

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SOMERIES JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Luton, Bedfordshire

LEA area: Luton

Unique reference number: 109575

Acting headteacher: Mr M Welch

Reporting inspector: C D Loizou  
18645

Dates of inspection: 27 – 30 May 2002

Inspection number: 196691

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Davis
Date of previous inspection:	23 June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18645	Mr C D Loizou	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Music English as an additional language	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9798	Mrs V Ashworth	Lay inspector		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?
25559	Ms E Curran	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Art and design Religious education	
21816	Mrs B Thomas	Team inspector	English Geography History	
20007	Mr T Neat	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Science Design and technology Physical 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**

This is a community junior school situated in Luton in Bedfordshire and most pupils live in the immediate area. It was last inspected in 1997 and most of the staff currently in the school were in post then. The school community is still affected by the tragic death of its headteacher last October. The deputy headteacher has been managing the school since then and recently the governors appointed a permanent headteacher who will be taking up her post in September. The school received the National Achievement Award as recognition of improvements to its National Curriculum tests results for 11-year-olds. The school is average in size with 273 pupils on roll consisting of 140 boys and 133 girls. Six per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. Twenty-one per cent of the pupils are on the school's special educational needs register, which is average and less than one per cent have statements of special educational need, which is lower than most schools. Most of the pupils with special educational needs have moderate learning difficulties. Two per cent of the pupils are learning English as an additional language and less than one per cent are in the early stages of English language acquisition and these pupils speak Urdu as well as English. The school admits up to 75 seven-year-olds into Year 3 and most have attended the neighbouring infant school. Results of the National Curriculum tests and initial assessments of the pupils when entering the school vary from year to year but show that their attainment is in line with the standards expected of pupils starting Year 3.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and has many good features. The pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment on entry to the school. The teaching is satisfactory overall but varies across the school. The inspection evidence shows that by the age of 11, standards are above those expected in English and science and average in mathematics. English standards have been rising because the school has focused on improving standards in literacy, and in particular, writing. The acting headteacher and senior staff provide satisfactory leadership. The acting headteacher has managed the school well and the staff have maintained the positive and supportive ethos of the school during a difficult period. The school is particularly effective in ensuring that all the pupils have equal access to the curriculum, including those with physical disabilities and other pupils with special educational needs. The governors provide good support and manage the school well. Relationships are very good across the school and the staff are effective in promoting the pupils' personal development. There are good links with parents who think highly of the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

### **What the school does well**

- By the end of Year 6, standards in English, science, geography, history and information and communication technology are above those expected.
- The pupils achieve very well in music and many reach high standards by Year 6.
- The pupils are very well cared for. Consequently, they are very well behaved, persevere with their work showing very good attitudes and are given many opportunities to show initiative. The pupils' positive attitudes towards school are also reflected in the high levels of attendance.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils are very strong features of the school's work.
- The school provides a rich, broad and balanced curriculum with good links between subjects. The quality of writing in a range of subjects, including the use of information and communication technology, is good.

### **What could be improved**

- Raise attainment in mathematics, particularly in Years 3 to 5, so that the pupils achieve higher standards and reach their potential.
- Improve the teaching to reach the good and very good standards seen in parts of the school.
- Ensure that curriculum co-ordinators and senior staff monitor standards and the quality of teaching and learning effectively to achieve greater consistency for the pupils in all subjects.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in June 1997 and has made good progress since in addressing the issues related to curriculum planning. The school has maintained its very good provision in music and has also been successful in improving its assessment procedures, which were identified in the last inspection as an area for improvement. The school now provides many opportunities for the pupils to reflect on what they learn and to express their ideas and thoughts through their writing, in role-play, drama, music and sport. Standards in science have improved and are above average, while improvements in English have been more sustained because of the good quality and range of pupils' writing. However, more could be done to improve the standards in mathematics, particularly in Years 3 to 5, given that the pupils make good progress in other subjects. The school's monitoring procedures are satisfactory but more consistent and effective monitoring is required if the school is to help the pupils achieve well in all the subjects of the curriculum. The school's capacity to improve further is satisfactory.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	B	B	C
mathematics	C	C	B	D
science	A	A	B	C

<i>Key</i>	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The pupils start Year 3 with a wide range of ability but standards overall are in line with those expected for their age when they join the school. The pupils make satisfactory progress, including those identified as gifted and talented. In the National Curriculum tests last year, standards were above average in English, mathematics and science. However, compared with similar schools, standards were average in English and science but below average in mathematics. This year a higher proportion of Year 6 pupils is targeted to exceed the expected levels for their age in all three subjects. Inspection findings show that standards in English and science in Year 6 are currently above those expected but are only average in mathematics. Over the last four years standards in the national tests have improved faster than those in most schools but mathematics standards have been lower than those in English and science. The pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. A significant proportion of pupils in Year 6 have the potential to reach Level 5 or above, which is higher than expected for their age. Standards in music are well above those expected by the age of 11. Standards in geography, history and information and communication technology are above those expected and this is directly a result of improvements to the curriculum and the more consistent teaching in these subjects. Writing standards have improved significantly and, as a result, the pupils present their work neatly and clearly as well as producing a good range of writing in all the subjects of the curriculum. Standards in art and design, design and technology, physical education and religious education, are in line with those expected by Year 6.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils' attitudes to learning, to school and to each other are very good. They try hard and enjoy learning, applying themselves well, often co-operating and learning from each other.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The standard of behaviour is very good. This is helping to create an orderly and positive learning environment. There were no exclusions last year.
Personal development and relationships	This is very good. The pupils are independent and show maturity. Relationships are very good across the school. Older pupils support younger ones. The school operates an effective School Council which involves the pupils in the management of the school.
Attendance	Attendance levels are well above average. There is no unauthorised absence. This is very good and the pupils enjoy coming to school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory

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

The teaching is satisfactory overall and ranges from unsatisfactory to excellent. This is a good improvement since the last inspection because there are more lessons of high quality and fewer unsatisfactory lessons. However, there is still inconsistency across the school, with nearly half of the lessons seen being satisfactory and half that were good or better. Four per cent of the lessons seen were unsatisfactory. Teachers manage the pupils very well and teach the basic skills of reading and writing well. English and mathematics lessons are well organised and planned and teacher use the literacy and numeracy strategies well. Reading skills are well taught from an early age and the teaching builds on the pupils' good knowledge of letter sounds and spelling when they first join the school in Year 3. They provide good homework and prepare tasks that are usually well matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils. However, in some lessons, expectations are not high enough for all the pupils, so that tasks are not demanding enough and this affects the pupils' progress and achievement. Nearly one in five lessons observed were of high quality because the pace and challenge of these lessons was significantly higher. Teachers make satisfactory use of their assessments of the pupils' progress to inform their planning but in half of the lessons observed the tasks being set did not challenge those pupils who have the potential to achieve higher than expected standards for their age. Good support is provided for those pupils learning English as an additional language and those identified with learning difficulties or have special educational needs in English and mathematics. Literacy and numeracy lessons are well planned but more could be done to

improve mental numeracy skills and to develop the pupils' investigative skills in mathematics. Music is very well taught, resulting in standards that are well above those expected. Information and communication technology is used very well to support the pupils' learning in a broad range of subjects.

## **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good. Teachers provide a good range of practical and relevant tasks and there are good opportunities for the pupils to use computers to support their learning. It is a rich and balanced curriculum that includes high quality music as well as a good range of competitive and non-competitive sports, games and music tuition during and outside school hours.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The pupils receive good support. Those with learning difficulties are identified early and make satisfactory progress. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 who are identified with particular aptitudes in English and mathematics are provided with good and effective support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	A very small number of pupils speak an additional home language. Good assessments of their needs are made and they are well supported in lessons. The pupils make satisfactory progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is very good throughout and is supported by a broad range of activities in school and outside school times. Very good provision is made for the pupils' personal development. They are developing a very good understanding of life in a multi-cultural society and are able to reflect on human feelings and emotions. The pupils develop a very good respect for themselves and for others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is a very good level of care provided for all of the pupils. Child protection procedures are very good. The school has good procedures to assess how well the pupils are doing. Teachers use these assessments to set learning targets for the pupils to achieve but some teachers make less use of their assessments to inform their planning so this is an area that has some inconsistencies. The school has a direct policy and positive attitude towards race equality.

Parents are well informed about their children's academic and personal development. Regular information about the curriculum and school events is provided and parents are pleased with the range of work the school provides but some say that this is inconsistent across the school.

## **HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	This is satisfactory overall. The acting headteacher provides good leadership. The senior staff work closely with him and subject co-ordinators monitor the pupils' work. The management of the school is well focused on improving standards and supporting all pupils but in some subjects the monitoring is not as focused on improving teaching and learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body provides good and effective support. The governors work closely with the acting headteacher and senior staff and have a clear understanding of their role in managing and supporting the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is satisfactory. The governors and staff have established clear priorities in the well-conceived school development plan. There has been a thorough process involving audits and regular checks of the school's performance and the pupils' attainment in national tests. However, more could be done to improve the consistency of teaching and learning across the school so that all the pupils achieve well.
The strategic use of resources	This is good. There are clear targets which are matched to spending priorities. The school manages its finances well. The governors have a satisfactory understanding of how to ensure that the school is getting value for money when committing resources or spending school funds.

The school's limited accommodation is well maintained and has improved considerably, especially with the establishment of a dedicated room for information and communication technology and improving the way that all of the available space is used for teaching groups and storing resources. Additional support staff, such as classroom learning assistants and special educational needs support staff, are being deployed effectively and make a valuable contribution to the pupils' learning. The administrative staff are very efficient and always make themselves available to parents and visitors as well as managing the smooth running of the school and its finances. The school's accommodation and resources are satisfactory and there is an adequate number of well-qualified staff.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Behaviour in the school is good.</li><li>• The teaching is good.</li><li>• They feel comfortable approaching the school.</li><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li><li>• The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The consistency and amount of homework provided by the school.</li><li>• The range of activities provided outside lessons.</li></ul>

Parents think highly of the school and are particularly pleased with the way the acting headteacher and staff are approachable and supportive. Inspectors agree with all of the positive views expressed by parents. The parents expressed no serious concerns about the performance of the school, but some would like to see improvements to the way homework is provided and more extra-curricular activities. The inspection team judge that the arrangements for setting homework are working well and there is a good range of activities provided at lunchtimes and after school hours.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. When the pupils join the junior school their level of attainment on entry varies from year to year but on the whole it is in line with that expected of pupils aged seven. In last year's national tests, before the current Year 3 pupils left the neighbouring infant school, results show that standards were average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. The current Year 6 pupils started the school four years ago and the standards they achieved when they left the infant school were above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics.
2. Standards for 11-year-olds in last year's tests indicate that they have achieved satisfactorily in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. English, mathematics and science standards were above the national average. Compared with similar schools, standards in English and science were average, in mathematics they were below average. The improved standards in English reflect the recent focus on the teaching of reading and writing. The pupils who have special educational needs affects test results but a significant number of such pupils achieve the standards expected for their age indicating that many have made good progress. Inspection evidence shows that the pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Standards in the national tests have been rising over the last three years at a rate faster than the most schools but they have been slower in mathematics compared with those in English and science.
3. The school has now begun to focus its teaching so that the pupils are grouped by ability and this is starting to have a positive effect on all the pupils' progress in English and mathematics. Reading and writing standards are improving as a result of this focus on grouping pupils by ability, as well as the effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. This led to an increase last year in the number of pupils achieving higher than expected standards for their age. The proportion reaching Level 5 in English and science was above the national average. However, in mathematics, the proportion was lower and just met the national average. Given that more pupils did better in English and science the same proportion ought to have achieved higher levels in mathematics as well.
4. Inspection evidence indicates that the pupils make good progress and achieve well in English and make satisfactory progress in mathematics and science. Currently, standards in English and science are above those expected by the end of Year 6. Mathematics standards are lower and are in line with those expected. The current Year 5 has a higher proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register compared with the previous year (approximately a third more) and this is having an adverse effect on overall standards. The pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in mathematics.
5. The pupils express themselves clearly when speaking and their writing is well formed and mature with a very good range of vocabulary. As a result, they use whole sentences when



answering questions or explaining what they mean. When reading, the pupils know their letter sounds well and use a good range of strategies when attempting to read unfamiliar words. Standards in reading and writing show significant improvement because there has been a focus on the more advanced skills of inference, deduction and prediction in English lessons. The pupils are writing with increasing confidence, using correct spelling, punctuation and sentence structure and can write extended sentences accurately. In mathematics, the pupils develop a good understanding of number facts, measures and shapes, but, when solving simple problems, the pupils need direct support and intervention, so that the problems can be explained to them. There is also greater inconsistency of expectations set by teachers in mathematics compared with that found in other subjects. As a result, higher attaining pupils could achieve a lot more, especially in Years 3 and 5, where the teaching varies considerably in its expectations. In science, the pupils are provided with good opportunities to plan and evaluate their own investigations, resulting in them finding out for themselves using the skills they have acquired.

6. Standards in information and communication technology are above those expected nationally by the age of 11. Standards have improved since the last inspection and the pupils make good progress in some most strands of information and communication technology, for example, word processing, graphics and data handling. In control technology, they make satisfactory progress because there is slightly less emphasis on this aspect than in other areas. The use of new information and communication technology resources has improved the effectiveness of the teaching but the school is still undergoing staff development and training, especially to improve the use of the school's new computer room as a useful resource and an information study centre.
7. The pupils make satisfactory progress in religious education and achieve standards that are in line with those expected at age 11. Standards have improved since the last inspection. The school covers the Locally Agreed Syllabus, but there are some inconsistencies in the teaching of religious education for there to be sustained improvement in standards. Some pupils' workbooks show gaps in their learning, sometimes as a result of lessons that have insufficient depth of coverage of topics. There is inconsistency of expectation in the teaching ranging from regular and well-planned lessons to other year groups and classes where religious education is covered briefly or a topic referred to as part of other topics.
8. Although the majority of pupils identified with special educational needs achieve levels below or well below the national average for their age, they make satisfactory progress towards their targets throughout the school. All pupils know what their targets are and they work in partnership with their teachers to achieve them. Accurate assessments of the pupils' needs ensure that they work with appropriate ability groups for English and mathematics and the support they receive is good. There has been satisfactory progress in the provision for special educational needs since the last inspection.
9. Less than four per cent of the pupils are learning English as an additional language. These pupils' progress is assessed continually by class teachers and their learning targets are adjusted to best fit their individual needs. Because of the good relationships that exist between the teachers and pupils, this method is extremely effective. As a result, pupils who

speaking another language make satisfactory progress over time in their knowledge and understanding of English. Those pupils identified and registered as gifted and talented make satisfactory progress. Teachers monitor and assess their work and ensure that they are suitably challenged, including work that is set for them to do at home.

10. The pupils make satisfactory progress in art and design and design and technology. In these subjects they achieve standards that are in line with those expected for their age by the end of Year 6. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in design and technology which was found to be weak previously. They make good progress in other subjects achieving standards above those expected, except in music where the pupils make very good progress and achieve high standards and physical education where they make good progress and achieve standards in line with those expected. In physical education, swimming standards are above those expected.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

11. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good throughout the school. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is also very good. The school has a warm, caring and positive ethos, enhanced by the very good quality of relationships. Pupils know what is expected of them and respond well to the encouragement and praise given to them. Attendance is very good.
12. Most pupils are very keen to come to school. They enjoy the lessons and activities available. A large number of parents who responded to the questionnaire stated their child liked school. The pupils have very positive attitudes to their work and often show enthusiasm for it. They take a pride in their work on display both in the classroom and around the school. The pupils settle quickly to work and try hard to complete their tasks.
13. Behaviour in lessons is very good overall and in Year 6 some excellent behaviour was observed. In the few lessons teachers set lower expectations, behaviour is not as good and class management is not so strong. The high quality of behaviour in lessons contributes significantly to the progress the pupils make. Behaviour at lunchtimes, around the school and in assemblies is very good. The pupils are very polite and courteous with adults and are considerate with each other. Nearly all parents who responded stated that behaviour in the school is good. There have been no exclusions for the last three years.
14. Opportunities for the pupils to use initiative and take personal responsibility are very good. They are able to work well individually and collaboratively. They are able to stay on task when the teacher does not directly supervise them. The pupils are given responsibilities as class monitors and finally in Year 6 as school prefects. The prefects were observed to be mature and caring in their approach when reporting back to their weekly meeting. There is also a School Council which debates issues affecting daily life in school. During the inspection, the School Council met to discuss the effective use of the playground at break times. The pupils managed the meeting very well, showing maturity and a concern for other pupils. The School Council and, in particular, the involvement of the pupils, makes a very good contribution to the effectiveness of pastoral care in school.

15. The school is successful in fostering the very good personal development of the pupils. They co-operate with each other and learn to listen with respect to the views and beliefs of others. They enjoy the opportunities to work together in pairs and small groups. They share books and equipment sensibly. They are able to discuss their feelings with the staff and other pupils. The staff value the pupils' contributions to class discussions and the pupils feel comfortable approaching their teacher and support staff. The pupils are comfortable in school and enjoy their lessons and break times in an atmosphere free of oppression or bullying.
16. Attendance is very good and well above the national average. Unauthorised absence is below the national average and is very good. A small number of families continue to take extended holidays abroad in term time and this affects the teaching and learning in relation to those pupils.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

17. The teaching is satisfactory overall with a significant proportion that is good and very good. Most of the teaching seen was satisfactory and a large amount was found to be good or better. Very little unsatisfactory teaching was seen, amounting to four per cent of all the lessons observed. This was mainly related to a lack of expectation and challenge so that little was being demanded of the pupils resulting in a few cases of unsatisfactory behaviour. Thirty-three per cent of the lessons seen were of good quality and 18 per cent of lessons observed, mainly in Years 4 and 6, were judged to be very good.
18. Teachers plan work carefully so that the pupils in most year groups have work that is matched to their capabilities. This is more evident in the most effective lessons, approximately half of those observed, where there was a clear match of work to the pupils' needs and abilities. However, in the less successful lessons, including those that were satisfactory overall, teachers did not engage the pupils in the lessons so there was more evidence in these lessons of teachers talking to the pupils for far too long before practical activities began. In a Year 3 religious education lesson, for example, the pupils became less responsive as the teacher talked for too long about places of worship, even though the content of the lesson included plans to visit a local mosque. By contrast, good and very good lessons involved the pupils entirely. In a very good Year 6 mathematics lessons, the teacher allowed time for the pupils devise their own questions and opinions about different data. The pupils respond well to this type of teaching. They listen carefully to instructions and during class discussions they offer thoughtful answers and responses.
19. The pupils persevere with tasks when they are sufficiently challenging and interesting, for example, when a group of Year 4 pupils answered intelligently about the functions of skeletons in an excellent science lesson or when Year 6 pupils enjoyed the humour of poetry in a literacy lesson where they investigated the subtle differences between literal and metaphorical writing. The teaching is having a positive impact on the pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour. There are clear rules and classroom routines which provide a secure learning environment for the pupils. This was best demonstrated when Year 3 pupils

became geographical detectives as they searched through items typically found in a supermarket and linked the items such as tropical fruit back to their origins in the rainforest. This lesson, like other good and very good lessons, are effective because they are practical and engaging for the pupils and therefore sustain their interest and concentration.

20. In the very small number of unsatisfactory lessons seen, there was less control and discipline, largely because the work was less demanding and varied. The lessons did not set high enough expectations, resulting in some disorganised work with some groups of pupils wasting time and losing interest. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson for example, too much time was spent by the teacher going over work that was already familiar to the pupils. The activities became less demanding as the majority of pupils searched for right angles in the room. Although the lesson was practical and seemingly motivating for the pupils, it was clear from their responses that they found the task undemanding and repetitive. This led to some unsatisfactory behaviour. In another lesson, lower attaining pupils in Year 5 struggled with their reading as they were not provided with appropriate support or work. The lesson was too slow and undemanding for the majority of pupils. Mathematics standards are lower than English and science, especially in Years 3 to 5 and some of the teaching, although satisfactory, does not always help to improve mental numeracy skills and investigative skills. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson for example, the pupils were only required to use basic multiplication facts. Although this was useful in itself as a revision exercise, problem solving in the rest of the lesson did not extend beyond what the pupils already knew about multiplication.
21. In the most effective lessons, teachers insist that the pupils complete their work on time and to a high standard. A group of Year 6 pupils, during a very good English lesson, were expected to investigate the poetry of Alan Ahlberg and then used this as a basis for further exploratory work on humorous poetry. The introduction to most lessons makes it clear what is expected and the learning objectives are usually shared with the pupils. For example, in mathematics lessons, the teachers start by reminding the pupils what they have already learned before introducing new skills, knowledge and techniques. In Year 4, higher attaining pupils were taught to identify acute and obtuse angles. The lessons began with a crisp introduction which reminded the pupils of the link between directions and angles. This meant that all the pupils were sure about the methods they were going to use to measure angles, using protractors, before looking at more complex problems using diagrams of angles that extended beyond 180 degrees.
22. Geography, history, information and communication technology and music lessons are well planned and provide good opportunities for the pupils to explore ideas and evaluate their own work to improve it further. Consequently, standards are above those expected. Geography and history are well taught and the pupils make good progress because they learning to use the environment and apply this to real life problems and issues, for example, how society deals with waste and pollution. Design and technology teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and this is reflected in improvements to standards. Science teaching is usually practical and motivating for the pupils. Religious education is taught satisfactorily but this varies across the school and this is evident when looking at the pupils' workbooks, where some teachers have covered topics in greater depth than others.

Music is taught very well, especially when the pupils are taught by specialist music teachers. Swimming is well taught across the school and as a result the pupils achieve standards above those expected for their age.

23. The teachers use good assessment procedures to monitor the pupils' progress in most subjects. The pupils' work is usually marked up to date and teachers ensure that the pupils know what they have to do to improve further. However, some teachers' marking is not as rigorous as it should be, with high praise given for some of the pupils' work when it is clear that this is not the best work done. Teachers keep good records having tested what the pupils know and this information is used to prepare coherent annual reports to parents about their children's progress. The pupils are not always involved in the setting of individual learning targets. Regular assessments, including optional national tests in all year groups from Year 3, help to inform and adapt teachers' planning because it is clear what has been learnt and what needs to come next.
24. The pupils with special educational needs are taught satisfactorily. Every adult concerned with the education or care of these pupils knows each pupil's targets so that the work and support is carefully planned to enable them to achieve. Continuous monitoring of the pupils' progress, including their personal development, ensures that they have relevant support and appropriate work. Relationships between adults and pupils with special educational needs are very good and the pupils' achievements are valued and celebrated.

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

25. The school provides a rich and relevant range of learning opportunities for its pupils that contribute well to the standards they attain. These opportunities are available to all pupils. Statutory requirements to teach the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are met.
26. Since the last inspection, the curriculum has been developed well. The weaknesses reported then related to the provision for design and technology, information and communication technology, the use of literature and the development of handwriting have been addressed effectively. Also, there are now very good arrangements in place to provide pupils with personal, social, health and citizenship education. Under these arrangements, pupils in each year group study relationships. Sex education is set very securely in this context. Well-structured guidance about the dangers of misusing drugs and the importance of exercise is also given. The school works very well to enable the pupils to make choices about their health and well-being.
27. The opportunities for pupils to gain from experiences outside lessons have also improved, and are now good. A wide range of activities, including lacrosse, gardening and art, enrich the curriculum, extend pupils' personal development and help to raise standards.
28. There are good schemes of work which have been implemented for all subjects. The problems identified in the last report, concerning the lack of planning guidance to ensure that

teaching is based securely on what has already been learned, have been eradicated. There are good systems for teaching literacy and numeracy skills. A sound system of long, medium and short-term plans for each subject and year group now ensure that skills, knowledge and understanding are gained in a progressive way. However, there is no concise overview of what pupils learn as they pass through the school. This makes it difficult for senior managers to plan wide-ranging provision, such as the development of computer skills in different subjects.

29. The curriculum is broad and balanced overall. However, changes in the way in which time is allocated to different subjects in Year 6 and designed to provide good opportunities near the end of the school year for revising pupils' existing learning, make it difficult for senior managers to check how much time is given to teaching different subjects.
30. Arrangements for identifying and supporting the pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is being learned as an additional language are good. There are good structures in place which match the requirements of the National Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. The co-ordinator ensures that individual education plans are up to date and reviewed appropriately. The parents are kept well informed about their child's progress. Classroom assistants are well organised and provide effective support for pupils during lessons.
31. The scrutiny of teachers' plans shows that they do not always pay enough attention to meeting the needs of different ability groups. "Extension" and "reinforcement" tasks are sometimes set, but not enough separate activities are planned to ensure that more able pupils are consistently challenged and less able pupils are fully supported in their learning. However, the school does well to ensure that all the pupils have equal access to the curriculum, including those with special educational needs, those learning English as an additional language and those identified with a particular gift or talent.
32. The school makes good use of the local community to add depth and breadth to pupils' learning. Visits are made to support work in history about the local hat trade. Visitors, including theatre companies teaching about science in an enjoyable way, add interest and variety to the curriculum. Good liaison with the neighbouring infant school helps to ensure that pupils transfer confidently, and productive contacts with the secondary school to which many pupils go, are of great value when they leave. The impact of some of the good work done with a secondary school was seen during the inspection, when the head of the technology department led design and technology lessons for pupils in Year 4. Those in Year 5 benefit from using the computer room at the secondary school, and further work is planned for next year with the schools to which pupils transfer, to help to raise standards in Year 7. The school also makes a good contribution to the initial training of teachers through its support for students on teaching practice.
33. There is very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This shows considerable improvement since the previous inspection when provision for spiritual and cultural development was judged to be satisfactory, and links to other subjects and assemblies were not making a significant impact on personal development.

34. The provision for spiritual development is very good. The school has developed a climate, through its clear set of values, principles and beliefs, within which all the pupils can grow and flourish, respect others and be respected. The very well planned school assembly themes, provide the pupils with the opportunity to explore values and beliefs and the way in which they impact on people's lives. These give the pupils an awareness and understanding of their own and others beliefs. When singing in assemblies, the pupils use actions well, sing expressively and display emotion together as they join in with, "You've got to move when the Spirit says move", and "Prayer is like a telephone for us to talk to Jesus/God. Pick it up and use it everyday".
35. Time is given for pupils to reflect on individuals and for questioning and identifying how they might have behaved in their situation. For instance: Joseph's feelings on his way to Bethlehem with Mary, and his view of the birth of Jesus, or the feelings of each of the wives of Henry VIII as they faced their future. Pupils recognise that Henry's beliefs and his divorce led to a major event and change to the beliefs of Christians in England. The visit to The National Gallery gave great joy as pupils began to appreciate the achievements of artists. For example, the mystery in the painting *Belshazzar's Feast*, by Rembrandt, portraying "shocked people with spilt wine from gold and silver vessels and just visible...an unseen ghost or spirit of someone". The pupils feel special in school when their achievements are celebrated, and they clap spontaneously to congratulate each other and their teachers. For the pupils who were filmed by the local television news programme, *Their Moment of Fame*, this was truly awesome. After studying *Twin Trouble* and *Cliff Hanger* by J Wilson, the pupils were able to write their feelings about how he or she had behaved and one boy clearly portrayed the anxious feeling of the shepherd as he searched for the lost sheep.
36. The well cared for outside environment truly reflects the joy of nature. The opportunities given to the pupils to plant shrubs, trees and flowers and take part in the Luton in Bloom competition, fuel the imaginations of pupils to ask questions and helps them to respect the environment and learn to appreciate beauty and peace in unexpected places.
37. There is a very good framework for the promotion of moral development. From an early age, the pupils are taught to distinguish right from wrong and to understand what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Consequently, the pupils' conduct in and out of school is very good. All the staff set a very good example for the pupils to emulate by promoting the school's values and standards and treating the pupils with care and respect. The pupils' self-esteem and confidence is enhanced in lessons and elsewhere with constant praise and encouragement. In Year 6, the pupils have written thank-you letters to their friends and sent cards wishing each other good luck in their national tests. The school fosters the values of honesty, fairness and very good behaviour. It has a very positive ethos of encouraging pupils to think about the world in which they live and care for others and the environment. The pupils know about child victims of crime and the life of children living in disadvantaged areas. Particularly poignant was their decision to sponsor Nerdine, a girl living in Haiti. Teachers use English, history and geography lessons well to encourage the pupils to debate moral issues and to express their views, for instance, considering, "Thinking

Green or Not,' or, for or against the Butterfield Green development and the real dilemma of the farmer facing the foot and mouth epidemic.

38. The school provides very good opportunities to support pupils' social development. Relationships are very good in the school. Teachers foster a sense of community and self-esteem is well-promoted. The pupils' comments and responses in class are invariably valued and respected and never undermined. There are many opportunities for the pupils to take responsibility and make important decisions, for instance as a member of the School Council, being a prefect, or being part of the well-established paired reading scheme. The very good range of educational visits and extra curricular activities for all the pupils develop skills in co-operating, communicating, negotiating, persuading others and recognising each other's skills. One boy said in discussion with an inspector, "There is always something to look forward to in this school". The school supports a number of charities locally and nationally
39. Provision for the pupils' cultural development is very strong. The pupils learn about their own and other faiths and cultures, traditions and activities through their religious education, literacy, geography, history, music, mathematics, science and art and design lessons. Particularly good is the study of the local area and the influences that have shaped the pupils' cultural heritage. One very good assembly recognised celebration around the world. The school provides many opportunities in music. Pupils enjoy African workshops and the opportunity to use and perform with authentic African instruments. In one assembly the pupils were in carnival mood, all enjoying moving to the rhythm of the African drums played by the pupils, *We are marching in the light of God*, and joining with the choir to sing an African song, *Siya hamb'e*. The pupils also have the opportunity to attend the steel band workshops in the local high school. Visiting speakers and dancers enhance this programme as well as the visits to the theatre to see *Tom Sawyer*, and to the cinema to see *Harry Potter*. The pupils also visit local museums and the local church.
40. Celebration of local and national events was the theme of the week during the inspection, especially the Luton Carnival and the Royal Jubilee. The questions posed were, how and why we celebrate, how we make a difference and why we should be proud. During assembly time the mood is set as pupils listened to *The Coronation Anthem*, by Handel, as part of the recent Golden Jubilee Celebrations.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

41. The school provides a very good level of care for its pupils. Teachers and support staff provide very caring and thoughtful support for pupils and they are accessible and responsive to the pupils' needs. The very good quality of relationships throughout the school helps to ensure that all the staff get to know the pupils well and care for them consistently well. The educational and personal support provided for pupils is very good. Teachers carefully record each pupil's achievements or where further guidance is required. There has been good improvement in this area of the school's work since its last inspection.
42. Very good and effective procedures for child protection are in place and the acting headteacher has taken on this responsibility. Although he awaits formal training, the local



authority's guidelines are followed and good links with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) have been established. Other outside agencies are not always so prompt and supportive. There is a very good level of awareness throughout the school. Health and safety issues receive a high priority. The school's "Travel Plan" promotes safe and healthy journeys to school and the school has recently participated in the national "Walk to School Week". The aim is to reduce car journeys to school wherever possible and the potential dangers resulting from congestion at the school gates. The local authority's policy and guidelines are in place. The acting headteacher, site agent and governors inspect the school premises regularly. Those issues which cannot be corrected immediately are identified and brought before the governors. Parents have all been advised on "Safety in the Sun" this year as part of the healthy schools project. First aid cover is very well organised. Necessary records are maintained and pupils are well cared for if they become ill.

43. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good and applied consistently. Registers are marked twice daily and returned to the office immediately by class monitors. They are monitored by the office on a weekly basis and by the acting headteacher fortnightly. Those pupils with 100 per cent attendance over the school year receive a book token and the school intends to extend such rewards further. Attendance is regularly debated at governors' meetings, particularly in relation to extended holidays taken in term time. The EWO visits regularly and is supportive in tracking those few families who need more help and guidance on attendance issues. However, most parents are keen to follow the school's requirements.
44. Very effective anti-bullying and behaviour policies are in place. They detail the requirements of behaviour management throughout the school with both rewards and sanctions. Class rules are posted and acted upon. A house point system is in place to encourage both social and academic endeavour. A scale of rewards is set down and totals can be carried forward to subsequent years. Unacceptable behaviour is dealt with and recorded. There are good work assemblies at the end of each half term together with those to celebrate pupils' out of school achievements. The school also has an effective anti-racist policy in place and is very effective in responding to any incidence of harassment or bullying as well as racial tension.
45. Procedures for assessing and monitoring the pupils' attainment are good. There is good liaison between the staff in the neighbouring infant school so that information about the attainment of Year 2 pupils helps to inform teachers in Year 3. At the beginning of Year 3, teachers use a range of assessment information to make predictions and set end of year targets. The information is also used to place pupils into higher and lower ability sets for mathematics. This target setting and assessment continues as pupils move through the school. All the pupils are formally assessed each year, the results of which are carefully analysed and used to inform the teachers' curriculum planning and for identify training needs for teachers. The pupils' progress and attainment are tracked and recorded effectively. The parents are given good information about their children's targets which have been set for English, mathematics and science. Teachers' day-to-day assessments, including the use of their marking of the pupils' work, for all subjects is not so well developed and is not always used effectively to monitor pupils' progress. This inconsistency is symptomatic of the variation across the school in the quality of teaching. The most effective teaching uses the

targets and assessments of the pupils to inform short-term planning, for example, when teachers adapt the tasks set for the pupils so they are better matched to the pupils' needs and current rate of progress. Where the teaching is satisfactory or, in a few cases, unsatisfactory, assessment is not being used to inform planning so that, for example, the pupils all get the same task or some pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

46. The parents are in the main very well satisfied with the standards achieved and the encouragement given to their children. They are kept well informed of the daily life of the school. However, some parents are not sure that their child receives the right amount of homework, nor do they think that school offers an interesting range of activities outside lessons. Inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by parents but have judged both homework and extra-curricular activities to be good features of the school.
47. The replies to the parents' questionnaires, attendance at the parents' meeting and discussions with parents during the inspection week, indicate that a significant majority of parents are very supportive of the school. They are appreciative of the fact that teachers are approachable and willing to make time to talk to them. The acting headteacher is available each morning as he greets pupils and parents, and after school. The parents also value the strong moral code that is promoted within school and the way in which the pupils are helped to become mature and responsible individuals. Inspection evidence supports all of these positive views of the school. The school is aware that parents are not entirely happy with the amount of homework and acknowledges there are inconsistencies relating to the amount set and time taken to mark across the school. However, the homework policy is clear and the acting headteacher now monitors homework diaries each week. The school is also aware that there is a need to give more publicity to the range of activities it is able to offer so that more pupils will be encouraged to participate.
48. The school has established a number of good links with parents. There is an appropriate home-school agreement in place which everyone signs. There are regular letters to parents informing them of school life. An interesting newsletter is compiled by the Parent Community Committee of the Governing Body and issued each term. A small number of parents help in school with readers on a regular basis, and also on school visits. The school carried out a communication survey last year to encourage parents to identify where more information is required.
49. The quality of information supplied to parents is good. A pupil pack is issued to all new parents, which includes the school brochure, a copy of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) Learning Journey, numeracy ideas at home, the Travel Plan, the headteacher's report, the home-school agreement, a use of Internet agreement, together with school uniform requirements and necessary medical information. There is an induction meeting for Year 3 parents, and regular parents' evenings throughout school. Those who do not attend are contacted by the acting headteacher. The annual school reports have improved over the last few years and are now more parent-friendly and informative, giving details of

achievements, progress and target setting. The school brochure and governors' annual report are detailed and give a good picture of the school and how it functions.

50. The school values its relationship with parents, and the Parent Community Committee often acts as liaison between parents and the school where members are approached before contact is made with school. This arrangement works well. The Parents' Association is shared with the infant school and has approximately 35 committee members. This Association is thriving and provides regular social occasions bringing community development and money for the school. Over recent years it has raised in the region of £8000 for the school library. Very recently £1200 was given to the computer programme and currently the target is to provide fleeces for outdoor activities in cold weather. The Association awards a class prize to the child who shows the greatest "care, courtesy and consideration". The parents attend the school's annual prize giving. This joint venture between school and parents greatly enhances the relationships the staff and governors have with the parents and pupils.

### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

51. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The acting headteacher has provided good leadership following the tragic death of the school's headteacher. At the time of the inspection the governors appointed a permanent headteacher who will begin next September 2002. The acting headteacher and senior management team work closely with the pupils, staff, parents and governors and have successfully managed to maintain stability during this difficulty and emotional period for the school community. Parents have commented very positively about the current leadership of the school and believe that the acting headteacher has done well to maintain good contact with them and they have particularly commented on how visible he has been, for example, he always goes outside every morning to greet parents and pupils as they arrive at school.
52. Raising standards has been the main focus for development and there are now effective routines and procedures in place which are beginning to help the staff and governors to evaluate how well the school is doing in relation to similar schools. There has been good improvement since the last inspection because the school has improved standards and dealt with the issues raised in the last inspection. However, more could now be done to improve the way subject co-ordinators monitor standards, teaching and learning in their respective subjects. There are currently too many inconsistencies in the teaching which are not being sufficiently addressed and closer monitoring and checking would have to be put in place to resolve these.
53. The personal commitment of the acting headteacher and his staff to the needs of the pupils is good. The acting headteacher has re-focused the senior management team so that they are expected to prepare their own analyses and actions plans, as well as contribute towards an evaluation of the progress the pupils make in each subject. Nevertheless, the timetable for monitoring visits to lessons or checking how well the pupils are doing does not always mean that the co-ordinators are able to see each subject being taught.

54. There are accurate and realistic targets for improvement in the form of agreed attainment targets which have been ratified by the local authority. Teachers are now more certain about what they are going to teach and what they are aiming for. The school development plan includes a comprehensive training and professional development programme, which aims to improve the way teachers assess the pupils' progress. In a very short time the acting headteacher has undertaken a thorough needs analysis and assessed the effectiveness of the school. This has helped him to work with the deputy headteacher and together they have used this evaluation to take the school forward.
55. The governors provide good support and management. They are committed to the needs of the school and its pupils and they fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. Formal and effective monitoring procedures are established and consequently governors are kept well informed about standards and the work of the school. The governors visit the school regularly and receive reports from the acting headteacher and senior staff. The school development plan is used to steer the work of the school but until now governors have not been expected to contribute to the process. The acting headteacher has not had enough time to establish effective procedures that will enable all the governors to prepare parts of the development plan. Subject co-ordinators prepare audits and action plans to determine what priorities need to be established before committing resources.
56. Resources are managed satisfactorily and subject co-ordinators check teachers' planning to ensure that there is appropriate work being done but the inconsistencies on teachers' assessments affect how well lessons are covered and this is not always picked up or addressed. The school's use of new technology is good. The pupils are being provided with regular access to up-to-date information and communication technology software or hardware.
57. The school has adequate numbers of appropriately trained and experienced staff to meet the needs of the National Curriculum and religious education. Satisfactory job descriptions are in place for all members of staff. There are well-qualified staff to support those pupils identified with special educational needs. These include the special educational needs co-ordinator and a good number of classroom assistants. The school manages its provision for special educational needs well. There are a good number of learning support assistants, many with experience and training in helping pupils with special educational needs. They are deployed well and make a good contribution to learning by giving individual and small group help. This also includes effective support for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.
58. Present facilities are generally adequate to meet curricular needs, although there are also some shortcomings, for example, the lack of adequate teaching areas so that the school has to make use of corridors and the school hall to teach pupils with learning difficulties. This arrangement is unsatisfactory and hinders the progress that some pupils make. Displays throughout the school are generally good. They are attractively mounted and contain significant quantities of pupils' own work. Outside, there is a large yard and the pupils have good access to grassed areas for sport.

59. The school's finances are managed satisfactorily and the governors use sound principles when considering spending priorities and how best to allocate the school's funds. Due to some recent refurbishment, the school is using specific grants to build an additional special educational needs room, but this is still small in scale and does not adequately meet the needs of all the pupils in the school. A large amount of money has been spent on the computer room which is having a positive impact on standards in information and communication technology.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

60. In order to raise standards further and improve the work of the school, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

**(1) Raise attainment further in mathematics, particularly in Years 3 to 5, so that all the pupils achieve well and reach their potential by:**

- providing more challenging tasks for the pupils who have the potential to exceed the standards expected for their age;
- ensuring that all lessons provide tasks that are challenging for all the pupils and are better matched to their capabilities;
- monitoring the pupils' work more rigorously to ensure that what is planned for the pupils to learn is being achieved.

(Paragraphs: 2-5; 79-84)

**(2) Improve the teaching further to reach the high standards seen in parts of the school so that the pupils make consistently good progress in all year groups by:**

- ensuring that lessons provide more opportunities for the pupils to extend their thinking with more demanding tasks for all the pupils;
- using the assessments of the pupils' progress, including teachers' marking, more consistently to inform teachers' planning, and to ensure that pupils of all abilities make good progress;
- monitoring teaching and learning more systematically to improve the consistency of practice across the school.

(Paragraphs: 17-24; 31; 45; 76-77; 88)

**(3) Improve the way that pupils' work and the quality of teaching and learning are monitored by:**

- providing a co-ordinated and systematic approach to monitoring all the subjects of the curriculum, ensuring that subject co-ordinators check pupils' work and teachers' planning with more rigour to raise standards further;
- ensuring that there are better procedures in place to allow co-ordinators time to support teachers in their respective subjects to improve the consistency of teaching and learning across the school;
- checking that all the pupils are on course to reach their learning targets.

(Paragraphs: 28-29; 52-53; 55; 78; 89; 106; 119)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	55
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	9	18	25	2	0	0
Percentage	2	16	33	45	4	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	273
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	16

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	57

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.6

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
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 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	39	27	66

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	33	31	36
	Girls	25	21	25
	Total	58	52	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (88)	79 (82)	92 (97)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	33	31	36
	Girls	25	21	26
	Total	58	52	62
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (87)	79 (82)	94 (96)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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



***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	7
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	256
Any other minority ethnic group	3

*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: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.8
Average class size	27.3

**Education support staff: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	85

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

***Financial information***

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	599,568
Total expenditure	597,962
Expenditure per pupil	2,215
Balance brought forward from previous year	37,715
Balance carried forward to next year	39,321

***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.6

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	273
Number of questionnaires returned	95

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	40	51	7	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	46	6	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	55	4	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	45	19	6	2
The teaching is good.	48	48	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	54	8	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	40	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	37	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	36	49	9	0	6
The school is well led and managed.	56	41	2	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	52	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	41	10	4	10

### **Other issues raised by parents**

The parents say that they choose the school because it provides a positive and supportive environment for their children. Many parents are delighted with the commitment of the staff and say that the school is popular with parents and has an established reputation in the area. Some parents expressed concern about the inconsistency of expectations set by some teachers in the school.

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

### **ENGLISH**

61. There has been good improvement in English since the previous inspection. Inspection findings are that overall standards are above those expected for by the end of Year 6. Standards of speaking and listening, writing and reading in the present Year 6 are high. The previous inspection identified that standards in English throughout the school were well in line with national expectations. Current standards confirm last year's national test results, which were above average. However, compared with similar schools, the results were average.
62. Over the past four years English results have exceeded the national average. The assessments made by the teachers supported these test results. There was no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls or other groups of pupils within the school. Indications were that pupils with special educational needs did well because a significant number achieved the expected level for their age.
63. The pupils' work in English, analysed and seen during the week of the inspection, indicates that each year group has a wide range of ability. The standards of the higher attaining pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 were above what is expected and they make good progress. The school has introduced the Additional Literacy Strategy (ALS) for the pupils in Year 4. This is often delivered during the group work session of literacy lessons and has proved to be very effective. The pupils with special educational needs work well and make good progress. However, there are a number of pupils in Year 5 who are working below their expected level and who will need the very good extra help provided in Year 6 if standards are to remain high and for the school to meet its target in 2003. The pupils in the present Year 6 have taken part in intensive booster classes in school as well as after school to ensure they fully reach their potential. The current attainment targets are being met and this has been consistent judging from previous test results.
64. The National Literacy Strategy has considerably helped the school to maintain and raise the standards. The strong focus on teaching basic skills, and the emphasis on guided reading and shared text work is contributing very effectively to the continuing improvement in spelling and to fluency and expression in reading. Teachers plan strictly to the National Literacy Strategy guidelines. For most pupils this is working well but it is sometimes inappropriate for the pupils who are falling behind, as the strategy has not yet been adapted to provide accurate and detailed assessments of the pupils who do not meet the required standard.
65. Knowledge and understanding of fiction and non-fiction texts have been extended through the National Literacy Strategy but also through the love of books that the teachers share. There are many well-kept, up-to-date fiction books for the pupils to choose from in the classrooms and on display around the school, as the new information and communication

technology suite has been situated in the library, which has caused a problem with open access to books for the pupils. Each class is timetabled for one lesson a week and pupils borrow the books they need for research work. By the end of Year 6, the majority of pupils are able to scan articles, select and summarise information. Many are able to present this information in their own words. The pupils spoken to were able to use reference books confidently and effectively.

66. The majority of pupils enjoy reading and regularly take books home. The pupils in Year 6 and higher attaining pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5, are self-motivated, enjoy reading and are reading some demanding texts. They show understanding of a range of texts, select essential points and can use inference and deduction appropriately. Their progress in reading is very good. For example, they enjoy reading books by Tolkien and J K Rowling, especially after watching the film *Harry Potter*, and some of the pupils, because of the present interest in the football World Cup, are very keen to read *My World*, by David Beckham. The reading skills and the skills needed to read with deeper understanding of the average pupils are sufficiently well developed to enable them to cope with most texts. The pupils with reading difficulties are supported individually or in groups and achieve well. The reading skills of those pupils who are below average but are not pupils with special educational needs are weaker. In Year 3, the pupils were reading a wide range of poems to identify the type of text. Sharing the reading of them was fun. They liked looking for alliteration and synonyms in, *Adventures of Isabel*. The pupils in Year 6 can talk about a wide range of authors and texts they like reading. They know why they like their books, and talk about their work in depth. This is due to the quality of work covered on structured book reviews, which are completed with a view to recommending the books to someone. These reviews briefly explain the content, state whether the book was enjoyable, whether it challenged them, and their own thoughts about the author and genre. Pupils in Year 3 enjoy sharing reading with those in Year 5, as well as pupils in Year 4 working with those in Year 6 during lesson time every week.
67. Standards in listening and speaking skills are very high. In discussions with pupils they were able to put forward their own points of view. The pupils regularly take part in school assemblies. Here they read clearly and project their voices effectively to be heard by all. Year 6 pupils had prepared their own very good booklets on, 'Heart and Lungs'. These were shared with their reading partners from Year 3. These lessons developed speaking and listening skills very well, as well as giving the Year 3 pupils confidence and a sense of responsibility to pupils in Year 6.
68. The whole school target to improve the pupils' writing is successfully raising standards. Teachers are now very good at providing opportunities for pupils to write. They employ very good strategies and techniques. This is having a very good impact on the standard of writing in English lessons and in other subjects. The scrutiny of work showed how well each aspect of the literacy strategy is covered and understood by most of the pupils. The pupils in all years write reports on the places they have visited, letters to persuade other to also visit there, and thank-you letters.

69. Year 3 pupils are taught to write stories using a wider range of vocabulary. During this year they had successfully begun to draft and redraft their work. This has improved their work especially that based on, *The Noise in the Sky*. They have begun to understand how to write instructions in order, for example, 'Making a Sandwich', and 'Easter Biscuits'. Year 4 pupils are beginning to realise how paragraphs and chapters can be used to organise, order and build up ideas after studying *Where The Wild Things Are*, by Maurice Sendak. They are able to write sensible book reviews and letters to Mrs Fine, the author, explaining how well she writes her books, including quotes from the text of *The Angel of Nitshill Road*. The pupils were investigating origins and meanings of words and finding very good collections of words with common roots using 'graph', 'micros', 'octo', 'annus', for example. In the lessons seen, the pupils were evaluating advertisements for impact, appeal and honesty. When writing after rain had fallen, one pupil in Year 5 wrote: "The sky was lowering to swallow everything in its path. You could smell the coldness...". This year group were reading and evaluating letters from newspapers and magazines intended to inform, protest, complain and persuade. They could recall easily slogans from television advertisements. Most became aware of ambiguity, half-truths, bias and how opinion can be disguised to seem like fact to model a piece of writing. However, in one Year 5 group, the work did not meet the needs of the majority of pupils.
70. Year 6 pupils enjoy poetry, especially poems by Alan Ahlberg and Roger McGough. From *I Heard It in the Playground* the pupils were able to empathise with the poet and his use of similes and metaphors. They are encouraged to comment critically on the overall impact and experiment with language. Teachers encourage and support very good discussion about one's own feelings compared with the character in the poem. As a result, the pupils find out that some feelings differ depending on whether you are a girl or a boy. They enjoy having fun creating language to gain effect, for instance, a ploster, delvier, lounstall, blosawack, and chopster. They use these non-standard words well to create good poems.
71. Teachers are particularly good in encouraging pupils to apply their writing skills appropriately and effectively in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, empathetic writing, as Beowulf, 'How do you feel after Grendel burst in and pounced on the sleeping warrior?' or letter-writing to, 'Ma and Pa', as a country child in 1861, and to the newspaper about the development of the local Butterfield site, as well as informative letters, historically correct sent from Hadrian's Wall and postcards from St Lucia to home, expressing the first impressions of the place. Very good diary writing has been produced, 'A flower girl's life in September 1851', 'make 'em look bigger. Sometimes I hear Charlotte crying at night, the poor soul', and written accounts of 'The Fire in the Sky', the Hindenburg airship disaster, and explanations of how the artist Turner achieved the impression he was aiming for, "Lazy golden mists, a vaguely visionable bridge...it is camouflaged in a mist", and the description of how they felt after studying *Belshazzar's Feast*. One pupil wrote "The experience was absolutely horrifying and astonishing and I would certainly not like it to happen again". Others demonstrated clear note-taking 'Sea full of weird creatures', 'Arab Dhow ships were easy to steer'.

72. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught and their achievement is good. Teachers have good support from the classroom assistants, who hear the pupils read and keep very good records of their work.
73. Grammar is well taught across the school. The understanding the pupils have enhances both reading and writing skills; it supports effective communication. In most lessons seen, pupils were using dictionaries and in some classes, thesauruses to improve their work. Punctuation is understood and used well. The pupils in Year 3 learn 'When "it's" means "it is" time for tea, but when we mean the dog has "its" bone, leave "it" alone. This helps the pupils to use the apostrophe correctly.
74. The previous report stated that handwriting standards could be better. Closer scrutiny of the 2001 national tests showed that handwriting standards meet those expected for their age and are now improving well across the school. The weekly handwriting lessons and the good standards used by teachers are beginning to have a positive impact on the way pupils acquire a neat, legible and fluent handwriting style.
75. Standards in spelling are high. The teachers have adopted the National Literacy Strategy, Spelling Bank Booklet and use the lists of words and ideas set out in it. In each class there is a good emphasis on the context in which words might be used. The computer program *Starspell* is used successfully. It helps teachers to assess each pupil individually, therefore improving their achievement in spelling.
76. The quality of teaching and learning in the 11 lessons observed was good overall, with very good teaching in Year 6. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of the literacy strategy has been in part responsible for this high standard. Some lessons started very well indeed, but when the tasks were given to the groups some of the pupils did little work because it was similar to that given to the rest of the class and did not match the range of ability. This was because teachers plan to the prescribed term and week too slavishly and as a result by the time the lower attaining pupils reach Year 5 they are underachieving. There was one occasion when the teaching and learning was weaker, the intended aims of the lesson were unclear, the text was too difficult and also badly photocopied, and not enough time was given to complete the written task set.
77. Pupils really enjoy their lessons and are well motivated and eager to learn. During the majority of lessons observed, the pupils' behaviour ranged from good to excellent and is very good overall. On the one occasion pupils did misbehave it was because they were unsure of the task, were not clear what they had to do, and the text and the level of work were too difficult for them.
78. The leadership and management provided by the co-ordinator are satisfactory. She is fully aware of the standards required to achieve the highest grades and aware that standards in the present Year 5 are below the target set. Her monitoring of teaching and learning has not been sharply focused enough to prevent the lack of challenge presented to some of the pupils in the tasks that they are being set. There are many very good examples of teachers' marking but marking of the pupils' work for those who are working slightly below their

capacity is not always suitable, nor are the comments or targets set met by the pupils. Resources acquired to promote the introduction of literacy lessons and to help reading are of good quality and have been carefully chosen.

## **MATHEMATICS**

79. Last year's National Curriculum test results for 11-year-olds show that the pupils attained standards above the national average. Since the previous inspection results in mathematics have been improving faster than the national rate and the teaching has made satisfactory improvement since then. However, compared with similar schools, standards were below average in last year's tests because the pupils only made satisfactory progress in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants and make sound progress.
80. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils in Year 6 are making good progress in relation to their attainment on entry. The most recent national tests results (2002) show that a greater proportion compared with the previous year achieved or exceeded the standards expected for their age. It is evident that the progress of the Year 6 pupils owes much to the consistent good teaching in that year group. Pupils in Years 3 to 5 are making satisfactory progress and overall attainment in those years is average. In each year group the teaching groups are based on prior attainment and in Year 6 an extra class is provided for the small number of low attaining and special educational needs pupils. However, greater emphasis needs to be placed on planning to meet the needs of pupils with different abilities more consistently across the school. The inconsistency in the quality of teaching accounts for the variable progress made, especially from Years 3 to 5, where progress is satisfactory overall.
81. The pupils have a good knowledge of number, and throughout the school they explore and systematically develop a knowledge of important number facts and strategies for carrying out number operations both mentally and in written work. The pupils have good access to the mathematics curriculum but greater emphasis needs to be placed upon independent and investigative learning. The pupils in Year 3 understand about money and can solve simple addition and subtraction problems using it. They organise and gather information through tally charts and block graphs. In Year 4, the pupils interpret data from graphs. They make use of control technology, using computers to construct two-dimensional shapes based on their knowledge of angles in shapes. They understand position and direction and can use co-ordinates. They recognise the relationship between simple fractional and decimal numbers. This develops further in Year 5, where the pupils begin to understand the idea of percentages and express them as equivalent fractional parts. They are developing an understanding of representing and interpreting data using such terms as 'range' and 'mode'. The pupils use information and communication technology well to design spreadsheets to calculate a holiday budget. Most pupils in Year 6 confidently use a series of operations in solving problems involving number, money, and measures such as area and circumference.



The pupils can explain their thinking, but the presentation of explanations of written problem-solving activities is not sufficiently developed, especially in Year 3 and 5, where there is less progress than in other year groups.

82. Overall, the pupils enjoy mathematics lessons. They have consistently good attitudes and behaviour. They are eager to be involved in whole-class numeracy activities, readily settle to group activities and concentrate on their work for the appropriate time. Relationships are good and they are happy to share ideas and support one another.
83. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good teaching seen and very good lessons in Year 6. Teachers use the guidance of the National Numeracy Strategy to support their planning so that pupils systematically learn skills and knowledge and develop understanding. However, planning for the needs of more able pupils is often reliant on providing extension activities to be tackled when the class activity is completed. This is also true of a significant number of lessons where the tasks being set were not always appropriate for the whole ability range. Where the teaching is most successful, teachers have a good knowledge of both the subject and of how children learn. Precise learning objectives are identified. These build directly on what pupils already know and are shared with them so that they can recognise the purpose of the activities and so, both pupils and teachers can easily access the progress made in the lesson. The lessons usually have a bright, interesting introduction that catches the attention of pupils so that they want to be involved. The pupils' interest is sustained by the provision of learning activities that suitably challenge all groups and are timed to ensure the lesson moves at a brisk pace. Visual aids are well prepared to support the direct teaching of knowledge and skills, and practical resources are on hand to support pupils' understanding until it is secure. This was well illustrated in a Year 6 lesson on ratio and proportion, and in a lesson for lower attaining Year 6 pupils on interpreting graphs. Weaknesses in the teaching are evident where the start of the lesson is repetitive and lacks challenge. Consequently the pace drops and pupils become quietly distracted. Teachers' marking does not consistently inform pupils of what they must do to improve.
84. The subject is satisfactorily managed. The subject co-ordinator has worked alongside the local education authority advisor to monitor the provision in the school. The information gained has identified areas for improvement and the school is well placed to improve standards further. The pupils use their numeracy skills well in other subjects, for example, in science when recording data and in information and communication technology when using simple spreadsheets to calculate totals.

## **SCIENCE**

85. The results of the national tests last year show that standards were above average when compared to all schools, and average when judged against those working in similar contexts. From the period 1998 to 2000, standards rose much faster than the national trend. The rate of improvement dropped last year, due to the presence in Year 6 of a significantly higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. There has been good improvement in science since the last inspection.

86. Inspectors judge standards to be above average by the end of Year 6. Standards have risen since the last inspection thanks largely to the good analysis of how well the pupils achieve, and the use of this information to guide teachers' planning. The pupils in the current Year 6 work above the expected level in investigating and testing. When finding out how much force is needed to raise a book up different gradients, they repeat observations to make sure their results are accurate and record the average number of Newtons. They work with appropriate precision and draw line graphs to show the outcomes of the test. However, in writing about their investigations, pupils do not describe how they might improve them. They show a detailed and sophisticated knowledge of the changes that happen to materials. The pupils use suitable scientific terms, such as 'chemical reaction', when discussing combustion. They understand the processes at work when a candle burns. The pupils wrote "The wax acts as fuel and burns with the surrounding oxygen to produce heat and light."
87. The scrutiny of the work across the school shows that overall, pupils including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language as well as ethnic minority pupils, make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment.
88. The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons seen was good overall, varying from satisfactory to excellent. Teaching of the highest quality was seen in Year 4. The very good knowledge that teachers have of this subject helps them to question pupils very effectively. This was a strong feature of an excellent lesson about skeletons in Year 4, and led to a very good discussion about the function of different bones. As a result of this, pupils gain skills and understanding well. Teachers plan together in year groups and discuss what works best in their lessons. Generally, the skilful management of classes leads to pupils applying themselves well and enjoying their work. Teachers work hard in lessons to involve and support all pupils. Opportunities are missed to improve pupils' spelling and handwriting skills when they are not required to correct mistakes in written work. Some teachers do not use enough praise or incentives to encourage pupils to behave well in some lessons.
89. The good work and monitoring of standards done by the knowledgeable co-ordinator, especially in improving the written guidance to help teachers plan, and making practical suggestions about addressing weaknesses in pupils' performance, helps to raise standards. His organisation of a 'science week', in which the whole school studies the work of eminent scientists, has helped to improve the status of the subject. The school is keen to increase the opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. A special computer program has been bought to help in the analysis of the performance of different groups of pupils, such as those from ethnic minority backgrounds.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

90. The attainment of 11-year-olds is in line with that expected for their age and standards have been maintained since the last inspection. All the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school.

91. The pupils in Year 3 are developing a knowledge and understanding of art and well-known artists. They produce paintings in the style of Van Gogh and they are able to combine different techniques to achieve an effect. In Year 5, following a visit to the National Gallery, pupils wrote about the paintings they had seen. They gave their views on how successful they think the artists had been in achieving the impressions they were aiming for. The pupils use a variety of media to represent those paintings. The work is attractively displayed in corridors and the hall and includes *Belshazzar's Feast* by Rembrandt, *The Ambassadors* by Hans Holbein the Younger and *The Tiger in a Tropical Storm* by Henri Rousseau. Year 6 pupils develop their work on interpreting what they see around them and create designs in the style of William Morris. Year 4 pupils attempt a variety of printing techniques and produce attractive designs on fabric using shells, fruit and vegetables. They make close observational drawings of straw hats paying close attention to the special weave of the hat. Through their drawings of skeletons of animals they effectively improve their shading technique to communicate a three-dimensional effect. Good examples of work in clay and salt dough were seen in both Year 4 and Year 6.
92. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory. Where there are elements of good teaching, for example, in a Year 3 class, the teacher is encouraging and improves the pupils' observational skills to extend their expertise and confidence when describing different styles of art. Effective use is made of sketchbooks to experiment and improve work. In a Year 4 class, pupils planned a garden collage. The teacher supported their planning with a variety of resources and through good questioning and discussion.
93. The curriculum co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has worked hard to develop a scheme of work which ensures coverage of the art and design curriculum. This gives clear guidance to teachers as to how they can develop pupils' skills as they move through school. Resources for art and design are satisfactory.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

94. Standards are in line with those expected by the end of Year 6. This was the case at the time of the last inspection. The teaching has improved well and is now consistently satisfactory and learning resources have improved. Overall, the pupils achieve satisfactorily, but the progress made in one of the Year 5 classes has been adversely affected by a succession of unavoidable changes in teaching staff.
95. The standards that pupils attain arise from satisfactory teaching. A strong feature of the work of Year 6 pupils is the effort they put into designing products such as a shelter. They draw their intended structure from different angles and identify the materials they will use, the design plan, the tools needed to do the job and how it will be decorated. They also evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their work well. One pupil wrote about a Victorian toy he had made "I need to glue this part down a bit more". Examination of the toys produced by Year 6 showed that some pupils had made clever use of cams and levers, for example, to cause a model whale to rise and fall as though swimming in a painted sea. However, throughout the school, the pupils do not show in their design drawings how components will be fixed or take enough account of the needs of the users of the things they design.

96. The good quality teaching evident in Years 5 and 6 leads to a greater understanding of the design process. In Year 5, the pupils begin to realise the limitations of certain materials and ways of fixing things. One wrote, "The roof was a major problem. I had put sticks on it and stuck them with sellotape. I couldn't paint over this". In the best teaching, good management of pupils, combined with a good knowledge of how to develop skills, knowledge and understanding, result in positive attitudes to learning and a quiet purposeful working environment. In a lesson for Year 6 pupils, very effective questioning by the teacher led to a clear understanding that different materials are appropriate in different design contexts. Sometimes teachers expect too little of their classes when they set tasks such as finishing off an existing artefact. All the pupils have the same opportunities to succeed. Those with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers, thanks to the good support they receive from teachers and the adults who assist them.
97. The pupils enjoy the practical nature of work in this subject and are keen to get on with the task in hand. They collaborate well when working with partners. The pupils in Year 6 recently won a competition combining their skills in design and technology and their knowledge of computers. Their motorised model bird is an educational toy, controlled by a computer to teach younger children how to tell left from right. This achievement inspired others to take a greater interest in their own work.
98. The good support provided for teachers by the co-ordinator and the good links developed with the local secondary school have a beneficial effect on the quality of teaching and the standards that pupils attain. The school is aware of the need to refine its arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment so that more use can be made of this process to meet the learning needs of groups and individuals.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

99. Standards and progress are good for all pupils at the end of Year 6. The pupils achieve standards above those expected for their age. This shows considerable improvement since the previous report when attainment was judged to be only satisfactory. Attainment for pupils with special educational needs was judged to be below expectations. This is no longer the case. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress. A new policy has been written and this is effective in helping teachers to plan their lessons. The school has adopted the most recent national guidance, which begins to address the judgement in the previous report which stated that the scheme of work needed developing. The use of worksheets has been reduced and these are now used when appropriate.
100. Mapping skills continue to be developed and are taught well throughout the school. In Year 4, the pupils are able to draw plans and maps of their local area well, use a key and label places on the maps of the British Isles correctly. By Year 6 pupils are able to use four and six figure grid references well and understand many of the symbols on the Ordnance Survey maps.

101. Year 3 pupils recognise local landmarks and have a clearer view of life in and around the local area of Stopsley. They have extended their knowledge and understanding of places studied including oceans, deserts and rainforests. The features of a desert were explored with reference to the Mojave Desert in South California. As well as learning about how the tents are made from goat's-hair cloth, how the long flowing robes worn shield the skin from sun and heat, they have looked in detail at the life and importance of the camel.
102. Year 5 pupils are able to describe the function of a town and how the land is used. As a result of their study of Europe, the pupils can identify countries and some differences in temperature and rainfall. They have identified places near to rivers and hills and can explain why these places are important. Good observations were made from their study about water pollution. They realise that in the past people used rivers and seas to dispose of waste and why now, some are badly polluted. This work led to good accounts about use and abuse of rivers today. The pupils in Year 5 are taught appropriate geographical vocabulary, with clear illustrations to help them understand their meaning in their work on, the course of a river, for example, stream, course, channel, delta, spring, estuary, meander, rapid, waterfall, river cliff, erosion, deposition.
103. Fieldwork away from school to Dell Farm, near Whipsnade, also plays a very important part and enhances the geographical curriculum, providing opportunities to enhance learning through practical work in different areas. The pupils and teachers thoroughly enjoy these experiences. The pupils with special educational needs take part in all fieldwork activities. On a visit to a church, the pupils were able to identify how places change through the passing of time, for instance, one pupil wrote, "The dew pond is just an old bunch of trees in a dip now".
104. The work presented by Year 6 pupils explaining how St Lucia is different from Stopsley and Luton in terms of weather, buildings, work and the school day, is of a high quality. The very good display of the pupils' work demonstrates how well the school provides hands-on experiences of traditional crafts of tie and dye, cleaning and polishing shells, bowl-making using banana palm leaves and the shell of a coconut carved out as a bird feeder. The pupils analyse evidence and draw conclusions about the weather patterns and climate and use calculators well to find out the average rainfall.
105. An environmental issue causing concern at the present time is whether to, 'Think Green or Not'. This is a dilemma and decisions have to be made for or against a local project called the 'Butterfield Green Development'. Increasing traffic on the local main road, pollution and litter problems, and the plight of animals are all being debated. This is helping the pupils to read articles and letters, and send accounts and letters to the local newspapers.
106. The subject is well managed and the co-ordination of the work being covered across the school is good. The quality of teaching is good and the co-ordinator knows what is happening in all classes through her monitoring but, as in other subjects of the curriculum, this is informal and not systematic enough. She is aware that there are no formal assessment procedures as yet and that more information and communication technology software is required.

## HISTORY

107. Standards are above those expected by the end of Year 6, which reflects the judgement made in the previous inspection. All the pupils make good progress including those with special educational needs. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection. The school has reviewed the curriculum, developed an effective policy, and adopted the recent national guidance, which is used to inform teachers' medium-term planning. Chronology is developed well. The pupils are able to make use of the time lines displayed in each classroom to make comparisons and draw on previous knowledge to contrast changing times, giving reasons why and how. The well planned, relevant visits enhance the learning further, help pupils to become historians, asking and answering questions, selecting and recording information relevant to their topic. Expectations are high.
108. The pupils in Year 3 have studied the Celts, Romans and Anglo-Saxons in great detail. There was good learning about warriors, wooden spears, hill forts, deep ditches, and defence and attack strategies, and they found out that a crannog was a house built on wooden stilts. These pupils enjoyed meeting a 'Roman Soldier' and finding interesting artefacts when they carried out a large scale dig with the staff at the Luton museum.
109. The study of the local area in Year 4 is very good. Teachers plan visits effectively to the Hendon and the Wardown Museums to enhance the pupils' knowledge and to help them understand what life was like in their local area and the changes that have taken place. The pupils know that Luton airport was built in 1937 and used for military planes during the war. They know how Vauxhall got its name and their time line shows clearly the development of car manufacture from the Vauxhall Ironworks Company formed in 1897, the first car in 1903, the Luton site in 1905, that 5,640 tanks were made during World War II and that the last Vectra car was made there in 2002. They learn the importance of straw plait and bonnet making to the area and begin to understand what it was like to go to plait school and the tools used to make the straw plait and hats. The display in the classroom is a credit to the teachers and pupils and is a museum in itself.
110. Year 5 have a good understanding of life in Tudor times through the different strategies used by the teachers to help all the pupils to learn. The pupils were using inventories to identify characteristic features of the lives of different types of Tudor people as viewed from the property they left. There were good links with art and design. The study of the portraits of Henry VIII and his wives helped the pupils to begin to predict and interpret the character and their thoughts. They began to understand a little about using signs and symbols and what they represent from the Rainbow and Ermine portraits, for instance, a snake represents the symbol of wisdom. The visit to The National Gallery helped them to understand some other artists' work during this period, but they found the picture of Lady Jane Grey's execution very touching, filled them "with horror", and some wrote that they, "couldn't imagine what it would be like". During this study, Tudor music was played regularly, and in December the pupils celebrated with a Tudor Christmas.

111. Year 6 pupils enjoy being detectives, and on their visit to the Burgess room in the Bedford museum, identified certain objects and what they were used for on their visit. The boot and button hooks and the strop caused problems, as these were well out of their experience. The presentation of their work in their individual topic booklet, *The Victorians*, is very good. The pupils had used a computer scanner for the illustration on the front and ably copied and pasted information from the Internet. Their written accounts on Florence Nightingale, Dr Barnardo and Lord Shaftesbury show a good understanding of the lives of these significant men and women. Their empathetic writing based on *A Servant to Mr Higgins in 1893*, *A Flower Girl's Life in 1851*, *A Letter, as a Country Child to Ma and Pa, in 1861*, show how well the pupils understood the way of life of people who lived during this period.
112. At the time of the inspection Year 6 pupils were completing some good work on the Ancient Greeks. They were reading Greek myths and legends and thinking about their relationship to the archaeological discoveries of Sir Arthur Evans in Crete 100 years ago. Good enquiry questions were posed about how we know, and after looking at Grecian urns and the use of olive oil some came to the conclusion that, "History can be smelly!"
113. Co-ordination of the work in history and the teaching are good. The co-ordinator is very keen to raise the standards of history further. She is aware that procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment and progress in history are still at an early stage of development but steps have been taken to reduce the number of published worksheets used and to improve the use of information and communication technology further.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

114. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is above the standard expected by the age of 11. There has been good progress since the last inspection as standards at that time were judged to be average. Good improvements have been made to resources since then and the ICT curriculum is taught well. The school has introduced some key programs and additional hardware for ICT and this is largely related to word processing, graphics and data handling and some elements of control technology, for example, graphic modelling, are still in need of further development. There has been good staff training which has led to a better understanding of ICT, resulting in the teaching seen being of good quality. The introduction of a dedicated ICT room, which is used to teach and reinforce basic skills as well as being used as an information, learning and resource centre, is helping to develop programmes which will improve research skills and encourage the pupils' independent learning. These initiatives have come about because of the knowledgeable and diligent management of the subject by its co-ordinator who has dedicated a lot of his time to supporting staff and developing the ICT curriculum.
115. The pupils make good progress in word processing, desktop publishing and graphics work. As a result of the increasing competence of teachers and the introduction of new computer programs, the pupils are experiencing a range of techniques that help them to prepare reports, write stories and factual accounts, as well as entering data to generate questions and investigations. Every pupil has their own data file on the networked computers in the ICT

room and they are becoming increasingly competent at retrieving information, saving and printing their work. The teaching is well resourced and organised.

116. The pupils in Year 4 have a good understanding of graphics, word processing and data handling. This is largely related to the teachers' competence in teaching these skills. The pupils were observed using a control technology program to construct two-dimensional shapes. The pupils made good progress and are beginning to use more complex routines to create a series of instructions that are linked and can be retrieved as a file to produce more complex shapes. Evidence from previous work done shows that the pupils can label pictures and combine text with graphics. Some pupils have produced interesting labels using borders and frames to enhance the effect of their picture. In Year 5, the pupils are able to use a spreadsheet to solve problems related to a holiday budget. They show increasing confidence in using the various tools and menus to arrange columns and rows on the spreadsheet and then to edit their work to produce some pleasing results. Although the lesson seen was successful in producing a number of well organised spreadsheets, higher attaining pupils could have achieved a lot more if the work prepared for them was more demanding. In Year 6, the pupils are presented with much more demanding and thought-provoking work. They were observed working in groups to formulate questions during a combined mathematics and ICT session. The pupils were investigating a range of graphs, charts and matrices which evoked thoughtful discussions and analyses about how best to present information. This work is then being extended to more advanced data handling using ICT. A group of Year 6 pupils were able to explain the procedures needed to produce text and pictures and could expand this to importing pictures from the Internet.
117. The teaching seen was good. Evidence of pupils' printed work and discussions with Year 6 pupils shows that the pupils are making good progress. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress and are fully integrated in lessons. The school's ICT facilities are very effective in helping teachers to focus on basic ICT skills. All the computers are networked so that teachers can bring a whole class or group together to teach specific skills. Classroom assistants provide good support and are included in staff training. The co-ordinator has good plans in place to extend staff training so that it focuses on each part of the ICT curriculum. The school has improved control technology since the last inspection and has good plans in place to improve resources further, for example, by introducing more robotic devices and peripheral hardware such as probes, switches and switch boards to improve control technology and apply this to other areas of the curriculum, for example, science and design and technology.
118. Teachers and support staff are developing an increasing understanding of how computers can be used to enhance the work that pupils do across a range of subjects. Regular access to computers is timetabled and this helps the pupils to build on what has already been covered. There is a willingness from all the staff to improve their own knowledge and understanding of ICT and its capability. As a result the school is well placed to use new technology. Since the last inspection there is a more co-ordinated approach to staff development which provides consistent teaching based on an effective scheme of work that is helping teachers to plan their lessons. Resources are well matched to ensure continuity for the pupils and provide consistency.



119. The co-ordinator provides very good support to colleagues, ensuring that the staff and pupils have access to new software and experiment with new ideas. However, his time is not always planned well enough for him to visit lessons or provide direct support more specifically during times when ICT is being taught. This makes it difficult for the school to evaluate the impact of new initiatives or to provide more effective support to colleagues specifically in relation to teaching and learning. The co-ordinator helps the staff and pupils to cope with problems or computer breakdowns and also co-ordinates training and provides a scheme of work which is monitored when teachers have their planning checked. This is helping the staff and pupils to follow a structured programme of ICT.

## MUSIC

120. Standards in music are well above those expected by the end Year 6. The pupils achieve very well and music is a strong feature of the school's provision. This is largely brought about by the personal dedication of the school's music co-ordinator who, together with the very good support for music provided by the local authority, has a positive impact on maintaining high standards in music and singing. Many staff have, to some extent, good musical expertise and this ensures that music is well taught across the school. The pupils benefit from weekly music lessons as well as visiting specialists who are invited as part of particular topics, such as the recent visit of African specialist percussionists. Weekly singing sessions are taught in the hall to all pupils and these provide good opportunities for them to learn new songs and to practise and improve their singing skills.
121. The quality of singing in assemblies is very good. The pupils sing in unison and their singing has good range, pitch and timing. The pupils thoroughly enjoy their music and singing and the large majority of pupils can listen to others when singing to help them distinguish between hard and soft tones. The music co-ordinator and staff help to raise the profile of singing and introduce musical instruments to each class when they have their music lessons.
122. The teaching is good and the pupils make good progress. It is very good when taught by music specialists and the music co-ordinator. Good use is made of untuned percussion instruments to help the pupils distinguish between different beats and sounds. Visiting African percussionists used large traditional drums, African xylophones and other tuned and untuned traditional African instruments to teach a large group of pupils during the inspection week. The pupils learned to play a range of repeated tunes and simple melodies accompanied by an ensemble of percussion played on different drums including large and small bongo drums. Year 3 pupils were observed being taught clapping rhythms and experimented with repeating patterns or ostinato, where the phrase is repeated in songs. The lessons was very well planned and skilfully taught as the teacher provided opportunities for the pupils to play an instrument and to distinguish between high and low sounds. Many pupils are able to read from a simple musical score as they play recorders or accompany using untuned percussion. The pupils then practised each rhythm or song with pleasing results. These sessions enable the pupils to make good progress, because they are well structured and based on very good and secure subject knowledge. Every week, specialist peripatetic instrumental tuition takes place and a large number of pupils are involved. There

is a broad range of instruments being taught, including brass, woodwind, strings, drums and keyboards.

123. In the lessons observed the pupils enjoyed the lessons very much; they tried hard and persevered, especially when working in groups or with a partner. The teaching uses skilful questioning, a good range of music resources, and the staff praise and value the efforts of all the pupils. Visiting musicians are invited to support music teaching from time to time. The co-ordinator also organises choirs and musical ensembles and productions for local music festivals and music is used well to support the creative and dramatic arts as well as school productions. During the inspection, the acting headteacher and music co-ordinator showed the school a video recording of the school's involvement in the recent Luton Festival. This was recorded from television coverage of the event and demonstrated that the school played a leading part in the celebrations with a range of musical ensembles. Evidence from previous work and recordings of past school musical productions show that music is an important and well-established tradition in the school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

124. The standards that pupils attain are in line with those expected of pupils by the end of Year 6, as they were at the time of the last inspection. There are no differences in the standards achieved by boys and girls.
125. Swimming is a strong feature of the provision in this subject. All year groups receive tuition for several weeks each year and a large proportion of pupils are able to swim at least 25 metres of front crawl and another of back crawl by the time they leave school. In addition, they can jump in at the deep end of the pool, tread water for 30 seconds and climb out again. Swimming standards are above those expected for 11-year-olds.
126. In dance activities, pupils remember and reproduce effectively the movements in country dancing which they practise for performances in front of the rest of the school. They work in a controlled way, making good use of the limited space available when two classes perform together. The proper emphasis placed by the teacher on getting pupils to evaluate their performance is reflected well in comments such as, "We went into the centre too early" and, "We're definitely getting better". The pupils attain appropriate standards for their age in athletics. Those in Year 6 were seen practising their sprint techniques. Most started effectively and maintained a suitable pace to the finish. More able pupils remember to 'dip' as they cross the line. Many pupils fail to make maximum use of their arms to increase their speed.
127. The quality of the teaching observed was good. Teachers invariably set a good example to pupils by changing into suitable clothing and joining in when appropriate. This results in good attitudes to learning. They provide good warming-up routines, ensuring that everyone is ready to start activities effectively and pointing out the importance of preparing to exercise. The very good skills of teachers in controlling and managing their classes also contribute well to the success of lessons. Sometimes teachers do not give enough coaching or instruction to enable pupils to make optimum progress. Greater analysis of movement

would benefit more able pupils, for example, in knowing what constitutes a good jumping technique.

128. Good links with local sports bodies help to raise standards and increase interest in physical education. During the inspection, a coach from the town's professional soccer club worked with Year 5 pupils to improve their passing skills, as part of a six-week course. The newly appointed co-ordinator has good plans to involve pupils in assessing and recording the standards they attain. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and competitive and non-competitive sports and team games, including good participation in local swimming galas.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

129. At the age of 11 years the pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education is in line with the expectations set out in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.
130. In the three lessons seen during the week of the inspection the quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory. In a Year 3 lesson, the pupils learned about worshipping in a mosque and gained a wider understanding through a presentation by a Muslim pupil. Year 4 pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of Judaism and are able to explain the importance of the Jewish Shabbat. In a Year 5 lesson, the pupils read sections from the Old and New Testaments to explore the ideas of love and forgiveness. The teacher's questions were probing and helped the pupils to relate the key messages of love and forgiveness to situations in their everyday lives. The pupils responded thoughtfully. One boy, asked why we should forgive people, said, "Your conscience tells you it's the right thing to do". When questioning and explanations are overlong some pupils become restless and unwilling to engage in discussion. This can be a distraction for the majority of pupils who participate with interest. For example, in one lesson in Year 3, the introduction was too long and teaching points too laboured. Consequently the pupils lost interest and became restless so that the impact of the teaching was diminished even though the teacher had planned for an interesting visit to a local mosque.
131. The work displayed, pupils' workbooks and a discussion with Year 6 pupils, show that in the main teachers provide a balanced religious education programme based on good subject knowledge. The pupils in Year 6 were able to talk knowledgeably about the main world religions. Their views about the importance of learning about different religions were illustrated by their comments. One pupil's intelligent response was, "So that you don't offend anyone through your ignorance". Another believed it was interesting and made people more tolerant towards each other.
132. Subject co-ordination is satisfactory. The school's scheme of work corresponds to the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Resources are satisfactory and teachers make good use of the local church. However, there are fewer opportunities provided to visit other places of worship or to use the expertise of religious leaders across a broad range of religions.