

INSPECTION REPORT

KENTS HILL FIRST SCHOOL

Milton Keynes

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique reference number: 110402

Headteacher: Mrs H Anderson

Reporting inspector: Mrs P Silcock
21261

Dates of inspection: 10th – 12th June 2002

Inspection number: 196623

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 - 8
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Birdlip Lane Kents Hill Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Jolly
Date of previous inspection:	1 st July 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21261	Pauline Silcock	Registered inspector	English Art and design Design and technology History English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught?
19443	Nancy Walker	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
16761	Melvyn Hemmings	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Geography Music Special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?
24022	Julia Lawson	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Physical education Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated to the east of central Milton Keynes. At the time of the inspection, 222 pupils were on roll with roughly equal numbers of boys and girls. Sixty pupils were in Reception classes. All children now start school in the September of the year in which they are five. Most have benefited from pre-school education in play groups or nurseries. Children's attainments vary on entry to school but teachers' assessments find most below the average expected for their age, compared with children in other local authority schools, in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Approximately 23 per cent are of minority ethnic origin. Nine per cent are learning English as an additional language (well above the national average) with six per cent at an early stage of such learning. They receive support through Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant funding. The main languages spoken other than English are Urdu, Cantonese, Polish and Japanese. Approximately nine per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, an average figure. Approximately nine per cent have special educational needs, well below average. One per cent has a statement of special need. This is below average. Most pupils with individual education plans are identified as having moderate learning difficulties, with a minority having speech and communication or behavioural problems. There is a trend towards rising pupil mobility. Figures for the last school year show 17 per cent joined and 41 per cent left the school other than at the normal time of entry. The leaving figure was higher than the usual proportion of around 20 per cent because the school 'hosted' pupils waiting for the completion of a new school in an adjacent area.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Kents Hill is a good school. The school provides good quality education for all its pupils, so all achieve well relative to their ages and abilities. More able pupils frequently reach good standards in subjects across the curriculum. This positive picture is owed to the frequently good or better quality of much teaching. The headteacher is a very good leader. She is ably supported by her deputy head. The management of the school is also very good. All with managerial responsibilities contribute strongly to school life, including governors, who are effective 'critical friends' of the school. Senior managers, staff and governors are determined to move the school forward and raise standards in all aspects of provision. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Good work from all support staff helps pupils to achieve well and make the best of their abilities.
- Pupils of all ages are enthusiastic learners. They behave well because of the strengths in teaching, which is of frequently good or better quality and inspires pupils to want to succeed.
- The quality and range of learning opportunities are very good.
- Pupils' personal development is very good in terms of their willingness to take responsibility for themselves, for their relationships with one another and with adults.
- The headteacher's clear educational vision is informed by her thorough overview of the school's work. She receives very good support from all those with management responsibilities.
- The governing body is very effective in helping shape the direction of the school.
- The care and welfare of all pupils is very good, being at the heart of all staff's concerns to promote learning.
- Parents have a high regard for the school, seeing themselves as valued partners in their children's education.

What could be improved

- The level of provision for information and communication technology across subjects in line with school improvement planning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

No issues for action were identified in the last inspection in July 1997 although points for development were noted throughout the report. The school has worked hard on all aspects of provision since then and has achieved a good level of improvement. It has made very good improvements for children in the Reception year. Improvements in numbers of support staff, including the appointment of a Nursery Nurse for the youngest children, have significantly affected standards. Pupils with special educational needs now make better progress in mathematics. The analysis of assessment information informs planning and is regularly stressed. Its importance in raising standards is recognised. There are schemes of work for all subjects. The roles of subject co-ordinators are well-defined and seen as key to curricular planning and development. Pupils' personal development and the relationships they make with their peers and with adults are now very good throughout the school, as are arrangements for Child Protection and the care and welfare of pupils. Parents' views of the school are very much more positive than previously. However, they continue to express concerns about extra-curricular provision and homework. The school has a very good capacity to improve further.

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	D	C	C	C
Writing	C	B	C	D
Mathematics	A	B	D	D

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

The table reveals seven-year-olds achieved broadly average standards compared with pupils in all schools in reading and writing, and were below average in mathematics in 2001 statutory tests. Compared to pupils in similar schools, their results are again broadly average in reading but below average in writing and mathematics. Teachers assessed pupils as below average in speaking and listening and in science at expected levels (Level 2). Over time, trends in tests are rising although results vary year-on-year, reflecting different cohorts of pupils. The school's assessment information over time shows that the 49 per cent of pupils taking tests in 2001 who started school in the Reception year made particularly good progress. They at least reached Level 2 in statutory tests. Inspection judgements confirm the good progress overall. They show these pupils (now in Year 3) are, broadly, reaching expected levels in English, mathematics and science. More able pupils are doing better than this, frequently reaching good standards. Pupils in Year 2 are also judged to meet expectations in reading, writing, mathematics and science. More able pupils and some of average ability do better. This marks an improvement in standards in mathematics and science at this age. Pupils have good speaking and listening skills across subjects. Almost all read confidently, as when they read to younger peers in shared reading sessions. They can generally sequence ideas well when writing and more able pupils write at length. Those of average or below average ability do better with shorter tasks but have more difficulty with their spellings and in keeping work tidy - especially boys. In mathematics, pupils order three-digit numbers and put different patterns into a sequence. The more able have a good grasp of place value when ordering numbers into thousands, hundreds, tens and units. Pupils discuss scientific ideas with understanding. For example, they discuss how plants and animals are classified according to observable features. Pupils of all ages, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make good progress because of good quality support. Most children in the Reception year are judged likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in all areas by the time they transfer to Year 1. Pupils of all abilities in Year 1 frequently do much better than

expected because of skilled teaching. For example, in a very good history lesson pupils were keen to participate and made notable progress in learning about historical time. Across the school, pupils reach good standards in music, especially in singing. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 reach satisfactory standards in National Curriculum subjects more generally (for example, geography and design and technology) and in religious education. More able pupils again do better than this. Through the generally good teaching in information and communication technology, pupils become competent on computers but have too few opportunities to apply their skills to other subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic about learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are most frequently well behaved. They generally concentrate hard and complete tasks in the time given.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and are notably polite and helpful towards each other and when dealing with adults.
Attendance	Good. Pupils almost always arrive promptly at the start of the day.

Across the school pupils respond really well to frequently stimulating and varied learning opportunities. On occasion, a small number of children in the Reception classes present challenging behaviour but they usually settle productively to work with good support. Very good relationships between pupils and with adults markedly affect work in classrooms and school ethos. According to recent figures, attendance has improved in the last complete school year.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is a strength of the school with none judged less than satisfactory and 46 per cent judged good. A further 23 per cent is very good. Good or very good teaching is frequently seen in all year groups, across areas of learning for children in the Reception year, and in National Curriculum subjects and religious education for pupils in Years 1 to 3. Particular strengths are evident in Years 1 and 2. Although teaching in geography was judged satisfactory overall, some good teaching was also seen in Year 3. Strengths are found in English and music, which are of very good quality. Mathematics is well taught. Teachers teach basic literacy and numeracy skills well. Throughout the school, teachers' planning is very good. It is well matched to pupils' needs, including the more able who like extra challenges. Assessments made in lessons feed usefully into planning, ensuring all pupils make good progress. Support staff are deployed to very good effect to support pupils with learning needs, such as those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. This provision adds considerably to the quality of classroom life. In a small number of lessons the pace falters at times so pupils, unusually, find it hard to concentrate. More often, pupils make strides in learning because of well-planned lessons and stimulating activities, such as the whole-school 'sing-along' session where a teacher's expertise promoted high standards in an enjoyable way for a hymn practice in the hall.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good overall. Planned activities are frequently stimulating, engaging all pupils' interest.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with learning difficulties are identified early and curricular planning is suitably adjusted to supporting these.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils are well supported through carefully targeted support, especially in literacy and numeracy lessons. They participate fully in all aspects of lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall with strengths in pupils' moral and social development. Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong and work co-operatively because of consistent practice across the school. Provision for pupils' cultural development is not consistently part of planning.
How well the school cares for its pupils	To very good effect. Pupils' good welfare and positive self-esteem are important to all adults across all aspects of the school's provision.

The school places a high priority on its partnership with parents, which is very good. Curricular planning has good breadth and balance. Teachers plan in an interesting and lively way to meet statutory requirements and recommendations in the guidelines for Reception children. Although the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are stressed in line with government requirements, care is taken to ensure wider experiences are integral to planning (for example, in the arts). As noted, information and communication technology insufficiently supports work in other subjects. All pupils have access to the curriculum. Very good assessment procedures inform teachers' planning so pupils are grouped appropriately, especially in English and mathematics. Targets set at class, group and individual level are monitored regularly. Pupils know and understand these and well-planned tasks help achieve them. This is true of pupils on the Code of Practice register of special needs, whose individual education plans are of good quality.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has a very keen sense of the school's educational direction. She is well supported by a very effective deputy head and by others with management responsibilities.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	To very good effect. Governors are actively involved in school life and school improvement planning. They are good 'critical friends'.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. All with management responsibilities undertake monitoring activities, including observing teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Specific grants are used for designated purposes and all financial matters are rigorously administered and overseen.

There are sufficient teachers to meet curricular demands. Improved support staffing levels (including for administrative purposes) have had a good impact on pupils' learning. Overall, accommodation is good, both indoors and outdoors. It is well kept. With the exception of information and communication technology, learning resources are sufficient to meet curricular needs. They are good for English and science and very good in music. The headteacher's collaborative and supportive management style motivates colleagues, so the school has a strong commitment to improvement and capacity to succeed. Notably, the headteacher and chair of governors work in harmony. Their stance on school improvement and the raising of standards is uncompromising. The governing body is keenly aware of principles of best value. In the light of likely effects on standards, it checks that the school applies those principles when prioritising how monies will be spent.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children like school and are eager to get there.• They enjoy lessons and make good progress.• Teaching is good and teachers and other staff know children really well.• Children are helped to become mature and responsible.• The school provides good information about all aspects of its work.• It works closely with parents and values their views.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Homework provision.• The range of activities offered outside lessons.

The vast majority of parents are very pleased with nearly everything the school does. However, many otherwise supportive parents are unhappy with how much homework is given in addition to regular reading and spellings. Inspectors agree the school could usefully review its homework policy, since many parents appear unaware that some homework tasks are voluntary. A significant number are also critical of the range of activities offered to their children outside lessons. Inspectors do not agree with parents' concerns here and judge there is a good number and range of extra-curricular activities, considering pupils' ages.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Assessments on entry to school show attainments vary year-on-year, but, overall, are below expectations for four-year-olds compared with children in other local authority schools. The areas of learning assessed are: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; and mathematical development. All children, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, make good progress because of good support from teachers, a Nursery Nurse and other support staff. Inspection evidence shows most children should achieve the Early Learning Goals in all areas by the time they transfer to Year 1, including in those areas where weaknesses were identified at the start of the school year. They are also expected to achieve these goals in the remaining areas, i.e. knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development. Indeed, more able children and those of average ability already achieve some goals in each area. For example, they co-operate well in sharing toys and helping each other when they push or pull one another around the outdoor play space in wheeled toys, or share equipment to make sand castles in the sand trays together. Children have good reading skills. They can formulate letter shapes for familiar words and write legibly for their own purposes. They can name and order numbers to 20 and 'take away' through practical activities using sets of objects, such as toy animals. They manoeuvre around a computer screen using its mouse, changing the colour and size of their work. In music, they can pick out and compare patterns within their names and follow a four-beat pattern with instruments. They sing songs and rhymes from memory. They confidently steer wheeled toys around spaces and balance across a low beam. They use tools and equipment well, as when they use scissors and paint brushes and a number of different implements for writing.
2. In the 2001 statutory tests, seven-year-olds were broadly in line with the average for pupils in all schools in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. They achieved broadly in line with the average in reading when results are compared with those of pupils in similar schools but below average in writing and mathematics. Over a period of three years, boys' results were considerably poorer than girls in reading and writing and fell significantly below girls' results in mathematics. Teachers assessed pupils as below average in speaking and listening skills and in science at expected levels (Level 2). In science, there were weaknesses in experimental and investigative science and strengths in 'life and living processes'. Inspection evidence shows pupils now in Year 3 were well below the average of their peers in local authority schools when they started in the Reception year. This is accounted for by the greater proportion of pupils having special educational needs than normal in each cohort. Also, almost half of the cohort (approximately 41 per cent at the time of statutory tests) entered school after the usual time of entry. Assessment information allows the school to compare individuals' assessments on entry to Reception classes and statutory test results at Year 2. Where such a comparison is made, it reveals all pupils who started in Reception, now in Year 3, have made good progress. They achieved at least in line with the expected Level 2 in statutory tests. Boys made progress in line with girls, even though they did not do as well in statutory tests. It is difficult to compare this evidence with inspection findings because further pupil movement (some very recent) has materially affected the make-up of Year 3. However, inspection judgements support the picture of good progress overall. They show these older pupils are achieving broadly in line with expected levels in English, mathematics and science. More able pupils are doing better than this, frequently reaching good standards.
3. Pupils in Year 2 also achieve broadly in line with expectations in reading, writing, mathematics and science. More able pupils and some of average ability do better. This marks an improvement in standards overall in mathematics and science at this age. The latest test and teacher assessment results are not yet available. Pupils have good speaking and listening skills, seen across subjects. This is because lessons are frequently structured to provide many and varied opportunities for pupils to think through and talk about their ideas and listen to others' opinions. Almost all read confidently to younger peers in shared reading sessions. They have sound strategies for tackling unknown words, making a sensible guess from a story's content for instance. They read for meaning for varied purposes. For example, they use instructions on work sheets or 'aide memoires', placed on a wall, to

support a story task. They can generally sequence ideas well when writing and more able pupils write at length. Those of average or below average ability succeed better with shorter tasks, such as when writing poems or brief accounts of what they have done or seen. These pupils have more difficulty with their spellings and in keeping work tidy - especially boys. Pupils consistently achieve better results in handwriting when practising relevant skills but do not always transfer such learning to other work. In mathematics, they order three-digit numbers and put different patterns into a sequence. The more able have a good grasp of place value when ordering numbers into thousands, hundreds, tens and units. Pupils handle simple scientific equipment carefully and safely. They discuss scientific ideas. For example, they consider how plants and animals are classified according to observable features and subsequently investigate this in the wildlife area in the school grounds, using magnifiers and other equipment with some skill.

4. The school analyses assessment information extensively to determine how to address weaknesses in pupils' performance in order to raise standards. For example, there is a continuing effort at improving spelling and tackling gender differences in English. There has been considerable success in raising standards overall in science, but particularly in the teaching of experimental and investigative science.
5. Pupils throughout Years 1 to 3 achieve well relative to their age and abilities. At times, Year 1 pupils do better than might be expected because their learning is reinforced by practical tasks that intrigue them. For example, in a history lesson, all pupils built very successfully on their understanding of how time is measured when they placed toys along a time-line. Pupils with special educational needs (including those having a statement of special need) and those with English as an additional language make good progress because they are well supported, with help in literacy and numeracy suitably emphasised. Across the ability range, pupils are challenged by tasks and extension work is available for those (generally more able) who finish ahead of others.
6. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactory standards in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology and religious education. Standards in music are good and pupils reach high standards in singing. They sing tunefully and can maintain a rhythm. They sing many songs from memory enthusiastically, obviously enjoying themselves. More able pupils across the age range sometimes reach good standards in other subjects, too. For example, Year 2 pupils have produced very pleasing pastel drawings of fruit and vegetables, making collages of these with felt and beads. Year 3 history work shows able pupils are good at making sense of information they have researched about life in Ancient Greece. Their extended writing on this topic is lively and interesting. Pupils have sound computer skills which they apply appropriately to different subjects (as when word processing for varied purposes or producing block charts for mathematics and science). However, opportunities for such application are limited because of insufficient resources.
7. The picture showing standards reached and the progress made by different groups of pupils is similar to that in the previous inspection report.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils of all ages have good attitudes to school and parents confirm that their children are happy to attend. All, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, have positive attitudes towards their work and show interest and enjoyment in what they are doing. Their good attitudes are similar to those found in pupils at the last inspection. Pupils attend regularly and the school's attendance figures are comparable with others across the country. The attendance figure for this current year at 95 per cent, in fact, marks an improvement on last year and is now over one per cent above the national average. Pupils are very punctual both at the start of the day and after recreation and lunch breaks. They settle very quickly. In lessons, pupils discuss topics keenly and thoroughly, taking a full part in activities. They concentrate well, working briskly and producing a good amount of work.
9. Standards in pupils' behaviour continue to be good. Pupils show respect for staff. They listen and follow instructions. They are polite and well mannered, routinely holding doors open and standing back for others to pass through, including other pupils as well as adults. There are however a few pupils, especially in the Reception year, who find it difficult to behave acceptably but do respond adequately to skilful management. During recreation and lunchtimes, pupils play well together.

Noticeable in their play is how well pupils from many different backgrounds and cultures mix together rather than forming cliques or excluding individuals. Nevertheless, pupils are very lively outside and although there is no intimidating behaviour or animosity of any kind, they sometimes play roughly with one another with little thought about the consequences for their own safety.

10. Relationships and pupils' personal development are both very good indeed - an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils reveal a maturity beyond their young age when they show respect towards staff and each other and fulfil responsibilities with fair initiative. Many examples were witnessed by inspectors. For instance, during paired reading sessions, older pupils read and share books with younger pupils in a very adult but fun way. When a younger pupil had fallen and grazed her knees, an older boy treated her with real compassion, gently guiding her into a chair and distracting her with a story - a joy to see. At playtime, unaware that he was being observed, a boy persevered at persuading a girl to remember the school rules and not climb over shrubs to retrieve a ball. He was eventually successful.
11. Pupils are supportive of each other in lessons, listening to one another, sharing ideas and equipment and learning from each other's ideas and skills. A School Council meets regularly and class representatives take their responsibilities seriously - they make democratic decisions and manage a small budget, for example, by searching through equipment catalogues and comparing what they can afford with items they want to buy. Using this strategy, they decide to choose more litter-bins for classrooms priced within their budget. They have also been instrumental in getting playground markings repainted. Pupils feed back the outcomes of meetings to their class.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. Teaching is a strength. It is never less than satisfactory, with 46 per cent judged good and a further 23 per cent very good. These findings are similar to those of the last report and are commendable since a number of teachers were on temporary or supply cover contracts during this inspection. Staff changes were owed to teachers taking up new posts, or they happened through other circumstances beyond the school's control. Particular strengths are seen in Years 1 and 2 where 48 per cent of teaching was judged good and a further 33 per cent very good. In Year 3, 42 and 17 per cent of lessons were good and very good, respectively. In the Reception year, teaching was divided equally between that which was satisfactory and that judged good.
13. Teachers' planning throughout the school is very good. It is well founded on assessments of pupils' prior learning and takes good account of individual needs, including those of pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. The school is aware that better information about bilingual learners' English language skills on entry to school would help to further teachers' understanding of their learning needs even more. It is actively working towards this end. Pupils with special educational needs (including those with a Statement of special need) are taught in ways geared to targets on their individual education plans. Teachers take very good account of these in their weekly planning, especially when setting targets linked to literacy and numeracy and (where behavioural problems are identified) for ensuring that targets for personal and social development are understood by all concerned. Work is well matched to pupils' abilities, so that they make good progress. The Nursery Nurse in the Reception year and teaching assistants across classes give good support to pupils with identified needs both individually and during group activities, complementing the teacher's role. This happens, too, with bilingual learners who benefit from a specialist learning support assistant. Carefully targeted support ensures these learners are well taught. They make good progress during whole class sessions and when working in small groups.
14. To ensure consistency across each subject, teachers within each year group meet weekly to review work and adjust planning in light of learning outcomes. This shared planning greatly benefits staff new to the school since it allows established teachers to make sure new colleagues understand common practices and are supported in their work. It generates strong team work as teachers pursue common goals, further enhancing the quality of pupils' learning.

15. Support staff contribute to learning in all classes. They are deployed to very good effect. In the Reception year, for example, the roles of the Nursery Nurse and those of the teaching assistants are very well established. Adults work productively together, being good role models in the way they co-operate in the smooth running of lessons and treat one another and pupils with respect. Teachers make sure support staff know a lesson's content and the part they will play. For example, a teaching assistant knew it was important to sit with a pupil with special educational needs during a whole class literacy session in Year 1. She made sure he followed teaching points about spelling patterns by copying them on a small 'wipe board' and reinforcing what the teacher said. Consequently, he watched the teacher attentively and concentrated for an appreciable period of time. Support staff discuss the outcomes of their work with class teachers, so planning takes 'next steps' for pupils properly into account.
16. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are well taught. Strengths are seen in the teaching of English, which is judged very good overall. Basic skills in information and communication technology are also well taught, notwithstanding the limitations set by current levels of resources which means teachers cannot always ensure skills are applied to subjects across the curriculum. In almost all subjects, teaching is at least good. Strengths were seen especially in a Year 1 history lesson (the only history observed) and in the teaching of music. Geography teaching is judged satisfactory, with some good teaching seen in a Year 3 class. Quality teaching aids pupils' learning generally, as when they achieve high standards in singing. Planning is rooted in clear teaching and learning objectives, which are shared consistently with pupils so that they know what is expected of them. At the end of lessons, teachers commonly check what has been learned and assess this learning against targets. Frequently, too, especially in the better lessons, teachers comment on whether pupils have made progress towards personal targets.
17. Where teaching is good or better, teachers maintain a brisk pace. They keep learning intentions in mind, involving everyone in fulfilling these. For example, in a very good Year 1 music lesson, a teacher explained that pupils should think about the *quality* of sound when they played an instrument and find out whether they could change this at all. She let pupils experiment at shaking, striking and banging their instruments, aware of the excitement in handling them. Gradually, she persuaded them to listen to one another's playing, drawing attention to how sounds were made and could be improved. Pupils learned that a triangle has a pleasing ring when it and its beater are held correctly. Really skilled questioning and observations of what pupils did well stimulated all into concentrating hard. For instance, the teacher reinforced the good playing of the triangle by remarking "Oh, hasn't he done that well! Can you see what he has remembered to do with the beater?" This caused many to think more carefully about playing their own instruments with more attention to the sounds produced. Almost incidentally, pupils confirmed their knowledge of instruments' names when the teacher probed their previous learning and extended this.
18. Overall, teachers have good pupil-management skills, especially in Years 1 and 2. In the Reception classes, teachers manage pupils satisfactorily in the main but also are good at managing the challenging behaviour of a small number. Such behaviour is dealt with sensitively in both classes. Carefully planned activities enable those who find it hard to control their social behaviour to participate in the range of opportunities provided. At times, the slow pace of a lesson affects pupils' concentration. Unusually, they fidget. For example, in a satisfactory Year 3 religious education lesson, the pace faltered towards the end when points already made earlier were repeated. Pupils lost interest and became distracted and needed reminding to pay attention. More generally, pupils get on and make progress because they know teachers expect tasks to be taken seriously and finished in the time given. They apply themselves to achieving goals. In the better lessons, teachers place themselves strategically when with a group, keeping a good eye on the rest of the class. At times, they monitor around tables checking everyone is on task and looking for where help is needed. This was seen during a very good Year 3 literacy lesson when pupils were well aware that they had to have relevant points to share at the end of the session.
19. Teachers match homework to pupils' ages and abilities. For example, children in the Reception classes take books home every night. As they move through the school, such regular reading stays a priority for all but other tasks are also set. Pupils practise spellings related to literacy work and tackle thematic work such as that associated with the current topic.

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

20. The school's curricular provision for children in the Reception year and in Years 1 to 3 has good breadth and balance. Areas of learning for children under five and National Curriculum subjects, together with religious education for pupils from seven to eight years, are planned in ways relevant to the age range taught. Overall, there is a very good range and quality of provision, with particular strengths in Years 1, 2 and 3. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers plan in an interesting and lively way to meet statutory requirements. Appropriate time for subjects ensures they are properly covered across the school year. Core subjects of English, mathematics and science are given special emphasis, reflecting recent national requirements, yet care is taken to ensure wider experiences in the arts, humanities and physical activities. Currently, information and communication technology insufficiently supports work in other subjects. School management knows there are not enough machines for classroom work and that pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to apply skills across the curriculum.
21. The school has made very good progress since the previous inspection in developing its curriculum for children in the Reception year, conforming to the latest national guidance and helping children to develop at a suitable pace. The broad curriculum, along with very good links across areas of learning, allows children to reinforce their knowledge, skills and understanding regularly. For example, children develop literacy and numeracy skills while shopping at a 'garden centre' and writing menus in a 'café'. There is also improved access to an outdoor play area meaning that increased time can be given to physical as well as to investigative and imaginative activities. A suitable curriculum is now in place for pupils in Year 3, extending learning beyond Year 2. Generally, the detailed programme for delivering the curriculum, relevant to the age of pupils taught, provides a useful framework and guidance for planning.
22. Nationally devised literacy and numeracy strategies are well established and there is good provision for teaching relevant skills. At the time of the inspection, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development in Reception classes were being planned, helped by recommendations for children approaching the end of their time in the Early Years. That is, the school is moving away from the Foundation Stage curriculum to place more stress on national strategies preparing children for transfer to Year 1 in September.
23. In addition to the taught curriculum, a wide range of extra-curricular options such as football, dancing and French enriches pupils' experiences. Activities take place either during lunchtimes or after school, according to season. For example, sewing, computer and chess or draughts clubs run during the Spring term.
24. The school grounds are used well for physical activity lessons and for science explorations. The local environment (including a nearby church) similarly extends children's learning for many purposes, as when Year 1 pupils learn about map-making in geography and explore immediately around the school. Pupils also participate in a range of educational visits to the benefit of their learning. For example, Year 1 pupils visit a farm and Year 3 pupils visit the Roald Dahl museum in connection with their literacy studies. Pupils' experiences are further broadened through meeting visitors from the local community, such as members of the local fire brigade (complete with their fire engine when visiting Year 2), a road safety officer and a librarian. The latter came to talk to pupils in Year 3 during the inspection about children's books that have recently been nominated for awards. There are good links with other feeder schools; and Year 10 pupils from the local Upper School visit regularly to play football.
25. Provision for ensuring all pupils are fully included in the life of the school is very good. Very good use is made of support staff relative to pupils' learning needs, to give all of them full access to the curriculum. Provision for pupils with special educational needs successfully reflects the transition to the requirements of the new nationally agreed Code of Practice. Planning arrangements are secure and good quality individual educational plans have relevant and manageable targets in them. Pupils with special educational needs (including those with a statement of special need) and bilingual learners take lessons alongside their peers with curricular provision matched to their needs. Specialist support staff monitor pupils' understanding in literacy lessons, sitting with them in whole class sessions to

help them answer questions alongside their peers. In addition, some pupils get extra help through the 'Springboard' programmes for Early Learning Support and Accelerated Learning Support. Year 1 pupils, deemed in need of Early Learning Support for example, are helped with their reading skills through a structured programme of work over a specified period.

26. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. This is because teachers provide a range of planned opportunities for pupils. They use 'circle time' well for discussing different social issues such as 'friendship' and reinforce the importance of good behaviour via well-chosen stories. Health education is promoted through well-planned topics on safety, health and hygiene. Provision for drugs education is good. There are clear aims for this and appropriate visits and visitors aid its delivery. Governors have an agreed policy on sex education which is not explicitly part of the curriculum but works through subjects such as science as opportunities arise.
27. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, with strengths evident in provision for moral and social development.
28. Provision for spiritual development is good. The school's detailed policy identifies suitable links with subjects such as poetry, drama, art, music and religious education. It highlights the importance of planning for times of stillness. Good links are made with collective worship. In assemblies, teachers provide a reflective atmosphere with well-chosen music and opportunities for a 'quiet thinking time'. Pupils respond calmly, respecting this time by bowing their heads and remaining quiet. In religious education, pupils have good opportunities to explore the values and beliefs of major faiths such as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Judaism. Curricular planning allows pupils to build up knowledge cumulatively so as to learn about similarities and differences between faiths. Collective worship and assembly times are well planned. Weekly themes contain many opportunities for pupils' spiritual development.
29. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. An understanding of right and wrong is promoted through the school's firm moral code. Agreed 'golden rules' positively affect pupils' behaviour. These rules are familiar to children and are applied consistently throughout the school. Teachers respect the ideas and values of children, encouraging pupils to discuss moral issues and share their feelings. For example, in circle time, Year 2 pupils discuss behaviour and its effect on others in groups. Pupils have taken part in sponsored walks and a 'skip-a-thon' to raise money for cancer and heart charities.
30. Provision for social development is also very good. The very caring atmosphere throughout the school and its very good relationships work very effectively on behalf of pupils' social development. All pupils respond well to expectations that they work hard and sensibly, benefiting especially subjects such as physical education, mathematics and religious education, where high levels of co-operation emerge when pupils work in groups. Pupils play very well together, sharing equipment and displaying very good relationships both in and out of classrooms. They are helped in this aspect by the high levels of co-operation between adults in classrooms and around the school more generally.
31. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. In Year 2, pupils listen to and appreciate the rhythms of African drums and in Year 3 they explore Aboriginal art as part of their study of the natural world. In the Foundation Stage, Reception children celebrate different religious festivals such as Divali and Eid and share food and presents traditionally associated with these. During the school's weekly 'sing-along' assembly all pupils learn songs from different cultures. Yet there is a limited range of such planned opportunities for children to learn about cultural traditions and practices and to reflect on their significance - through literature and drama for example, or through music, art and crafts.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. While this aspect of school life was judged good in the previous inspection report, there appears to have been improvements overall since then. Pupils are very well cared for. All staff members treat the welfare of pupils as of utmost importance. They monitor safety matters consistently and, for instance, seek to refine procedures regarding school premises (indoors and outside). The Governing Body is keenly interested in this aspect of school life and monitors provision regularly.

33. There are very good child protection arrangements. Appropriate training for all staff members means they know who to report to with concerns. Swift action is taken where necessary to enlist the help of relevant professionals beyond the school. Pupils get good guidance in keeping safe and leading a healthy life through regular and well-planned lessons in personal, social and health education. There is an annual visit for Year 3 to Hazard Alley Safety Centre to take part in mock emergency situations. Also, the school practises the 'Protective Behaviour' programme which teaches how 'everyone has a right to feel safe all of the time' and 'nothing is too awful to share'. Good procedures ensure pupils are safe on visits out of school. However, at lunchtimes, when pupils play on the field, supervisors are not always as vigilant as they might be in patrolling all areas, especially site perimeters. Consequently, some pupils engage in rather rough activities at times and present a potential danger to themselves of which they are probably unaware.
34. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development and academic performance are very good. Both academic and personal targets are set for classes as well as for individuals and achievement is celebrated. Adults do much to help pupils develop as individuals, recognising and fostering individuality when they can. This is a strength of the school. For example, pupils' names may be recorded in the school's 'special book' for a positive act and they are then awarded certificates for this in Friday 'celebration assemblies'. Considerable stress is placed on raising pupils' self-esteem through such merit systems. Pupils' achievements are also rewarded by their being given extra responsibilities such as ringing the bell at the end of playtimes, or being 'King' and 'Queen' of their class for a day.
35. The school's assessment procedures and use of assessment information continues to be a strength. Information is gathered systematically through assessments on entry to the Reception year and regular assessments of pupils' progress across the curriculum in Years 1 to 3. In addition, the school analyses information from statutory assessment tests and teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 as well as information from other formal tests. These include, for example, optional Qualifications and Curriculum Authority tests for pupils in Year 3 and information from reading tests in Year 1. All such information is recorded meticulously and used to group pupils for literacy and numeracy and to help set suitable targets at class, group and individual level. Individual targets are discussed with pupils so they are clear about what they must do to improve. In a Year 1 literacy lesson, a pupil was congratulated for his achievement and was able to understand that his good progress had helped him reach a target set for writing. Targets are reviewed regularly and adjusted as need arises. This procedure involves *all* pupils and takes very good account of the learning needs of those who have particular difficulties (such as pupils with special educational needs, including one with a statement of special need) as well as those who are more able. The procedures for the identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs are effective and enable the school to identify those pupils who need extra support at an early stage. Ongoing assessments by teachers and teaching assistants contribute well to the regular reviews of their progress and effectively inform the setting of new targets. The school liaises well with outside agencies when extra support is required to meet the needs of these pupils.
36. Teachers cater well, too, for the needs of pupils with English as an additional language and match work to these pupils' needs, monitoring their progress and adjusting targets as a matter of routine. Notwithstanding such good practice, assessment information about these pupils' levels of skill in relation to their understanding of and ability to express themselves in English is limited. The school is working on sharpening its practice here, especially when pupils enter school (usually, although not always, after Reception age), so that planning for their needs is more fully informed and teachers understand better what is involved in the acquisition of English. For example, In-service for staff has already been undertaken with local authority personnel and more is planned. The school nonetheless makes every effort to promote bilingual learners' achievement and makes effective use of local specialist services to this end. For example, it organised a first language assessment for a pupil where there were concerns about progress in learning, to help determine whether problems were confined only to learning new concepts through English or whether these were more general. The school is working productively at making sure such important distinctions are made and understood by all teaching staff.
37. The school is now in a good position to analyse formal assessment information over time. For example, for those pupils who have been in school consistently from the Reception year, data can be analysed to show their progress in the longer term. Individual 'Progress Books' usefully record pupils'

progress in all subjects during a school year, with teachers highlighting strengths in learning and where improvements can be made. Teachers also ascribe levels reached in line with National Curriculum criteria for each subject assessed. Progress in English, mathematics and science is emphasised but progress in other subjects (such as art and design and history) is also monitored and recorded over time.

38. Pupils are encouraged through a number of rewards to attend school regularly and arrive on time. Unexplained absence or repeated lateness is followed up quickly and efficiently. Rules are clear and sensible and all incidents are very quickly and effectively dealt with. Staff throughout the school consistently insist pupils behave properly and use effective methods to ensure high standards of behaviour. Adults set good examples; they speak quietly and calmly, rarely raising their voices. In lessons and assemblies, they are very watchful and often use only a facial expression or an unobtrusive gesture to express disappointment in a pupil's behaviour, following this – often – with a kind smile or word of encouragement. Pupils respond well to this approach. They attend to what others say and learn to take turns. Activities in lessons are also frequently planned in ways ensuring pupils work together in groups or teams, co-operating and collaborating to achieve a desired result. The student council is now well established. As already noted, representatives respond positively to expectations that they will take their duties seriously and follow standard democratic procedures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. The school works very successfully with parents in partnership. Both parties have very high regard for the other, supporting each other very well indeed. Consequently, pupils benefit in personal and academic development. For example, because of very good, regular information from the school, parents know what is being taught and what the school is trying to achieve. Nevertheless, curriculum newsletters, although very detailed and informative, often rely on parents already knowing how to use information to help their child at home, rather than the school giving parents practical ideas.
40. Parents are also very well informed of their child's progress through regular meetings, through the very useful home/school reading records which do give ideas of how to help and through good quality end-of-year reports. These help parents to know what their children do well and where they have difficulties. However, the language used in some reports is occasionally too 'educational' and difficult for some parents. There are many opportunities for parents to come into school, such as at the start of the day, for school assemblies, curriculum and consultation evenings. Parents feel very welcome and involved in their child's learning. Parents regularly listen to their children read and help with other homework. Reading records give good insight into children's progress, with parents and teachers commenting.
41. Parents work hard to help with special events such as a recent 'Jubilee Street Party' and the Easter Hat Parade held during the Spring term. They willingly send in items for topic work - such as old toys for history – perhaps dressing their child in character for a special day. They support events such as the annual 'Book Fair' enthusiastically, recognizing the importance of encouraging their children to read and raising a substantial sum of money for more book resources for the school in the process. There is a very active parent/teacher association known as 'The Friends Association'. With the support of very many parents, this raises large sums of money for school equipment and to help to fund pupils' visits out of school. Parents also help willingly in school when they are able. For example, a parent volunteer has worked on a weekly basis in the library over a period of time to help pupils change their library books. This good support is set to continue as another parent is learning the role for the start of the next academic year.
42. Parents of children identified as having special educational needs are kept well informed of the progress they make. They are properly involved in all aspects of review procedures and, in common with all parents, have easy access to class teachers and the headteacher for more informal discussions if needed. Similarly, the school makes sure parents of bilingual learners understand school procedures and how their children are getting on. It calls on interpreting and translation services where this is deemed helpful.
43. Parents appreciate the way the school consults them about its work and takes account of their views through formal means (such as surveys) as well as more informally. As a result of all the school does

to inform and involve parents, their opinions about the school have improved greatly since the last inspection and are now very good indeed. The vast majority of parents are very pleased with nearly everything the school does. However, many otherwise supportive parents are unhappy with the amount of homework given in addition to regular reading and spellings. Inspectors agree the school could usefully review its homework policy since it seems a substantial number of parents do not really see that some homework tasks are voluntary.

44. A significant number are also critical of the range of activities offered to their children outside lessons. Inspectors do not agree with parents' concerns here and believe there is a good number and range of extra-curricular activities, considering pupils' ages. With regard to such provision, it is not clear how well parents grasp the nature of the 'Early Bird' club before school starts and after-school care club activities. For example, under the school's direction but separate from school provision, before- and after-school care is provided through many club activities for children whose parents work. This is a very popular, oversubscribed initiative. A calm, enjoyable atmosphere prevails during both morning and afternoon sessions and children are happy and settled.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. Leadership and management of the school are both very good. The headteacher has a very keen sense of direction and her commitment to ensuring pupils reach the highest possible standards is shared by staff and governors. A very effective deputy headteacher ably supports her. Indeed, their teamwork has been crucial to the smooth running of the school during recent, difficult circumstances. A considerable upheaval during the last year, owed largely to a high turnover of staff, at all levels, included the loss of the previous headteacher and deputy head who took up new posts. Since her appointment, the headteacher has rigorously researched 'where the school is' in each aspect of its work, setting improvement targets in collaboration with governors, staff and parents. Her collaborative and supportive management style motivates colleagues. This is why the school has such a strong commitment to improvement and capacity to succeed. The school instituted a new senior management structure at the start of the summer term, extending beyond the head and deputy headteacher. The roles and responsibilities of subject co-ordinators have recently been reviewed and these are now very well understood and carried out. A notable feature of management is the way that the headteacher and chair of governors work in harmony, sharing an uncompromising focus on school improvement and the raising of standards.
46. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's work, including teaching, are very good. Subject co-ordinator roles are well-defined and underline the development of subject areas. Co-ordinators are given release time for classroom observations, with individual feedback being given to staff and general issues raised at staff meetings. They also carefully monitor teachers' planning and sample pupils' work, to ensure consistency and continuity in learning within and across year groups and to inform the action plans for each subject. The governing body is kept well informed of curricular matters and governors are diligent in overseeing provision.
47. The school improvement plan is a comprehensive document and contains criteria against which the school can measure its success in achieving its targets. Very clear, appropriate targets for action are identified. Working through the school's good procedures for internal review, priorities are identified and planning over time suitably informed. Performance management is well linked to school improvement priorities, as is seen in the way improving pupils' spelling has been targeted through the school. Teachers' own performance targets are reviewed half way through each year to monitor progress being made. Staff members attend appropriate courses in line with school priorities or their personal targets and information gained is passed on to the whole staff and also to governors at curriculum-focused meetings. Alternatively, 'in house' In-service sessions are arranged for the whole staff, as with those relating to further improving boys' performance in literacy set to take place in the Autumn term.
48. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school and in the school improvement planning process. They have a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and carry out statutory duties effectively. The headteacher values the opinions of governors, who act as critical friends of the school. The chair of governors has a very firm grasp of his role in helping all governors become actively involved in decision-making, monitoring and school improvement. Committee

structures have recently been reviewed and improved, making the governing body even better at managing the school efficiently. The school is currently looking at ways of making classroom visits by governors more fruitful without their becoming threatening to teachers.

49. The management and administration of special educational needs are good. The deputy headteacher has recently taken over co-ordination of this and is managing a transition to the new Code of Practice well. Her support for staff and monitoring of pupils' individual educational plans to help them progress towards their targets, are good. She liaises skilfully with staff from external support agencies and with teachers and support staff. Funding for these pupils is prudent and a high number of support staff ensure they get effective, individualised help.
50. From the start of the current financial year, the school took control of Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant funding. This is targeted to very good effect at providing additional support for pupils through a specialist learning support assistant deployed primarily in literacy and numeracy lessons. In fact, governors have agreed an enhancement of funding for such support and for extra learning resources to make sure bilingual pupils achieve to the best of their ability. A member of the senior management team manages this aspect of school life well, fully supported by the headteacher. Her informed oversight of provision and knowledge of where improvements can be made feed into staff training, as noted above.
51. The headteacher and governing body resources committee manage the school budget very well. The school has good systems for controlling finances. Financial decisions can be measured to determine their impact on standards because effective strategies are in place for this purpose. The current 'carry forward' figure is somewhat high but includes monies accounted for (for work on the premises, for example) and not finally settled. The governing body is keenly aware of principles of best value. In the light of likely effects on standards, it checks that the school applies principles well when prioritising how monies will be spent. Day-to-day administration and systems of financial control are good. The recently appointed administrative staff work well together to oversee these systems, as well as efficiently aiding teachers and the running of the school. Technology helps make the running of the school smooth, both in supporting administrative and classroom procedures (such as teachers' planning and time-tabling).
52. The implementation of the school's policies for realising its aims and values is very good. The school's commitment to ensuring pupils feel valued and have positive self-images underpins its life, contributing to standards of attainment and achievement. Relationships are very good at all levels, adding substantially to the welcoming ethos that is a marked feature of the school. Giving all pupils equal access to the full range of opportunities provided is stressed. It is emphasised by the school's work in meeting the latest statutory requirements for promoting good race relations. A draft race equality policy has been formulated incorporating clear actions aimed at monitoring practice in all aspects of its life. Currently, it awaits final discussion with and ratification from the governing body.
53. Very good, thorough arrangements induct new staff into the school, including non-teaching staff such as lunchtime supervisors, secretaries and teaching support assistants. As a result, new arrivals quickly become part of the whole school team, sharing a consistent approach to what the school expects and provides. For example, staff members working directly with pupils use the same methods for managing pupils' behaviour and have the same high expectations of pupils. They work towards the same very high standards of health, safety and care of pupils.
54. The school has an adequate number of teachers to fulfil curriculum requirements across the age-range. Teachers are ably supported by a good number of support staff - an improvement since the last inspection. Because the school has a higher than average number of administrative staff, teaching assistants usually work with pupils targeted for such support. This especially helps those who are less able or who have particular learning needs.
55. Continual improvements to the grounds and rearrangements of the available internal space now provide the school with good accommodation. Although class (or 'home') bases are small, there is quite generous 'over-spill' space within each teaching area. There is also a separate sound-proofed classroom, very useful for music lessons or for times when the television is being used. The open-plan design of much of the school does create some noise pollution but teachers compensate for this most of the time. Two 'huttet' classrooms are rather separate from the main school but are good-

sized spaces for the Reception classes. There are also easily accessible, separate, outdoor play spaces for these youngest pupils. The whole school site is very clean and well maintained. It is a very pleasant learning environment, incorporating lovely, established shrubs, trees and plants and the recently planted Millennium Willow Copse. Classrooms and public spaces are made bright and interesting with good quality displays, showing a wide range of work by pupils of all ages in subjects across the curriculum.

56. The school has a satisfactory level of resources relevant to all areas of learning for children in the Reception year and for National Curriculum subjects and religious education for Years 1 to 3. There are good resources in English and science and very good resources in music. However, for current curricular purposes, there are not enough computers or software resources, which limits pupils' use of available machines to apply information and communication technology skills to meet demands from different subjects. Resources are generally of good quality. There is an attractive, recently replenished and refurbished library. The school supplements the relatively small number of books in its library by buying into the schools' library service. Because of its position, the school library is only used for teaching when adults accompany pupils or when a parent is on library duty. The school is working on plans to re-site the library to make it more open to pupils' use throughout the day to support learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The headteacher, staff and governors should ensure that, in line with school improvement planning:

- i. Provision for information and communication technology improves by:
 - increasing resources for the subject; and
 - giving pupils more opportunities to apply relevant skills to subjects across the curriculum.

(paragraphs 6, 16, 20, 72, 81, 87, 92, 96, 100, 105)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses¹ should be considered for inclusion in an action plan. These are indicated in paragraphs: 3, 31, 36, 43, 50, 67, 74.

- Differences in the achievement of boys compared to girls in English;
- improving assessment procedures for pupils learning English as an additional language when they enter school;
- planning systematically for pupils' cultural development; and
- reviewing homework provision.

¹ It is recognised that issues relating to gender difference and the assessment of pupils learning English as an additional language are not of lesser importance. However, the school already highlights these issues in its action planning and is pursuing them with vigour (for example, through In-service for staff already undertaken and setting this as a priority for the next academic year).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	39
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	9	18	12	0	0	0
Percentage	0	23	46	31	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR- Y3
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	222
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	21

Special educational needs	YR - Y3
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	21

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	20

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	50
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	118

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.01
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	33	38	71

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	25	28
	Girls	34	35	36
	Total	58	60	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (91)	85 (89)	90 (96)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	30	27
	Girls	34	36	35
	Total	60	66	62
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (89)	93 (96)	87 (91)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	5
Indian	4
Pakistani	8
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	188
Any other minority ethnic group	19

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y3

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.4
Average class size	28.75

Education support staff: YR – Y3

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	197

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	530, 753
Total expenditure	522, 405
Expenditure per pupil	2, 430
Balance brought forward from previous year	38, 414
Balance carried forward to next year	46, 762

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7.4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	230
Number of questionnaires returned	70

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	37	1	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	59	40	0	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	46	1	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	41	13	3	0
The teaching is good.	61	34	1	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	37	10	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	26	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	36	0	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	60	33	4	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	56	39	4	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	40	0	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	41	20	3	10

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

57. There have been very good improvements in provision for children in the Foundation Stage since the last inspection. Assessments on entry to school effectively target individuals to make sure they make appropriate progress and teachers' detailed topic plans allow for cross-curricular links while fully meeting the latest recommendations for the Foundation Stage curriculum. Few English as additional language learners start in the Reception year. Those that do are well supported by specialist provision at times. As discussed above, the school is currently constrained in the extent to which it assesses such children for their knowledge and understanding of English and is continuing to improve this aspect of its work. Within these constraints, bilingual learners are very well catered for and they make progress at least in line with their monolingual peers. The appointment of extra support staff has contributed to the good progress made by children in the Reception year, supporting individual and small group needs. This includes children identified as having special educational needs. The co-ordinator has worked hard to tailor the curriculum to the needs of all children. She monitors teaching and learning by reviewing weekly plans and through classroom observations. As noted earlier, the quality of teaching is good overall, in all areas of learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

58. By the end of their Reception year, most children are set to meet the early learning goals in this area. Children make good progress because teachers provide a range of opportunities for social interaction. In the outdoor play area, children use tandems, trikes and carts to push and pull one another and they learn to take turns by writing their names on a waiting list. When exploring water and sand, children co-operate well, sharing equipment and taking turns when making sand castles. All are comfortable and secure in their surroundings and are familiar with the routines of the classroom. They confidently self-register by matching their names to their photographs on a class 'gallery'. Good use is made of 'circle time' to help children value the contributions of others and their weekly reading sessions with Year 2 pupils provide a valuable social interaction with older children. Children learn appropriate levels of independence in caring for the classroom (as when they tidy things away). A minority of children (mainly boys) present challenging behaviour at times. Such behaviour was seen, for instance, in a physical education lesson in the hall when some boys needed to be reminded to focus on their skipping and jumping skills. Although this slowed the lesson's pace, the boys responded positively to firm management.

Communication, language and literacy

59. Children also make good progress in communication, language and literacy. By the end of their Reception year, most are judged likely to meet the early learning goals expected for children of this age. Teachers in both classes continually reinforce the need for children to listen to one another. They plan opportunities such as 'circle time' for children to practise speaking and listening skills. As a result, children are able to talk confidently in whole class situations and take account of the contributions of others. This was noticeable when children were talking about their special friends.
60. In reading, children fulfil expectations. Most can read simple sentences independently and identify initial letter sounds. Good literacy teaching means that all children realise how rhyming words sound the same and can listen for and predict rhymes such as 'in' and 'en' which are then used as prompts for writing. Teachers carefully select resources likely to interest and develop children's literacy skills. For example, children recall the story 'Rainbow Fish' in detail and suggest words such as, 'lonely', 'sad', 'upset' and 'miserable' to describe how the fish felt without friends. Regular visits to the school library and an effective home reading system contribute to the good progress children make in this area.
61. Children make good progress in writing because they have many opportunities in this area. For example, in the café, children plan their own menus; they write postcards, make invitations and write

their own labels and captions for displays. More able children write short sentences independently and are becoming aware of the function in sentences of full stops and capital letters. The very good use made of wipe boards helps children with spelling patterns. As a result, children make sensible attempts to spell words for their own writing.

Mathematical development

62. Most children meet the standards expected for their age and are set to reach the early learning goals by the time they transfer to Year 1. They can pick out and order numbers to 20 and can take away through practical activities using sets. Stimulating resources such as plastic 'sea world' animals link to their topic. These attract children and maintain interest. With adult support, children devise their own simple addition sums and record their findings. When worked with in the 'shop', they buy items and give change using 1p coins. Scrutiny of children's work shows they have compared and ordered objects for size and explored the properties of three-dimensional shapes through model-making, in line with recommendations for the age range.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

63. Children are making good progress in this area and most at this point in their Reception year are set to meet the appropriate early learning goals prior to entering Year 1. Children extend their understanding of floating and sinking by designing, making and testing their own boats to see if they float. They explain the materials used and grasp how different materials behave in water. They know that plastic is better than cardboard. By using resource books, children make detailed observations about the shape and properties of boats and use this knowledge to make boats of their own. They use scissors properly and can join junk containers using tape. Children's learning about the seaside is enhanced by a range of well-planned activities and by very good resources letting them touch and explore seaside objects. Children learn about maps through the story 'Rosie's Walk' and can plan their own map of the route taken by Rosie the hen. Children have good skills for operating the computer. They display good control when using the mouse and can successfully manipulate it to change the colour and size of their work. They confidently carry out functions because they get individual adult support. Children learn about their own and other cultures by celebrating different religious festivals such as Divali, Eid, Christmas and Easter and through reading stories from other cultures. However, the range of books on display at the time of the inspection about cultures and lifestyles different from their own is limited.

Creative development

64. Most children meet the early learning goals in this area at this point in their schooling. In music, they pick out and compare patterns within their names and follow a four-beat pattern with instruments. They sing songs and rhymes from memory. Teachers plan for a wealth of creative experiences enabling children to explore paint through printing and painting and by mixing colours to make new shades. As a result, children confidently and imaginatively apply different techniques for effect such as finger-printing for fish scales. There are good opportunities for imaginative play, well structured to let children adopt different roles. For example, in the outdoor area children pretend to picnic in a tent. However, in the garden shop and cafe area, children prefer solo play and need an adult to help them carry out their varying roles co-operatively.

Physical development

65. Children's skills in this area are suitably developed and most are set to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. They confidently pedal trikes and ride scooters around a circuit and balance on a low beam. They travel in different ways, such as running, skipping and jumping with control and co-ordination. They make good progress in this area because they concentrate and follow instructions given by the teacher. However, children are not developing their independence further by helping to set out equipment and put it away after use in physical education lessons in the hall.

66. Their fine motor skills are good. They grip scissors and writing tools appropriately and manipulate malleable materials with tools for a planned effect, as they do when making a fish with scales. They have diverse opportunities to explore different materials. As a result, they learn – for example – how to join containers and how to sew.

ENGLISH

67. The picture to report is similar to that in the previous inspection. By seven, pupils are becoming good at speaking and listening and can express their ideas and respond to teachers' questions across the curriculum. Reading and writing skills are broadly what are to be expected for this age but pupils achieve well relative to their abilities. More able pupils frequently reach good standards, though boys and girls of average and below average ability do differ in attainment, with girls generally doing better, especially in writing. This most obviously shows in spelling and work presentation. A high number of boys find it hard to work tidily, or to keep a consistent letter size in their writing. But it is also evident in these boys' apparent preference for shorter pieces such as poetry or the factual recording of observations and experiences, suggesting they find it hard to sustain writing for any length. Still, pupils make good progress. In Year 3, they build successfully on previous learning whatever their ability, and generally reach standards close to those expected for their age.
68. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of good quality support both from teachers and teaching assistants. They usually complete tasks set and achieve in line with their prior attainment. Those with English as an additional language also make good progress. Again, good quality support means bilingual learners reach similar standards to those of their peers. Where this is not the case, it is because of their still-developing skills in applying knowledge of spoken English to recording ideas in writing. Even so, pupils have a good grasp of the letter/sound system in English and can use their knowledge in writing from an early age. For example, a Year 1 bilingual boy made a really good stab at matching a sentence to his photograph in a literacy lesson. He even placed capital letters and full stops correctly with adult help. All pupils at an early stage of writing skill have some success with 'emergent' writing, matching letter sounds to words more and more correctly as their understanding grows. No-one sits back to wait for adult help or believes a task is beyond her or his capacity. Rather, when writing tasks are set, pupils throughout Years 1 to 3 settle down enthusiastically. Their positive attitudes benefit from teachers' good quality planning and their ability to explain what pupils are to learn. Questioning effectively checks pupils' understanding of tasks set.
69. Year 1 pupils build on prior learning and frequently reach good standards relative to their age and abilities in reading and writing. In a whole-class lesson, for example, almost all pupils joined in sounding out parts of words to 'blend' them together to make whole words (as in 'c-oi-l' for 'coil'). A more able bilingual learner eagerly answered questions throughout, on a par with peers. She knew parts of words are called "phonemes" and, together with almost all the class, could hold up the correct number of fingers to show how many phonemes there were in each word on a list as a teacher pointed. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils volunteered keenly to underline words with 'aw', 'au' or 'oor' sounds in them, listed on a white board during a whole-class session. A specialist learning support assistant with a small group of bilingual learners usefully reinforced points made by a teacher, helping pupils to focus on questions asked. They were able to join in the 'game' with peers and concentrated well during the following 'big book' session. Pupils of all abilities answered questions about the main character in the book (a pig), saying what they liked about 'him'. Many joined the teacher to read large parts of text. They used vocabulary such as 'plot', 'character' and 'setting' as they recapped on the journey taken by the main character and talked about his route.
70. Year 3 pupils can compare two stories by a favourite author in terms of similarities and differences. In a whole-class discussion, when exploring the meaning of "plot" and how authors develop a story idea, a boy realised the role of sequencing a "beginning and a middle and an end" in plotting a story. Pupils know authors use words to gain effect. They see that words such as "amazing" and "giant" are adjectives giving interest and amusement to a story, as in the unusual idea of a 'giant peach'. Through a teacher's skilled questioning, pupils reveal a very good knowledge of the stories being studied. Later, they remember in detail the twists and turns of plots, having obviously enjoyed studying them in some depth.
71. Teaching is at least good and was very good overall in lessons observed. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and share an enthusiasm for books with pupils, imparting a sense of wonder at the way authors think up stories or transmit information of other kinds. For example, a Year 1 teacher used a 'big book' about a holiday diary to involve pupils in recalling recent holidays. Learning was reinforced by pupils matching captions to the correct picture. The use of pupils' own photographs and of photographs taken on a recent farm visit for follow-up writing heightened and sustained their interest

in formulating and writing their own captions. Year 2 pupils talked confidently about personal 'story maps', able to explain their purpose because a teacher had involved everyone in the initial discussion. An 'aide memoire' of places to include on the map, usefully placed on a wall, allowed less confident and less able pupils to get help without seeking out adults. They also knew it was acceptable to talk about their work and help one another to map out the correct sequence for the journey. Teachers commonly employ such strategies to support independent learning skills, spending time with groups for planned purposes, as when the Year 2 teacher worked on guided reading tasks.

72. Although computer-use is limited because there are few machines, those available are used well. For example, two Year 2 bilingual boys played a game to help them with letter sounds and patterns found in sets of words. Year 3 pupils have made address labels for storybook 'letters' produced for books they have made following the 'Jolly Postman' format. Working in groups, pupils have reached a high standard with these. They are proud of their achievement and enjoy reading the books themselves, when quiet reading times occur. Year 3 pupils are studying books nominated for a prestigious children's book award, learning how to review these. They really enjoyed discussing this year's nominations during the inspection week with a visiting librarian from the local authority's schools' library service. They keenly anticipate finding out how closely their opinions match those of the book award panel! The school makes good use of visits by children's librarians throughout the year to stimulate interest connected with classroom studies. A yearly book fair is popular with pupils and their families, promoting reading as a 'fun' leisure activity.
73. The co-ordinator has a very good view of 'where the subject is at' across the school through her monitoring activities, including observing teaching and learning in classrooms. She has identified strengths and has set out areas for further development. Currently, the school is working on improving pupils' spelling and getting boys more involved in literacy activities. To these ends, local authority specialist staff have assessed provision and given advice and further In-service sessions are already organised for the Autumn term. To date, a range of strategies for teaching spelling is thought suitable for improving pupils' skills and boys are beginning to read more widely. Good resources support the literacy strategy and the school replenishes these as necessary.

MATHEMATICS

74. Standards in Year 2 and Year 3 meet those expected for pupils of seven and eight years. These have been maintained since the last inspection and all make good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language make progress in line with their monolingual peers and achieve on a par with them. The progress made by those having special educational needs has improved since the last inspection, individual targets are regularly monitored and performance data are analysed. The detailed analysis of regular testing by the co-ordinator shows that, by eight, boys have progressed at a faster rate than girls although girls still do better in formal tests. All teachers have a good grasp of pupils' needs and meet them by carefully planning work to allow pupils to build on previous experiences.
75. By seven, pupils order three digit numbers and can put different patterns into a sequence. The more able have a good grasp of place value when ordering numbers into thousands, hundreds, tens and units. All make good progress because they are challenged during whole class and group work, teacher expectations are clear and pupils respond well. In Year 1, pupils bolster their knowledge of numbers by using a 100 square. They know that when reading columns, numbers increase by 10, and when reading across they increase by one. In Year 3, they speed up when answering mental arithmetic questions through challenging teaching and good resources, ensuring all take part in a 'game' situation. As a result, they respond very well and improve their performance. Throughout Years 1 to 3, pupils use and understand appropriate mathematical vocabulary such as 'digit', 'value' and 'equally'. They use their knowledge of the terms 'shared', 'double', 'subtract' and 'half' when calculating. This good understanding is a result of all teachers introducing and consistently using correct terminology. Scrutiny of work reveals that pupils have experienced many different mathematical learning situations. In Years 1 and 2, they have used a data-package program on the computer to make and interpret information from a range of graphs and charts. They have explored the properties of shape through three-dimensional models. Year 2 pupils have solved a range of problems relating to direction and movement, shape, money and fractions. In Year 3, they are making good progress with shape, space and measures. Pupils can make a journey using a compass and can solve problems on digital time. Their work is well presented, with a clear build-up of skills,

knowledge and understanding over time. However, in Year 3 there is an over-emphasis on worksheets and pupils sometimes do not have sufficient opportunities for devising their own methods of recording their findings.

76. All pupils enjoy mathematics. They are attentive and eager to contribute during whole class sessions. Teaching is good. Teachers plan their work well, matching work to pupils' needs across the classes in Years 1 to 3. Pupils are grouped according to ability for their mathematics work. This benefits their learning. Teachers explain clearly what is to be learned and make good use of sessions at the end of lessons to check progression towards that learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use questions effectively to probe and challenge and to let all pupils participate. They make very good use of individuals during whole class input, sharing findings. This strategy keeps interest and reinforces understanding. For example, Year 3 pupils investigated different ways to divide the same number, while Year 2 pupils' practical demonstrations enhanced their understanding of how the value of a digit changes when placed in a different position. Teachers make good use of time, following the National Numeracy Strategy, making sure lessons have good pace. They use lesson time well to support individuals and groups and effectively focus on specific ability groups to provide direct teaching. When additional learning support is available, pupils' learning is enhanced and support assistants have a clear grasp of their roles in classrooms.
77. The newly appointed co-ordinator has a very good insight into her role. She has started to analyse pupils' test results and uses this data to set individual targets. Her monitoring of teaching has been linked to recent In-service and has allowed her to monitor the impact of this training on teaching. The co-ordinator has a good knowledge of mathematics throughout the school and has planned in detail for its further development.

SCIENCE

78. Teaching is good and pupils have positive attitudes to their work. As a result, they make good progress and achieve well relative to their age and abilities, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. Consequently, standards reached by most pupils, currently in Years 2 and 3 match national expectations. This picture is rather better than that suggested by teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 last year and similar to that reported for these year groups by the previous inspection.
79. Teachers prepare thoroughly, have secure subject knowledge and realise how important it is for science to be learned through structured practical activities. They have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and capabilities and, as a result, set challenging and interesting tasks. The way teachers and classroom assistants work as a team is notable and all pupils get a high degree of direct teaching. They stay on task, producing a good amount of work. Pupils are given lots of chances to develop their knowledge and understanding through practical activities, when they learn the basic skills of close observation and of recording findings in diverse ways. In a very good Year 1 lesson, a teacher skilfully challenged pupils' knowledge of 'pushes and pulls' as forces through questioning. Activities followed were appealing and captured the pupils' interest so concentration stayed high and was accompanied by a high work rate. As pupils pass through Year 2, they learn how to handle simple scientific equipment carefully and safely and discuss scientific ideas. An example of good Year 2 work occurred when pupils considered how plants and animals are classified according to observable features. After the discussion, pupils went into the wildlife area in the school grounds using magnifiers and other equipment with some assurance. They knew how to classify their findings and also respected the creatures they found by handling these carefully before returning them safely to where they had been found. They showed much curiosity and enjoyment during this activity and were very keen to ask and answer questions. They also showed they knew that following safety procedures during observations mattered, as did washing their hands thoroughly when back in school. Teaching the basic skills of carrying out investigations and using correct scientific vocabulary, are stressed. Pupils are encouraged to make predictions before carrying out tests and then reach simple conclusions about what they have found. As a result, by the time that they are seven, most of them can carry out a simple, fair test and record their findings in a number of ways.
80. Teachers in Year 3 classes let pupils learn how to handle a wider range of scientific equipment and

resources, to develop their knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas. Basic skills of investigation and recording results continue to be stressed. Pupils often work collaboratively on well-structured practical activities, discovering information for themselves and making effective progress in their investigative skills. This was seen when groups worked on separating magnetic from non-magnetic materials. They made sensible predictions before carrying out investigations and then decided for themselves how to record their findings. In this lesson, as in others, the activity organised built well on previous work, so pupils could use prior scientific knowledge.

81. Pupils sometimes use their computer skills to enhance their work but such use is limited. The school realises this is an area for further development. Pupils communicate their findings clearly, using correct scientific vocabulary and record their ideas in many formats. Recording involves their using literacy skills in their investigative reports and to labelling scientific drawings and diagrams. Pupils also make good use of their numeracy skills, as is evident in the work of Year 3 pupils, who have carefully measured how much water a plant needs to grow healthily.
82. The curriculum is good, being broad and relevant. Pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills develop through carefully structured, investigative activities. The co-ordinator's effective and enthusiastic leadership has itself led to the teaching of investigative skills and positively affected standards. Classroom observations monitor the quality of teaching and pinpoint possible areas for improvement. Assessment procedures successfully monitor pupils' attainment and progress, while suggesting targets for improvement. Plentiful resources are well managed. Adequate accommodation includes a wildlife area, which is exploited well to benefit pupils' knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things. Current provision shows the school has made good improvement overall since its last inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

83. Because of time-tabling arrangements, only one Year 1 lesson was seen during the inspection. Judgements are based on this lesson, on a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning and on a discussion with the acting co-ordinator together with a scrutiny of the file kept for the subject. Since the previous inspection, standards have been maintained with pupils in Years 2 and 3 achieving in ways expected for seven and eight year olds. Pupils make good progress in building on prior learning, including those identified as having special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language.
84. Year 1 pupils recall having learned to use pencils and charcoal for different effects when making observational drawings. They understand terms such as "hatching" and "cross hatching" when making marks on paper with a pencil to show different qualities of shading from light to dark when "in-filling" spaces. They know charcoal can be smudged for yet another effect. After watching a teacher's demonstration of a task, they show their very good understanding of a number of skills. They outline a toy bear's face on paper using spatula and glue, then carefully measure round the shape and cut a piece of string to stick down. In this way they build up an outline of the bear, complete with ears and limbs appropriately placed. Soon, they are 'in-filling' the body, representing the appearance of a chosen bear with effects of texture to their liking. For example, a girl coils string with great dexterity and fills in the face to show a "bumpy" effect like the bear she has chosen as a model. A boy measures lengths with reasonable accuracy then sticks them side by side with a 'hatching' effect because he wants to make "smooth" fur. A pupil with special educational needs perseveres with string that is quite hard to handle, making a face shape which he fills in to create different textures.
85. Good progress in observational drawing is seen in work displayed throughout the school. For example, Year 1 pupils have used charcoal to draw the shapes and patterns they pick out in their school buildings. Year 2 pupils have made recognisable drawings of plant specimens in pencil, carefully coloured with pastels to show blossom on twigs and flowers on stems. Features of different plants are easily discernible. By Year 3, pupils use their drawing skills for diagrams of plants that closely follow the shapes and forms of those studied for scientific purposes. A good range of work, planned in line with the latest subject guidance, is produced across the year groups and standards are sometimes better than might be expected. For example, Year 2 pupils have made very detailed pastel pictures of cross-sections of fruits and vegetables and then recreated these in collages with felt material and beads with very pleasing results. Photographic evidence and teachers' planning shows

Year 3 pupils use wire and modelling materials in three dimensions on what seems quite a large scale. Such activity addresses a weakness identified by a previous co-ordinator, whose survey of provision in the subject revealed little three dimensional work.

86. The teaching seen was good and work across the school as well as teachers' planning suggests this is generally the case. In the Year 1 lesson, pupils' speaking and listening skills were tested through skilled questioning, with emphasis on relevant subject vocabulary. In addition, pupils were reminded they would need to use their mathematical skills when making approximate measurements of pieces of string they cut. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and understanding of curriculum demands. There are strengths in the way subjects are linked, with necessary skills taught separately. For example, Year 1 pupils experimented with 'mark-making' and then applied techniques learned to observational drawings of the school linked to geography studies. Themes are planned for several weeks so pupils can apply skills repeatedly and consolidate their learning. They are taught to take art and design work seriously and to strive to do well. They learn about famous artists by studying their work and working 'in the style' of those chosen. Generally, Western traditions are emphasised although learning about other cultural traditions in art is evident at times. For example, Year 3 pupils have looked at how Aboriginal peoples create their images and have produced their own on a small-scale, making 'dots' of colour with small, soft, brushes to build up pattern and shape.
87. The subject is currently co-ordinated on a 'caretaker' basis. The headteacher has taken on this role since the previous co-ordinator moved on but plans are in hand for a more permanent arrangement in the Autumn term. The headteacher monitored teaching and learning in line with the school programme for such activities and, as noted, weaknesses identified earlier have also been addressed. Teachers receive appropriate feedback on lessons seen and general points for improvement are highlighted for staff discussion. Resources are generally sufficient for curricular demands and are of good quality. However, computer-generated art was not seen and planning for the use of information and communication technology was also not in evidence.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

88. Because of time-tabling arrangements, lessons were seen only in Years 1 and 2. Judgements are based on these, on a scrutiny of work and teachers' planning and on a discussion with the acting co-ordinator, together with a scrutiny of the subject file. Standards are in line with those expected for seven and eight year old pupils. Well-consolidated learning is built on by all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. This picture is similar to that given in the previous inspection Report.
89. Year 1 pupils talk about aspects of different houses (such as bungalows and semi-detached) and evaluate some dolls' houses to decide whether or not they are fit for their purpose. They show a good grasp of the task set and work co-operatively in small groups on lists of features they have observed and discussed. The task is structured helpfully. For example, more able pupils generate their own lists, while those benefiting from more structured work answer a list of questions they can read and understand. Year 2 pupils work in pairs to evaluate different kinds of puppets, recording their observations on worksheets showing different dimensions of the design and make process. All pupils can describe in simple terms materials they handle and how puppets work. For example, they write (it's made of) "fabric" and (it works by using a) "finger". More able pupils expand on such statements, perhaps describing the fabric as "furry" or as being "felt" and writing brief sentences to explain how the puppet works. Pupils can mostly say what they like about a puppet. They like handling it and showing how it works. When talking about puppets, pupils note details such as that buttons are used for eyes and strings are attached to some puppets in special ways.
90. A scrutiny of work reveals Year 2 pupils have previously made model fire engines. They planned the materials they would need and made preliminary drawings of what they wanted their finished products to look like. To help them understand about important elements of design, such as how axles are attached to wheels to spin freely, they learned about making prototypes. They evaluated their work and thought about how it might be improved. Final models are carefully made in wood, with good skills used to measure and saw different pieces to size before joining them with wood glue. Axles and wheels are carefully attached. Year 3 pupils make frames for photographs, with planning sheets showing how each component of the work was approached. Work analysing products to see how

they are constructed shows these older pupils are good at describing materials and the functions of objects. For example, they have worked on 'dream catchers', after studying an example and have clearly enjoyed designing and making their own.

91. Teaching was good in the lessons seen, although the pace of a Year 1 lesson faltered during discussion at the end. This was rather repetitive so pupils began to lose interest. More generally, lessons were well paced with interesting activities stimulating pupils to want to complete tasks. The lessons, which introduced new topics, were well aimed at helping pupils recall and build on earlier learning. For example, following the lesson on dolls' houses, Year 1 pupils are to design their own houses in small groups, deciding on the materials to be used and learning how to make appropriate joins. Teachers use relevant subject vocabulary. They take care to emphasise different stages of the design process and the need to decide whether something can be improved and how improvements might be made.
92. Planning is firmly within the latest curriculum guidelines and learning intentions are set out clearly. Pupils have sufficient time to cover work in some depth, while skills, knowledge and understanding develop in ways given meaning by links with other curriculum areas. For example, the Year 1 theme links with geography. The subject also promotes co-operative learning to very good effect. Pupils take account of differing views when striving for an agreed goal. It supports the development of literacy and numeracy, as in class discussions outlined above and when pupils measure and cut materials to a needed size. No use of information and communication technology was observed in design and technology during the inspection and teachers' planning does not reflect such use.
93. As noted, the subject is currently co-ordinated by a 'caretaker'. Again, this is the headteacher but, as with art and design, plans are in hand to resolve the situation. Previously, one person co-ordinated the two subjects but important distinctions between them are well understood and these consistently inform planning. The subject file is comprehensive. It has information on varied monitoring activities undertaken by the co-ordinator, including observing teaching and learning in classrooms. A scrutiny of planning by the previous co-ordinator revealed poor attention to food technology, but this weakness has been addressed and relevant units of work are now planned for Years 1 and 2. There are sufficient resources of good quality to meet curricular demands.

GEOGRAPHY

94. Standards since the previous inspection have been maintained. Most pupils in Years 2 and 3 reach expected standards and have made satisfactory progress through the school. Pupils with special educational needs similarly make satisfactory progress and achieve in line with their prior attainment. Those with English as an additional language make progress in line with their monolingual peers and also achieve in line with these peers.
95. Teaching is satisfactory, with teachers having secure subject knowledge. They organise and manage their classes so that little time is lost during lessons. Questioning effectively finds out what children know and understand before they start activities. Pupils are told clearly what they are to learn and all teachers stress correct geographical vocabulary. Year 1 pupils develop their mapping skills by walking around the school and then drawing a map of routes taken. Pupils' planning of a route from home to school, noting main features on the way, further develops these skills in Year 2. They are given opportunities to learn about transport and communication, along with the different uses to which land can be put. Teachers use discussion well to aid geographical understanding, as in a Year 2 lesson exploring the differences between villages, towns and cities. A teacher also used resources well to focus pupils' attention, effectively engaging all pupils and encouraging them to share ideas with others. In this lesson, pupils used many photographs appropriately, including aerial ones, to find out about Milton Keynes. Because activities are so interesting, pupils concentrate for long periods, ask and answer questions pertinently and acquire positive attitudes. They are keen to hear views and opinions from others and handle resources with care. There is satisfactory development of older pupils' ability to extract information from secondary sources and learn correct geographical vocabulary, so that they can talk easily about their work. This was evident in lessons for Year 3 pupils on drawing routes, referring to a road map from Milton Keynes to Bedford via Newport Pagnell. They realised how a key could help them understand map symbols.

96. Pupils use literacy and numeracy skills to write reports of their findings, as when creating a block graph to show weather patterns in the immediate locality. Throughout the school, teachers make some use of information and communication technology to enhance pupils' work, but recognise they must further develop this area.

97. There is satisfactory curricular provision so that all pupils enjoy relevant experiences. There is secure leadership by a co-ordinator who knows how the subject can be further developed: more opportunities are planned for pupils to compare and contrast amenities in nearby environments. Further visits are intended to provide further learning opportunities for pupils, including to the Butterfly Park in Bedford. The school has improved its planning since the last inspection and this now successfully incorporates national guidelines, so pupils of all abilities are appropriately challenged. Resources and accommodation are adequate. There has been satisfactory improvement made since the last inspection.

HISTORY

98. Only one lesson in Year 1 was observed because of the way the subject is time-tabled across year groups and throughout the school year. Judgements are based on this lesson as well as on a scrutiny of work and teachers' planning, together with a discussion with the subject co-ordinator of points raised by a scrutiny of her subject file. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 reach expected standards. At times, older, more able pupils and some of average ability do better. All pupils make good progress and build successfully on prior learning. Work frequently reveals good achievement relative to pupils' ages and abilities. History provision is better now than it was at the time of the previous inspection.
99. In a very good Year 1 lesson, about half the class knows history tells us "about the past" when a teacher asks them at the start. All are intrigued by the idea of putting three toys along a rope on the floor as a time-line. They readily see that the teddy bear goes at the start of the time-line because babies play with soft toys such as teddies and the three objects have to be placed to show toys the teacher had as 'a baby', 'a toddler' and what she enjoys 'now'. A girl realises a book is the teacher's 'toy' at present because it is too difficult for babies or toddlers to read. A boy puts the jig-saw in the middle of the line because it is the kind toddlers play with. Pupils are then asked "How old are toddlers?" The teacher accepts "two or three" as reasonable. "Where do you think the jig-saw should be? How long ago did I say I was a baby?" After much thought, a girl moves the jig-saw nearer to the teddy bear. Lively questions continue to keep all focused. So pupils consider where *their* baby or toddler toys should fit in relation to the teacher's time-line and where they should place the things they play with now. Two or three pupils are asked to do this, to bolster points being made. The class also considers where to place a toy played with by the teacher's father when *he* was a baby. A girl soon realises it has to go beyond the teacher's teddy bear, to show time even further back. As they work, it is obvious pupils are making good progress in consolidating previous learning and extending their understanding about calculating past times, by listening to the teacher and to one another and by articulating their ideas.
100. A scrutiny of work reveals Year 2 pupils learn about the Fire of London and life in Victorian times. They study Samuel Pepys and Florence Nightingale as famous people of these times. In Year 3, pupils learn about life in Ancient Greece, emphasising Athens and Sparta. Across the school, approaches similar to those outlined above inform teachers' planning and practices. As pupils move through the school, themes are clearly set within a historical context so pupils see how these 'fit' along a time-line. Practical activities stimulate pupils' interest and deepen their understanding. For example, Year 2 pupils spend a day dressed as 'a famous person' of their choice. Some lessons are taught 'in role', simulating lessons taught in schools during the Victorian era. Year 3 pupils have a 'Greek day' to culminate their studies. Work is varied across year groups. Pupils are helped with research skills by reference to information in a range of books and information packs, videos, photographs and posters and by handling artefacts (or facsimiles) where feasible. As noted above, talking and listening are important features of lessons that reinforce and extend learning. Structured worksheets support research activities and help pupils record their findings. More able pupils and some of average ability can incorporate researched information into extended pieces of writing by Year 3. Overall, history promotes pupils' literacy and numeracy skills effectively. Evidence suggests planning for the use of computers in the subject is in place in Years 2 and 3, but the school admits it needs to develop provision for information and communication technology further.
101. The co-ordinator keeps a comprehensive subject file. She has monitored teaching and learning in classrooms and checked planning to ensure agreed themes of work are covered across year groups. Planning is in line with the latest guidelines. There is good liaison with the Middle School where most pupils transfer after Year 3, so themes taught to these oldest pupils are agreed across phases.

Sufficient resources meet the demands of the curriculum. Parents are generous in supporting themes of work. For example, many Year 1 pupils brought in a selection of toys for their personal 'time lines' and this enhanced their interest and understanding of the work they did.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

102. Most Year 2 and 3 pupils reach standards matching national expectations, having made good progress and achieve well as they pass through the school. This good progress and achievement is seen in all groups of pupils. Although this picture does not appear as positive as that of the previous report, it has to be remembered that subject demands have altered considerably since then and it is difficult to make any direct comparison.
103. Teaching is good, with weekly designated lessons introducing skills modelled by teachers. These lessons are well prepared and stress the need for pupils to learn and practise the basic skills of the subject. Teachers have secure subject knowledge enabling them to ask relevant questions and to support pupils when they face difficulties. Lessons are taken at a brisk pace so pupils have a high work rate. Learning objectives are clearly stated, so pupils know what is expected of them and work builds on prior learning. This results in pupils using previously acquired skills to gain new ones. In Year 1, they are taught that computers can make words and pictures and to assemble text. They are also taught how electrical items can be programmed to work. In one lesson, a teacher showed a class how such items as a vacuum cleaner, microwave and CD-player can be made to work. Pupils word-process simple sentences and enter data to create a block graph showing the different ways they travel to school. As they progress through Year 2, pupils learn how to change the type and size of text and to retrieve, process and display information.
104. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and, when working in pairs on the computer, they collaborate well. This benefits their social development. They treat equipment carefully and are well behaved. Most pupils are able to organise and present their ideas with information and communication technology appropriately. They use computers confidently and with enjoyment. Pupils' positive attitudes showed in lessons when they were learning how to enter instructions into a 'Floor Turtle' to move it along a specified route. In one of these lessons, a teacher captured pupils' interest by telling them a story about a search for pirates' hidden treasure. The pupils then had to move the 'Turtle' around obstacles to find the treasure, which they greatly enjoyed doing. In other activities, they incorporate text and graphics into their work, developing their keyboard and mouse skills. Pupils in Year 3 can load programs, save their own work and use the Internet to send emails. They also show a secure understanding of how a database gives information in different ways and is very efficient in that it saves work. During a lesson on looking at search criteria for a database, they became very excited when they saw a chart showing where all the pupils in their class lived. When they realised they could choose how to organise the chart (into either a vertical or horizontal format) they were even more amazed. Most use information and communication technology to enhance work in subjects such as English, mathematics, science, history and geography. The school has, nonetheless, rightly identified this as an area for further development.
105. There has been good improvement in curricular provision since the last inspection, so that it is clear how skills, knowledge and understanding are built on over time across the year groups. This has been supported by the development of a comprehensive scheme of work using national guidelines as a starting point for planning. There is good leadership and management by a co-ordinator with good subject knowledge and expertise, enabling her to support and advise colleagues effectively. Her role in monitoring and evaluating the curriculum is well developed. She has a good overview of the subject throughout the school. Resources have been improved since the last inspection, but the school knows it must provide more computers so that pupils can have more 'hands on' experience, especially in terms of using information and communication technology to support work in other subjects.

MUSIC

106. Year 2 and 3 pupils reach standards above those expected for their age, especially in singing. This is a result of the quality of teaching, which is good and sometimes very good and the efforts of the co-ordinator in developing the subject through the school.

107. Lessons are well planned and prepared, so pupils experience many interesting and motivating activities. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They explain planned activities clearly and demonstrate techniques to be used. This was seen in a Year 1 lesson where pupils were taught how to play untuned instruments correctly. By the end of the lesson, their playing of instruments such as tambourines, Indian bells, monkey drum and 'agogo' was much better than at the beginning. In other activities, Year 1 pupils play many musical games in order to develop musical skills. They sing a number of songs from memory with good rhythm and pitch, as during a 'sing along' session for all pupils, taken by the co-ordinator. The main aim was to encourage pupils to sing enthusiastically and this was achieved. The teacher showed pupils how to adopt a proper posture to get the best from their voices and very effectively modelled how to sing well, so that their singing technique improved. In a lesson for Year 2 pupils, practising songs for the annual music festival, the teacher's demonstrations of singing a round worked very well. Most pupils sing clearly, tunefully and with a great deal of enthusiasm. They have very positive attitudes and are well-behaved during lessons. They listen very attentively, keenly following a teacher's instructions. They willingly listen to and appreciate the musical talents and contributions of other pupils, handle instruments with care and work well together when performing. In another very good quality lesson for Year 3 pupils, the expertise of a teacher enabled pupils to make very good progress when adding a clapped rhythm and a percussion accompaniment to a previously learned song. Teachers show a great deal of enthusiasm and this is obviously instilling a love of music within pupils.
108. The curriculum is broad and balanced, with all pupils being able to take part in interesting and relevant experiences. Their varied musical environment includes musical presentations for parents and members of the local community during school concerts and assemblies. They also can take part in the annual Milton Keynes Music Festival, which gives them the chance to perform in front of a large audience. There is very effective leadership by a co-ordinator, whose work has had a positive effect on standards. She knows the subject's strengths and weaknesses and sees the need to review planning, as there is some overlap of coverage in Years 1 and 2. Assessment procedures to track the progress of pupils are satisfactory. Pupils' experiences in music are significant to their spiritual development and they learn about other cultures through music. In one lesson, Year 2 pupils listened to and practised the rhythmic patterns of African drum music. Consequently, music contributes importantly to the school's provision for pupils' cultural development. The quality and range of musical resources are very good. Some lessons take place in a music room, which provides good quality accommodation for musical activities. The current provision shows that the school has made good improvement since its last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

109. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 3, reach standards expected for their age in physical education. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and are sufficiently high. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress. Teachers now use time at the end of lessons more effectively to evaluate pupils' performance and set targets for learning. Pupils are better at evaluating their own work and that of others and good use is made of demonstrations helping them observe one another and thereby improve the quality of their work.
110. By the end of Year 2, pupils throw with accuracy, both under-arm and over-arm, and refine throwing skills by aiming bean bags at targets. Year 2 pupils are making good progress in learning how to play simple fielding games, through well-planned lessons that teach the appropriate skills through demonstration and explanation. Teaching is good overall. Teachers' good subject knowledge helps pupils' progress. For example, when introducing rounders, good use is made of correct vocabulary such as 'fielders' and 'batters' and accompanying roles are explained. In Year 3, pupils improve accuracy and control when bouncing a ball. Good teaching of skills helps their performance and they become better at bouncing a ball in and out of a target. By increasing the challenge of the task all children become fully engrossed by it and respond well to additional challenge by following rules and co-operating with partners to succeed.
111. Pupils make good contributions to physical education lessons. They respond well to teachers' instructions and readily applaud good work. They are learning to work together as teams. At times, pupils are over-enthusiastic, but teachers deal with their exuberance by introducing added challenge

and maintaining a brisk lesson pace. Pupils from each year are coached by the 'Soccer School'. They can have football sessions with a local football club. These sessions are well attended and both girls and boys participate in supervised football matches and practise their individual skills.

112. The temporary co-ordinator is well supported in her role. Well thought-out plans for the future development of physical education include developing provision for dance. By monitoring teachers' plans, the co-ordinator has found curriculum planning and the building of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding over time to be strengths. But there are no procedures for recording pupils' on-going progress in physical education. The school currently follows a suitable published scheme which, together with the school's own plans, provides a detailed programme of work. Resources are regularly updated and there is a good range of equipment to challenge pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

113. Standards are in line with expectations in the locally Agreed Syllabus for pupils in Year 2 and Year 3 and have stayed the same since the last inspection. The role of the subject leader has grown since then and she now monitors her subject by observing teaching and checking teachers' plans for adequate coverage. The subject leader has a good grasp of her role and has clear ideas for the development of religious education throughout the school. The school follows the locally Agreed Syllabus and has integrated other materials to give pupils a broad curriculum in religious education.
114. In Year 1, pupils consider the meaning of 'difference' when they listen to a story about the ugly duckling feeling rejected by the other ducklings. They can relate these feelings to their own experiences and recognise acts of unkindness, such as when the other ducklings use the word "ugly" and don't really want to know their 'brother'. Pupils show a good understanding of what it means to belong to a group. For example, they know the 'ugly duckling' has things in common with some passing swans because he can make the same noise. Pupils know they should respect and value differences between themselves and others in the school community, although it is not clear how well they really understand the principles involved.
115. Links with the local church make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress. They learn about the church through regular visits at Christmas and Easter and from their good relationships with the local minister who often visits school to re-enact ceremonies such as baptism. In Year 2, pupils' knowledge of the special features of a church grows from first-hand observations, helping them recognise its external features. All make good progress in religious education and by seven years of age they know that a cross is a very important symbol for Christians. They say "Jesus died on a cross" and discuss important features of a church. For example, they know that stained glass windows tell the story of God and Jesus. In their studies of other faiths, pupils have learned about Jewish celebrations. In fact, Year 2 pupils studying churches work at a level higher than expected for this age, due to very good teaching and to teachers' secure knowledge of the subject. Pupils receive clear explanations. In Year 3, pupils articulate why the Bible is special to Christians. They know that the stories are about God and that different people wrote these stories. They also know that Jesus has a key role in the Bible. They make good progress in their knowledge of Islam and Hinduism through studying celebrations and rituals associated with the different faiths.
116. Pupils' attitudes to religious education are good. They work well together and willingly share ideas. Good teaching helps them think critically and evaluate their own and others' work. Pupils respond well to moments of reflection and listen quietly. Good teaching coupled with appropriate resources helps all develop positive attitudes. Children reflect on their own experiences and learn to share their feelings with others.