject policy identifies the geographical topics and skills that will be taught as pupils progress through the school. However, the arrangements for the assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress have yet to be fully implemented.

HISTORY

- 122 Standards meet expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils make sound progress in developing their historical knowledge and skills. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They are supported well and are fully included in lessons.
- 123 By the end of Year 2 pupils are developing a sound understanding of the differences between the past and the present through studying different events and lifestyles. They can recall information about the 'Great Fire of London' and know that as a consequence the city was rebuilt to a safer design. Pupils learn about the lives and impact of famous people such as Florence Nightingale and Guy Fawkes and about how people lived at the time. They have identified people who are famous now, such as Robbie Williams and Michael Jackson and can give simple reasons why they think these people will be famous in the future. In a lesson about leisure activities in the past Year 2 pupils used early skills of historical research to study how holidays for Victorians and people in the mid twentieth century differed from those of today. They used photographs to find differences in clothing, transport and amusements and through discussion with their teacher began to understand reasons for them. They are enthusiastic about the work and give thoughtful answers to questions. The pupils use language appropriate to the passing of time and have an understanding of chronology. Chronological sequences are well illustrated in the classrooms and provide a good context for learning and discussion. Pupils use a limited range of methods to record historical information. There is useful pictorial recording but less use is made of written work or diagrams to support learning.
- 124 Pupils in Year 4 know about the events of World War Two and its effects on the lives of people at the time. At an appropriate level they have also thought sensitively about the impact of the holocaust. Year 3 pupils can discuss the impact of invaders such as the Celts, Anglo Saxons, Vikings and Romans upon the country. In each year group pupils use reading skills well to extract information from texts, however, the range of ways in which this is recorded is limited. There is an over reliance on worksheets and pupils often copy information into their books. This does not allow them to express their knowledge or interpretation of facts or provide opportunities to assess pupils' understanding. Those pupils with special educational needs do not always complete this work and at times there is limited challenge for higher attaining pupils.
- 125 Overall teaching in history is sound. Teachers have a good knowledge of history and provide good resources to illustrate the subject and interest the pupils. There is satisfactory use of information and communication technology, for example in work about Roman mosaics but it is not yet used extensively to research or represent information. A whole school approach to the assessment of pupils' learning is being developed but has not been fully implemented.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 126 Standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 4 are above the national average. This represents a very good improvement since the last inspection and is the result of a considerable amount of very constructive subject development.
- 127 In both the infant and junior classes pupils achieve well and develop an increasingly wide range of skills and competence. By the end of Year 2 pupils are able to use a mouse and keyboard with speed and control. They load up programs, run them with a minimum of assistance and are increasingly independent when trying to find solutions to any problems they have encountered. The quality of pupils' work is evident in the attractive

displays around the school and a high quality printer, given as a prize for a competition won by a pupil, stands as testimony to the good quality work they are producing. A minority of pupils is still acquiring basic skills but the majority is able to use writing, art and data programs to good effect. Higher attainers work at speed and are often able to solve the problems they encounter for themselves. Year 3 pupils are starting to compose music on the computer and are able to drag and drop icons/items on the screen so that component parts of a well known tune are in the correct sequence. The enjoyment pupils derive from being able to use the computer in such ways is very evident in their enthusiasm, concentration and pride in their own and other pupils' achievements. They readily help each other and use the equipment entrusted to them carefully and sensibly. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Many of these pupils find they are able to produce a better standard of work on the computer than when using pencil and paper and this gives them considerable incentive to try hard with their tasks.

- 128 The teaching is consistently good and pupils make clear and sustained progress from Year 1 to Year 4. Careful thought has been given to the organisation of the curriculum and all pupils receive hour long lessons taught in a computer suite combined with small group activities on the classroom computers. Many of the computer suite based lessons for Years 1, 2 and 3 are taught by a specialist teacher with extensive technical skills which she is able to pass to the pupils at a level that is both appropriate and challenging. As a result the pace of pupils' learning is good and the skills they acquire are securely established. In a lesson about data handling Year 1 pupils were taught how to construct a pictogram using a wall chart and cut out pictures before moving onto the computer to produce a graph of their own. By the end of the lesson they were happily and quickly assembling data, adjusting it to correct errors and printing off their results ready for an end of lesson discussion. One of the most significant outcomes was pupils' recognition of how the computer had simplified a quite complex task and helped them to learn at a fast rate.
- 129 The computer suite only accommodates half a class of pupils comfortably and Year 4 pupils use the facilities of the local middle school for information and communication technology lessons. This not only allows the whole class to be taught at the same time but also provides a valuable link with the school into which most will transfer in the near future. However, the arrangement makes it difficult for pupils to continue work started at the middle school at other times of the week and it is a little time since the arrangements of the partnership were reviewed.
- 130 Teachers make satisfactory use of the classroom computers to aid pupils' learning in other subjects, particularly in English and mathematics. Pupils are starting to appreciate how knowledge can be acquired from CD ROMS and the internet to help them learn more about people, places and events. However, in some subjects insufficient use is made of information and communication technology. For example in science pupils do not use the data handling programs enough to help them record and present information they have gained from investigations.
- 131 A comprehensive programme of work provides a solid framework for lesson planning. As a consequence pupils learn to appreciate and use different facilities of the computer. Year 4 pupils, for example are able to type quickly and accurately a set of instructions to control the actions of an on screen model. This helps them develop reasoning skills and to begin to appreciate how instructions given to electronic devices, such as automatic washing machines, are turned into actions. The coordinator monitors the subject satisfactorily using a range of procedures. However, the information this provides is not yet used well enough to ensure that the upward trend in standards continues.

MUSIC

- 132 By the end of Years 2 and 4 standards in music are at the levels expected and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards are similar to those found at the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language achieve at a similar rate to other pupils and make sound progress.
- 133 Year 2 pupils sing in tune and enjoy performing although their singing sometimes lacks vigour. They are able to express preferences as to which songs they like, often choosing those that they sing in assembly. Pupils can tap out a rhythm reasonably well and they know the names of the instruments they are playing. Although they like different types of music, few pupils can name a piece of music which is a particular favourite or explain why. Year 4 pupils enjoy joining in songs they learn in class and they sing well when led by the teacher. They have only a limited understanding of simple musical terms and are often restricted to rhythm. For example, few pupils can explain what the term 'pitch' or changes in 'tempo' signify. The music they listen to and know about is wide ranging from classical to jazz and includes music from other cultures, such as African music. Pupils do not have many opportunities to compose their own music and this places limitations on their learning.
- 134 Only two lessons were seen during the inspection, however, it is apparent from the quality of music in the school and discussion with pupils that the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are planned carefully and a good range of resources used to support pupils' learning. Occasionally teaching is unsatisfactory because of a lack of pace and too frequent a change of activity. Pupils enjoy music lessons and generally concentrate well. Without being asked to do so a Year 4 pupil returned the day after a class music lesson having thought of a variety of ways to play a rhythm. The choir comprises of Year 3 and Year 4 pupils and makes a good contribution to music in the school. The pupils involved are very enthusiastic, their singing is melodic and they keep to the beat very well. They are able to put actions and music together well when performing 'Bob the Builder' and can readily adjust to a change in tempo and volume when singing 'World in Union'.
- 135 Pupils from all classes take part in school productions and the recent Christmas production of 'Babushka' showed that pupils' performance in singing is of the quality expected of primary pupils. During musical productions pupils play a variety of instruments to good effect, including the large drums and xylophones although these are not used extensively in lessons. Pupils are enthusiastic about the music they hear in assemblies and they are becoming familiar with the names of different composers. When the school was visited by a group from the 'Explorer's Club' all pupils joined in the singing well and readily participated in the actions to all the songs.
- 136 The subject leader has put together a sound scheme of work which includes the progression of skills and suggested pieces of music for listening and appraising purposes. However, there are no references to appropriate activities to help to develop those elements of composing that are not being taught well. Assessment is at a very early stage of development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 137 Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Standards have been maintained at the level reported in the last inspection but improvements have been made in the planning of activities and the range of opportunities available to the pupils. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. The teaching is satisfactory and on occasions good. Teachers make good use of national subject guidance and this ensures that all required aspects of the subject are covered effectively. At the time of the inspection the school was unable to use its own swimming pool due to damage by vandals. When it is operational this is a very useful facility as it means that pupils can enjoy regular periods of swimming without the time loss often incurred through having to travel.
- 138 Pupils in Year 1 are developing a variety of basic skills using a tennis racquet and a ball. Many of the pupils can balance the ball on the racquet in a sitting position and then stand up with the ball still in a balanced position. Through these and similar activities pupils are not only developing their muscle control but also improving their hand and eye coordination. Before beginning these activities the pupils engage wholeheartedly in an activity to stretch their muscles prior to exercise and they enter into the tasks with enthusiasm. A feature of all the lessons observed was the enthusiasm of the pupils and the amount of effort they put into the activity, this showed how much they appreciated and valued physical education. Pupils in Year 2 were engaged in developing continuous and controlled dribbling with a hockey stick. They proved to be quite good at controlling the ball with their feet but found using the stick much more difficult. Regular teaching points made during the lesson and good use of demonstration by the teacher enabled pupils to make progress and refine their skills. The pupils work well together in pairs, cooperating well, helping each other and getting on with the minimum amount of fuss.
- 139 By the time the pupils are in Year 3 they have the expected understanding of how to improve their performance. In a lesson on sprinting they began by timing their efforts when running normally and then again when they have practised their running style and a sprint start. They all enjoy running and put a great deal of effort into the activities. They have learned to use space well and to be aware of others who are performing around them. As with the infant classes a feature of lessons for the older pupils is the good use of demonstration by the teacher and pupils and the opportunities taken for pupils to evaluate each other's performance and feed this back to their partners.
- 140 As pupils progress through the school they enjoy the whole range of physical activity from games to gymnastics and swimming. Dance is a strong feature of the programme and includes movement sequences to music as well as country dancing. Pupils in their final year have Afro Caribbean dancing as part of their programme extending their appreciation of cultures other than their own. The physical education programme is further enhanced by an activity weekend that includes archery, climbing and mountain biking and by extra curricular activities that include hockey and football. In all the physical education activities provided all the pupils are fully included in the full range of activities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 141 Standards in religious education are above those normally expected both at the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 4. The subject also makes a significant contribution to the development of literacy skills and to the pupils' personal and social development. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection. A strength of religious education throughout the school is its impact on the attitudes and values shown by all the pupils.

Lessons are well planned with interesting activities and the quality of teaching in this subject is good. Consequently all pupils make good progress and achieve well.

- 142 Pupils in Year 1 understand about important times in the year and festivals that are important to Christians and other faiths such as the Nativity, Divali and Easter. They know the importance of places of worship and the ceremonies that take place such as weddings and christenings. Through sensitively organised discussion they explore aspects of their own lives such as feelings. In one lesson exploring 'Myself and My Feelings' pupils answered questions thoughtfully and gave examples of how a person's feelings can be hurt. They identified words such as sad, angry, happy and excited as expressions of different kinds of feelings. Pupils' skills in literacy were drawn on well in writing about something that made them happy or sad.
- 143 In Year 2 pupils extend their knowledge of major faiths and look at the places that are the important centres of worship such as the Mosque and the Synagogue. Stories from the Bible form an important aspect of their learning and a visit into school from the local Christian minister helps them to understand that all the great faiths have different kinds of leaders. Good use is made of artefacts to bring the different religions to life. For example, through displays that includes a rosary as a symbol of the Roman Catholic Church, a kippah used by the Jewish faith during prayers and a Muslim prayer mat used during worship. Lively and thoughtful teaching combined with the good use of artefacts, videos and visitors stimulates pupils' interest and makes their learning enjoyable. Pupils respond well, are keen to learn and watch and listen carefully. By the end of Year 2 pupils have become aware that some of the main religions share a number of religious practices, for example having a known place of worship.
- 144 Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 begin to deepen their understanding of different religions and religious practices. In order to do this they look at similarities and differences between the major faiths. Pupils in Year 4 come to a better understanding, for example, of different aspects of Jewish life, how the Muslims live and what the major differences are between their own lives and the lives of those who practice Sikhism. Pupils understand how celebrations form an important part of different religions and know a considerable amount about the major characters and stories from the Bible, for example Abraham, Moses and Joseph. From making sound gains in these lessons pupils are learning about the choices made by people from the Old Testament. In one lesson pupils confidently shared their ideas and after an interesting introduction they worked in small groups to answer a range of questions about Jonah. By the end of the lesson they had a clear understanding of the choices Jonah made and the consequences. They were enthusiastic about religious education which undoubtedly is one of the contributory factors to their successful learning.